

Predictions: Ohio State Bounces Back With Big Win Over Nebraska



Coming off of a 32-31 loss to now-No. 1 Oregon, Ohio State is looking to respond with another Big Ten win as true freshman Dylan Raiola and Nebraska come into Columbus on Saturday for a conference matchup. The Cornhuskers have been featured in the AP top 25 at points this season, although they have had some tough losses that have since pulled them out, most notably a 56-7 loss to No. 13 Indiana in their most recent game.

Here's Buckeye Sports Bulletin's staff predictions for Nebraska at Ohio State, set to kick off at noon on Fox. Check BuckeyeSports.com every Friday for the latest staff predictions.

Patrick Engels: Buckeyes Get Back On Track

Ohio State has faced as much outside criticism as any team the last few weeks for its 1-point loss to Oregon on Oct. 12, mostly for its poor performance on defense, giving up a number of explosive touchdowns and 496 total yards of offense while totaling zero sacks and just two tackles for loss.

Although some of those criticisms are certainly warranted from the game against the Ducks, I don't think the sky is necessarily falling in Columbus, and I see the Buckeyes bouncing back in a big way against a much more inferior opponent in Nebraska.

Beyond the play of Jim Knowles' secondary and Larry Johnson's defensive line, perhaps the most interesting storyline from this game involves Huskers true freshman quarterback Dylan Raiola, who was once committed to the Buckeyes in 2022 before decommitting, flipping to Georgia, then flipping from Georgia to Nebraska.

Raiola has had an up-and-down first year with the Matt Rhule-led Cornhuskers, and he has mostly been "down" the last couple of weeks, throwing zero touchdowns and four interceptions in the past two games against Rutgers and Indiana. With Raiola entering an intimidating Ohio Stadium environment that will have over 100,000 people rooting against him, I could see the young freshman struggling to throw the ball efficiently, which could allow the Buckeyes to take advantage of some costly mists throws throughout the game.

I'm looking for Ohio State's secondary to bounce back and have at least one interception on the day, while I could see the pass rush getting more pressure and forcing some mists throws or fumbles, too. It

will be interesting to see if the Buckeyes blitz more often from the secondary, but I'd still keep an eye out on Jack Sawyer off the edge.

The Buckeyes should also have a significant edge on the offensive side of the ball against a Nebraska defense that got exposed against Indiana, giving up 56 points and 495 total yards in the loss. While Nebraska's defense should be a lot more motivated this time around, Ohio State's Chip Kelly and Will Howard-led offense is still a big step up in competition to Indiana's unit, which could make for a big day for the Buckeyes on that side of the ball.

Nebraska gave up 215 yards on the ground to Indiana last week, so I'm expecting TreVeyon Henderson and Quinshon Judkins to run all over the Cornhuskers on Saturday, with Judkins having a major bounce back game with multiple touchdowns following his minor hand procedure and fumble against the Ducks. Nebraska's passing defense also looked shaky against the Hoosiers, so I expect Howard and his talented pass catchers to have no problems moving it down the field, especially after they showed they can do it at an efficient rate against Oregon.

I'm picking the Buckeyes to roll big in this one, putting the game away with an explosive offensive score near halftime and then a dominant defensive performance in the second half. **Ohio State 35, Nebraska 10**

Bobby Gorbett: Buckeyes Bounce Back

It has felt like a long two weeks since Ohio State lost in heartbreaking fashion 32-31 to Oregon, but finally the Buckeyes will attempt to start their path to redemption against Nebraska on Saturday.

In a way, it feels like a perfect scenario for the Buckeyes, who are not just well-rested coming off of an open week but perhaps a little angrier than usual after sustaining their first loss. Additionally, Nebraska looked beyond vulnerable in a humiliating 56-7 loss to Indiana just a week ago. With home-field advantage on their side, it feels like the perfect scenario for the Buckeyes to win in convincing fashion.

Although I don't see the Buckeyes defeating the Cornhuskers by quite as much as Indiana did, I'd be surprised if true freshman quarterback Dylan Raiola, as talented as he may be, is able to keep it close.

After an ugly performance as a unit in the loss to Oregon, the Buckeyes defense subsequently faced a hefty portion of criticism. Against Nebraska I think the Buckeyes defense answers the bell and makes it very difficult for Raiola and the Nebraska offense to have much success at all moving the ball.

Even in the loss to Oregon, the Ohio State offense wasn't really shut down but at times struggled after some unforced errors. I think behind starting quarterback Will Howard, the Buckeyes get out of their own way to be as efficient as they've been all season. **Ohio State 38, Nebraska 10**

Cameron Moone: OSU Dominates Huskers

After a long awaited two weeks, No. 4 Ohio State will have the chance to spit out the bad taste from the Oregon loss with a dance against Nebraska in Columbus.

There will be many questions, albeit valid, surrounding the Buckeye team as a whole. The Buckeyes have no Josh Simmons for the first full game of the year, possibly no Lathan Ransom and apprehension about what this defensive unit can do against a competent offense.

One of the things going for Ohio State against the Cornhuskers is the inexperience of freshman quarterback Dylan Raiola. The son of former NFL offensive lineman Dominic Raiola, the once highly-touted recruit has had an up-and-down season, to say the least. After a great start to the season, throwing five touchdowns to just one interception through the first three games, Raiola has looked more pedestrian as the season has rolled on.

A zero touchdown, three interception day against Indiana last week was Raiola's worst game to date in college, and he'll need to have a stellar day against Ohio State if he hopes to become the first freshman gunslinger to defeat the Buckeyes since Matt Barkley of USC did in 2009.

Ohio State's offense, which really was not the issue against Oregon, should likely put together another great day at the office, facing a Cornhusker defense fresh off of surrendering 56 points and 495 total yards to Indiana.

Will Howard and company will need to get back on schedule in the run game and a stout Nebraska run defense unit that gives up just 102 yards a contest will prove as a good litmus test to what this offense can do without Josh Simmons.

Even with some already solidified absences and potential missing holes in Ohio State's team, the Buckeyes experience should reign supreme against the Cornhuskers come Saturday. **Ohio State 42, Nebraska 14**

Greg Wilson: Buckeyes Give Raiola Trouble

Ohio State came out of the loss to Oregon with zero sacks, a surprise given the talent it has on the defensive line with four probable NFL prospects starting. There wasn't much pressure put on the quarterback, despite the success the Buckeyes had when they did successfully get into the backfield and force Dillon Gabriel to get rid of the ball.

With two weeks to figure out why that was an issue in Eugene, and Ryan Day spending most of his time with the defense over the off week, I believe the defensive unit is going to try to prove itself and its ability to get pressure in the backfield.

There is no better time to do that than against a true freshman quarterback in Raiola. He still has yet to see a defense like Ohio State's can be when it is playing at its best, and with two weeks to prepare for the Cornhuskers, the defense should be firing on all cylinders.

Raiola has already been sacked 14 times this season in seven games, and hasn't been faced with the task of going against Jack Sawyer, JT Tuimoloau, Ty Hamilton and Tyleik Williams. The front four's goal is going to be to remind the college football world why it was regarded so highly going into the season, and if the Buckeyes send more at Raiola, they will have a lot of success.

The offense will continue to excel in the game as well, and it seems like predicting a Jeremiah Smith touchdown is a safe bet. **Ohio State 42, Nebraska 10**