Predictions: New-Look Scarlet Knights No Match For Ohio State

Rutgers comes into Saturday's home matchup against Ohio State with a 6-2 record, the program's best since 2014, but it doesn't change the calculus for what should be a comfortable win for the Buckeyes.

Here are Buckeye Sports Bulletin's predictions for the game, set to kick off at noon on CBS. Check BuckeyeSports.com every Friday for the latest predictions heading into each contest.

Patrick Engels: Buckeyes Handle Scrappy Scarlet Knights

Unlike previous years, Ohio State actually has a challenge on their hands at Rutgers' SHI Stadium, with the Greg Schiano-led Scarlet Knights coming into this matchup with an impressive 6-2 record, their best since 2014. This season, Rutgers can present Ohio State with some challenges on both sides of the field. The Scarlet Knights have a top-five passing defense in the nation, and that may come as a particular challenge to the Buckeyes considering the poor play of Kyle McCord these past few weeks.

They also have a pretty solid rushing attack that is led by tailback Kyle Monangai, with quarterback Gavin Wimsatt also thriving with his legs. Perhaps even most important, Rutgers' special teams is one of the more innovative and effective in the conference, which can serve as a major advantage for the home team on Saturday.

But with all of this said, the newly-crowned No. 1-ranked Buckeyes should still steamroll ahead. The talent gap isn't as severe as it has been in the past, but there is still a sizable gap between the two team's rosters that should give Ohio State the major edge in this one. There's no better example of that than superstar Marvin Harrison Jr., who has completely dominated the opponent in his last four games this season. Having Harrison out there should provide Ohio State with the explosiveness they need in New Jersey, but the potential addition Emeka Egbuka should also be key in this one. Should he be able to go, Egbuka can help turn this Ohio State offense up a notch and allow McCord and his unit to generate some big plays against a stingy Rutgers' defense.

The clear advantage for the Buckeyes, however, lies within the defense. Rutgers' passing offense is among the worst in the conference, and that should allow Ohio State's secondary to continue flashing their dominance throughout the game. I also expect the defensive line and linebackers to hold their own in the run game against an inferior and less talented line, giving Ohio State the clear edge in almost every position group.

This one won't be easy, but if the Buckeyes can play a clean game and be disciplined enough to not fall for Schiano's special-teams tricks, I see the Buckeyes pulling away from this one after halftime to come away with another impressive road victory. **Ohio State 27, Rutgers 10**

Braden Moles: Rutgers Improving, But Won't Be Close

It's an undeniable fact that Rutgers' defense – even if it has not been thoroughly tested – has been among the best in the country this season. But it's also undeniable that the offense – particularly when it comes to passing the ball – has been among the worst in the nation.

It may seem simple, but that's almost entirely what this matchup comes down to for me. Rutgers is incapable of passing the ball, and while the rushing attack has posted a positive 178.8 yards per game, Ohio State has been similarly strong in stopping it, allowing only 99.8 yards per contest. If the Scarlet Knights are unable to move the ball, this one may not last much past halftime.

That being said, Ohio State's offense has been prone to slow starts throughout this season, and against a tough defense – at least on paper – it could be more of the same. And a few mistakes for the Buckeyes could potentially turn the tides in this one, though I wouldn't expected Rutgers to capitalize even if Ohio State was unable to hold onto the ball for some reason. The Scarlet Knights are light years ahead of where they were just a few seasons ago, but they still are not on an even playing field with the Buckeyes. **Ohio State 35, Rutgers 7**

Greg Wilson: Buckeyes Take Care Of Business

The Buckeyes go into SHI Stadium as heavy favorites, and the game is going to go exactly as it should. As Ryan Day always says, any Big Ten game, especially on the road, is a dangerous one, and Rutgers is already bowl eligible, so they won't be taking it lightly. But Day has had this team ready to go on the road every single time they have traveled this season.

This game will be more of the same for the defense, who has been shutting down even top teams in the country. The Scarlet Knights offense is tied for 66th in the country with 28.1 points per game and doesn't pose much of a threat if the Buckeye stop troops are half as effective as they have been this year.

It might be a bit more of a challenge on the other side of the ball. Greg Schiano has been able to turn this defense into one that could cause concern for teams, but the schedule they have done it against hasn't necessarily been a tough one. When they played Michigan on Sept. 23, the Knights gave up 31 points and only scored one touchdown in Ann Arbor. This game will likely be a similar result.

Of course, the main goal is to come out with a win and be 9-0 when the Buckeyes return to Columbus. But another focus should be to get Kyle McCord right and to let him get going early on, something he has had trouble with recently, and to keep everyone healthy going forward. **Ohio State 31, Rutgers 6**