

Predictions: BSB Split On Who Will Prevail In Rose Bowl



Now with just a day to go before Ohio State and Oregon match up in “The Granddaddy Of Them All,” the Buckeyes are still favored despite having two losses and being the lower-ranked team.

The game is set to kickoff at 5 p.m. Eastern on ESPN, the third of the four quarterfinal matchups, with the winner set to move onto the Cotton Bowl on Jan. 10 against the winner of the matchup between Arizona State and Texas.

Here’s how BSB sees the game between Ohio State and Oregon going:

Patrick Engels: Ohio State Loses Another Nail-Biter To Ducks

After 10 or so days of talk and hype, the highly anticipated Rose Bowl is finally just one day away.

Ohio State enters the matchup with Oregon riding high after its blowout win over Tennessee, and it also comes in with a chip on its shoulder to avenge the Oct. 12 loss to the Ducks. Oregon, on the other hand, comes in as the undisputed top team in college football with a roster as rested as any, with almost a month coming in between the Rose Bowl and its Big Ten Championship Game win over Penn State on Dec. 7.

Putting all of that into consideration, we could be in for another classic on New Year’s Day. A tightly contested game would certainly be fun to watch, but from the Buckeyes’ perspective, it could prove to be a disadvantage for them.

Since Ryan Day became head coach in 2019, Ohio State has struggled to come away on the winning side of close games when its opponent is as good or better as the Buckeyes. Perhaps Day’s biggest win of his head coaching career was in 2020 when the Buckeyes dethroned Clemson in the CFP semifinals, but that game ended in a blowout, with OSU trouncing Clemson 49-28.

Other than the Clemson win, a fair amount of Ohio State’s biggest games under Day have been close losses, with the CFP semifinals to Clemson in 2019 and Georgia in 2022, the 2023 loss to Michigan and the 2024 losses to Oregon and Michigan all coming to mind.

This goes to show that the Buckeyes have struggled historically under Day to win a big game when that said game is close, and I could see the same thing happening at the Rose Bowl.

Even though Ohio State has the capability to win by two or more scores, Oregon is simply too good to get steamrolled, and they have certain advantages over the Buckeyes that could put the game in their favor.

The first thing I am looking at how the Buckeyes' defense will fare on the perimeter, an area where Oregon was dominant in during their last outing. If Oregon can once again find Tez Johnson, Evan Stewart and others in open space, they could be in line for a few explosive scores, making this a shootout that Ohio State probably doesn't want to be in.

The Buckeyes can prevent that from happening by getting pressure on Dillon Gabriel this time around and controlling the time of possession with their run game, but I have my doubts that the Buckeyes' pass rush and rushing attack can put together a second straight elite performance after dominating in those aspects against Tennessee.

I could see Ohio State's offensive line taking a bit of a step back against the Ducks, which could allow Jordan Burch and Co. to control the line of scrimmage and give the ball back to Gabriel against what could be a tired OSU defense. This could lead to some explosive plays by Oregon's wide receivers, which could act as a pretty big body blow to the Buckeyes' chances.

I think Ohio State can go toe-to-toe with Oregon in a shootout — they certainly have the pieces on offense to do so — but I simply do not know if the Buckeyes can execute in the clutch when they need to down the stretch, which will almost certainly be the difference in the game.

Oregon and Dan Lanning have shown that they are capable of doing just that, while Day and the Buckeyes really have not both this year and in years' past. Because of this, I give the Ducks the advantage in the Rose Bowl, and I see them advancing with another last-second victory over Ohio State.

Ohio State 27, Oregon 30

Bobby Gorbett: Bucks Get Revenge Over Ducks

Moments after Ohio State's 1-point loss to Oregon on Oct. 12, I felt like the better team did not come on top. It's been two months since that first game and while Oregon has won the Big Ten championship and Ohio State lost to Michigan, I still feel like the Buckeyes are the better team.

The Buckeyes had some quality performances against Indiana and Penn State throughout the regular season, but their 42-17 win over Tennessee was the first time this team seemed to come close to playing at their highest level.

It's pretty simple for the Buckeyes in my opinion; if they continue to play at the level they played against Tennessee they won't just beat the Ducks they'll win the national championship.

Plenty went wrong for both teams in that first regular season matchup but what was certain was that both passing offenses were hard to stop. Despite all of the improvements both teams have made since that first game it's hard for me to envision either passing offense slowing down much in the Rose Bowl.

The reason to be optimistic for the Buckeyes lies in the fact that the Ducks connected on four passing

plays of 30 yards or more. Unless senior cornerback Denzel Burke has a similarly disastrous performance, I think the Buckeyes will be much better at preventing the big plays. The first Oregon game served as a catalyst for some drastic improvements for the Buckeyes defense. After giving up nearly 500 yards against Oregon, the Buckeyes have responded by not allowing 20 points in a single game since. On Wednesday, the Buckeyes will find out if those improvements are real or a product of them taking on some mediocre offenses.

With a Heisman finalist at quarterback in Dillon Gabriel and plenty of talented receivers around him, I think the Ducks will have their success moving the football, but the Buckeyes' improvements will be enough to give the offense a chance to win the game.

Unlike the Oct. 12 game, Oregon will have star defensive end Jordan Burch ready to go, but I still don't expect the Ducks to contain the Buckeyes' offense. Behind 311 passing yards from quarterback Will Howard, Ohio State scored six touchdowns with relative ease against Tennessee. Although the Buckeyes' offense might not be quite as successful against Oregon, I see no reason why the unit can't have the type of efficient performance needed to win the game.

It won't be easy for the Buckeyes to take down the undefeated Ducks, but I think Howard and the offense produce enough to deliver Ohio State its biggest win of the season to this point. **Ohio State 35, Oregon 28**

Greg Wilson: Buckeyes Give Ducks First Loss, Move On To Cotton Bowl

This game is a little different than most others we have to predict. We have seen these two teams play each other this season, so we have something to go off of. Granted, that was over two months ago, and there's no doubt that both teams have changed drastically over the course of the year since then.

But what I saw in the first game was Ohio State making mistakes that it doesn't usually make, Jeremiah Smith with a late offensive pass interference, Will Howard sliding barely too late, Quinshon Judkins getting the ball stripped from him and a kickoff that went directly off Caleb Downs for Oregon to recover.

Still with all of that going wrong, the Buckeyes lost by one point in Autzen Stadium, with a very good chance to win the game. Some are saying that Oregon could have scored more, but leaving points on the field against the best defense in the country is just something that is going to happen. Mistakes are too, but those seem easier to correct since OSU's defense is still just as good as it was then, and I think will be able to handle Dillon Gabriel better than it did the first time around.

I don't think the Buckeyes playing with a chip on their shoulder was limited to the first round game against Tennessee. I expect to see the exact same energy from them going into this game as well, trying to get the momentum on their side early on. But certainly Dan Lanning will have the Ducks ready to play as well. I'm sure that locker room has heard all about how they are undefeated, already beat the Buckeyes, but are still the underdogs.

The Buckeyes "leave no doubt" motto is going to be important in this one. They don't want another situation like the last when calls can be the deciding factor. I think they are going to go up early, and while Oregon will no doubt keep the game competitive the entire time, they will be able to keep that lead and move onto the Cotton Bowl. **Ohio State 34, Oregon 24**