

# Ohio State Offense Will Stick With Its Strengths In Cotton Bowl



Much has been said about the elite Texas defense coming into the Cotton Bowl matchup against the Buckeyes, and whether it will be able to stop what can be a fast-paced, high-flying offense that Ohio State boasts with so many great receivers on the roster.

The Longhorns are third in the country in passing yards allowed per game, just 166.1 yards on average, behind only the Buckeyes (152.4) and Iowa State (165.6), so attacking with the run — which Texas still defends fairly well — could be a little more alluring.

The past two games against Tennessee and Oregon, Will Howard has been letting loose and throwing the deep ball, which has helped the offense get the run game going later on as well.

While there is a blueprint to beating the Longhorns, with Georgia having success running the ball in both of its wins over Texas, and Arizona State putting up 214 rushing yards in the Peach Bowl, offensive coordinator Chip Kelly is making sure he doesn't look too much at what made other team's have success against Texas, and sticking to the strengths of the Buckeyes' offense.

"I think that's a dilemma for all coaches," he said. "How does it fit into what we do? How does it fit into the skill set of our players? We're trying to play to our strengths. You may say this is a good scheme, but it takes a certain type of player in this position to run it, but it may not be what we're in. It may also be something we don't do at all."

But even if the Buckeyes have to start getting the run game going, the offensive line has put together two straight great performances, getting push at the line of scrimmage and opening holes for TreVeyon Henderson and Quinshon Judkins.

Senior wide receiver Emeka Egbuka knows the Buckeyes are going to need to be on their game against the Longhorns secondary and stick to what they're good at.

“Nothing different. It’s going to take execution, toughness, being smart, turnover battle,” he said. “All the things that win you a football game is what’s going to win us this football game. The only thing that changes is the opponent.

“(The Longhorns’ secondary) are a very good unit. They are very athletic, very smart, they tackle well. They do everything the right way.”

But even with that, offensive lineman Donovan Jackson and the rest of the Buckeyes know the challenges that await them come 7:30 p.m. Eastern when the Texas defense lines up against them in the Cotton Bowl.

“They get a lot of looks. They’re very dynamic. They rotate a lot of guys, so they’re always fresh,” Jackson said. “It’s a very competitive operation, so we’re just looking forward to getting after it.”