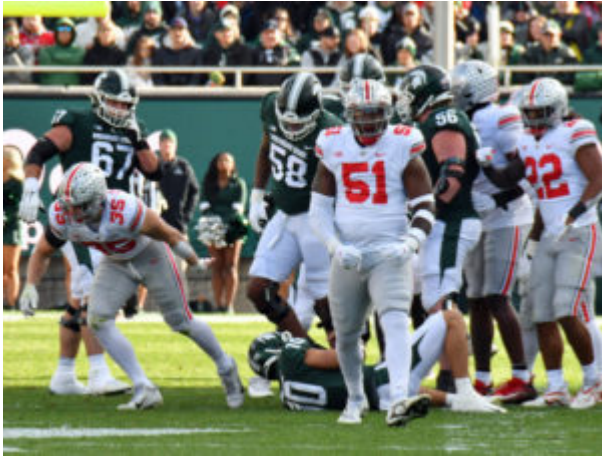


Predictions: Ohio State Does Not Hold Back Against Michigan State



Ohio State will return home for the first time in several weeks, set to host Michigan State for a prime-time matchup at 7:30 p.m. at Ohio Stadium, with the Buckeye taking the field in alternate grey uniforms.

The Spartans have struggled this season under interim head coach Harlon Barnett, and this stands to be relatively worry-free game on the Buckeyes' schedule as the season finale at Michigan approaches. Check BuckeyeSports.com every Friday for the latest staff predictions heading into a given game for Ohio State.

Patrick Engels: Buckeyes Throttle Michigan State In Primetime

After a difficult three-game stretch of games against Big Ten teams who are all likely going bowling this season, Ohio State should get a much-needed cakewalk on Saturday night when they go up against a depleted Michigan State team. The Spartans have obviously gone through a ton of turmoil all season with the firing of head coach Mel Tucker and elevation of Barnett, and this instability has translated to the field, with the team walking into Ohio Stadium with a measly 1-5 record, good for dead last in the Big Ten East.

Michigan State presents an almost perfect matchup for the Buckeyes because their struggles especially lie on the offensive side of the ball. Through nine games, the Spartans have mustered up just 18.2 points and 319.1 yards per game, good for last and ninth in the conference, respectively. This should obviously bode well for a Buckeyes defense who has been among the best in the nation all season against both the pass and run. If the Buckeyes can hold Penn State to just 49 rushing yards and 1-for-16 on third down, just think of what they might do to a much, much worse Spartans offense.

Ohio State has not nearly been as strong on the offensive side, and those struggles seem to be getting more common as the season progresses. Luckily for quarterback Kyle McCord and the Buckeyes, they should be able to move the ball with ease against a subpar Spartans defense. Michigan State has some solid payers in the secondary, headlined by ballhawks Jaden Mangham and Angelo Grose, but that still has not made a difference in the stat sheets, with the Spartans giving up 26.6 points and 222.3 passing yards per game, both of which fall at the bottom half of the conference. This could be a great

opportunity for McCord and the offense to get back on track and put forth their best offensive showing of the season.

With many of their key pieces, such as TreVeyon Henderson and Emeka Egbuka, now healthy enough to produce, I expect the Buckeyes' offense to be able to score at will under the lights and show the rest of the conference, especially Michigan, that they are capable of being explosive. I have the Buckeyes running away with this one by halftime and cruising to their biggest win of the season. **Ohio State 52, Michigan State 3**

Braden Moles: Can Ohio State Stop Winning Ugly?

Ohio State is up to a 9-0 record this season with three games remaining, but just one or two of those games have felt comfortable for the Buckeyes from beginning to end. With the College Football Playoff rankings now in full swing, winning with style takes on an increased emphasis, and it's something the Buckeyes have done rarely this season.

But this should be a great opportunity against a struggling Michigan State team that doesn't seem to do much of anything all that well, other than occasionally forcing turnovers, though that has gotten the better of McCord at points this season.

Ohio State has dominated recent contests against the Spartans by a combined 105-27 over the past two seasons. It would stand to reason that the Buckeyes can do it again against arguably the worst team Michigan State has put in the field in quite some time, but until I see Ohio State come out and dominate a team - that requires both sides of the ball to play well, which the offense has largely struggled to do on a consistent basis - I'm not going to predict a big victory for the Buckeyes.

That being said, there's still no way that I'm not predicting a victory for the Buckeyes. **Ohio State 27, Michigan State 7**

Greg Wilson: Buckeyes Beat Down Struggling Spartans

Ohio State is returning to Columbus for their first game in the Shoe since beating Penn State 20-12. They have had two tough games on the road against two decent Big Ten opponents, but came out with a 14-point, and 19-point win.

McCord has had a few struggles of his own down the stretch, but ones that seemingly can be fixed, and a game against the 72nd team in the country in scoring defense is the perfect time to figure those things out. With Henderson and Egbuka back at 100 percent, and the always reliable Marvin Harrison Jr. on the field, the Buckeyes should get out to an early lead and put the game out of reach for the Spartans early on. Harrison lost his 100-yard-plus streak last week, but he will get back to that number again with no issues in this game.

The Spartans are 111th in the nation in total offense, only gaining 319.1 yards per game, so the Buckeyes defense shouldn't have any issues. They have only given up 10.7 points per game, and this is one of the worst offenses they will see this year, so there won't be a lot of points on the board for Michigan State. **Ohio State 42, Michigan State 6**