

Predictions: Ohio State Has No Trouble With Hawkeyes



Ohio State comes back home for its Week 6 matchup against Big Ten opponent Iowa, the second conference game of the season. The Hawkeyes began the season in the AP top 25 and present what should be the toughest challenge the Buckeyes have seen yet this season.

Here are our staff predictions for Iowa at Ohio State, set to kick off at 3:30 p.m. on CBS. Check BuckeyeSports.com every Friday for the latest staff predictions.

Patrick Engels: No Trap Game Against Hawkeyes

There has been much talk this week about Ohio State's Week 6 game against Iowa being a potential trap game with the highly anticipated matchup against Oregon looming next week, but I just don't see that happening on Saturday.

Yes, Iowa has a fantastic defense, led by one of the best defenders in the nation, linebacker Jay Higgins, but they have yet to see this season an offense that is as dynamic as Ohio State's. I don't think the Buckeyes will be able to score at will against Phil Parker's defense, but they still should have enough star power to put together some efficient touchdown drives. Ohio State has a major advantage in this matchup on the perimeter, where wideouts such as Jeremiah Smith and Emeka Egbuka can get open often against an Iowa secondary who is maybe not as strong as their defensive front.

The Buckeyes should also have an edge over the Hawkeyes with Chip Kelly calling plays, who has shown all season he can fool opposing defenses with some unique run schemes. I think that will continue again against the Hawkeyes, just maybe not as much as against Marshall or Western Michigan. I'd expect Quinshon Judkins to have another strong game after being somewhat quiet against Michigan State.

Where the major advantage lies in this defense is on the other side of the ball. Iowa's offense has shown year after year that they cannot move the ball down the field consistently, and although they have shown flashes of improvement with Cade McNamara under center this season, the same can be said for this 2024 squad.

Entering the contest Iowa ranks second-to-last in the Big Ten to only Michigan in passing offense at just 147.5 yards per game. Combine that with Ohio State's veteran-led secondary who is hungry to return to

being dominant all game after some sluggish starts against Marshall and Western Michigan, and that may be one of the biggest mismatches we see in the Big Ten all season.

I can't see Iowa getting more than 200 yards in the air at Ohio Stadium on Saturday, and I think the Buckeyes will show enough on their defensive line to stymie talented rusher Kaleb Johnson for his worst showing of the year on the ground. Ohio State needs to be ready to start fast this time around, but I don't see a trap game here. **Ohio State 34, Iowa 10**

Bobby Gorbett: Ohio State Easily Gets Past Iowa

Ohio State's schedule through four games has sort of eased the team into stiffer competition, with each passing game showcasing a more difficult opponent. The Buckeyes' game against Iowa seems no different. The Hawkeyes have started out 3-1 with what appears to be an improved offense, and their only loss came at home by one point to playoff contender Iowa State.

A fringe-top 25-opponent like Iowa seems like the perfect tune-up for next week's game at Oregon. In reality, I think the Hawkeyes actually represent a tune-up of sorts for the Buckeyes' November matchup against Michigan.

Obviously, Ohio State has several prominent and likely better opponents to worry about before facing Michigan, but the Hawkeyes should serve as a sort of barometer for whether or not the Buckeyes are ready for that type of matchup.

Both Iowa and Michigan have physical defenses led by All-Big Ten caliber defense tackles. In the case of Iowa those are Aaron Graves and Yahya Black. For Michigan those are Kenneth Grant and Mason Graham.

Both teams have a dynamic running back — or in Michigan's case, running backs — who fuel offensive productivity. For Iowa, it's Kaleb Johnson. Michigan's standout running backs are Donovan Edwards and Kalel Mullings.

The Wolverines and Hawkeyes both have very limited passing attacks. Iowa's quarterback, Cade McNamara, even used to be a Wolverine.

Michigan might be a slightly more talented team than Iowa, with likely future NFL draft picks like cornerback Will Johnson and tight end Colston Loveland, but the difference is closer than some fans might think.

It's too early for predictions for games played in November, but at least against Iowa, I think the Buckeyes will have a dominant defensive performance. The one slight vulnerability (if you even want to call it that) Ohio State has had at times this season has been its pass defense; through four games, Iowa has shown no ability to take advantage of that.

With that in mind, I think Ohio State stifles the Iowa offense and has enough offensive success to win convincingly. **Ohio State 31, Iowa 6**

Cameron Moone: Buckeyes Blow Out Iowa

No. 3 Ohio State's toughest test of the year is at last on tap.

The Buckeyes, who have rolled through every opponent with impressive ease, will tilt off against Iowa in what should be a battle between a generational offense in Ohio State and the Hawkeyes' perennially stout defense.

If the Buckeyes want to continue the success they've had all season long, they'll need to do something that they haven't done often in 2024: start fast. The one thing going for Ohio State against this defense is that the game is in Columbus, but Iowa has contributors at nearly position defensively. Fifth-year linebacker Jay Higgins will likely be the best at his position that Ohio State will face all season.

This game will likely come down to run game against run game, it just matters on who can win the chess match? First-year offensive coordinator Chip Kelly has revamped this Ohio State offense and has come up with some really unique and challenging play calls. If his play design is able to get Iowa defensive coordinator Phil Parker off-balance, Quinshon Judkins and TreVeyon Henderson should run wild.

For Iowa, they'll need to have another massive day from running back Kaleb Johnson, whose comments earlier in the week about wanting to beat Ohio State is about all of the bulletin board material one would need for a mid-season matchup like this. The Hawkeyes will also rely on former Michigan gunslinger Cade McNamara to play mistake free football.

The rivalry between Ohio State and Iowa feels very sporadic and will likely remain so in this new Big Ten landscape, so it's always hard to get a read on how these two teams will fare against one another. **Ohio State 45, Iowa 9**

Greg Wilson: Buckeyes Shine In Home Opener

The biggest thing everyone is talking about when it comes to this game against Iowa is the Hawkeyes defense. They always are very strong, and seem to have another strong unit this season. The same thing was the case when the Hawkeyes matched up against the Buckeyes in 2022, but that didn't seem to matter for C.J. Stroud and Co., who beat Iowa 54-10.

I don't think Will Howard is at Stroud's level of play by any means, but Ohio State has offensive weapons all over the field who can each do all kinds of things. With the offensive versatility they have this year, I believe it will cause some trouble for the Hawkeyes.

With one of the top run defenses in the country, it might be a relatively down game for Quinshon Judkins and TreVeyon Henderson, but needing to focus on the run game so much will open up other lanes for OSU, which Chip Kelly will know how to attack.

Kaleb Johnson will be the biggest test the Buckeyes defense has faced this season so far, but it doesn't seem like Cade McNamara has grown into a passer who can pick apart an opposing defense, so they might be able to focus a little more on stopping the run game, though the Iowa offense has been better so far than what it has been in years past.

It's going to be a ramp up in competition for Ohio State this weekend, but as ready as they have looked for every game so far, I believe this one will be another game that's mostly over by the time the fourth quarter begins. **Ohio State 28, Iowa 10**