

# Predictions: Ohio State Has No Trouble With Western Michigan



Following a blowout 52-6 win over Akron to start the season, Ohio State will look to keep it rolling Saturday night under the Ohio Stadium lights against another MAC team, Western Michigan, who is coming off a near-upset victory over Wisconsin last Friday.

Here are our staff predictions for Ohio State's primetime matchup against the Broncos, set for a 7:30 p.m. kickoff on Big Ten Network. Head to [BuckeyeSports.com](http://BuckeyeSports.com) every Friday for the latest staff predictions.

## **Patrick Engels: Buckeyes Much More Crisp In Blowout Win**

No. 2 Ohio State came out relatively flat against Akron to open the season last week before cruising to a 52-6 win, which was a little surprising considering how much build up there was leading up to the year for the Buckeyes. This slow start seemed to catch the attention of head coach Ryan Day, who said during his press conference on Tuesday that his team needs to get off to much faster starts in games moving forward this year.

I would imagine this has been a major point of emphasis in practice this week, which leads me to believe that Ohio State will get off on the right footing this time around against a scrappy Western Michigan team. With several new Buckeyes now having one home game under their belts, there should be much less nerves this time around, which I think will allow both sides of the ball to produce a much crisper and disciplined game.

I expect Ohio State's offense to flow a lot better in Will Howard's second start with the Buckeyes, lading his team on a deliberate early touchdown drive to take set the tone for the game. I am looking to see if the offensive line has made any adjustments this week, however, and if they did, expect Quinshon Judkins to have a breakout game and show his worth as one of the top transfers in the portal last season with his best performance of this young season. The Buckeyes' front five should look better this game with Donovan Jackson returning to the lineup.

I have no concerns about Ohio State's defense, who should show again that they are one of the top units, if not the top, unit in the country against a Western Michigan offense that is not necessarily explosive. The Broncos do have one of the better offensive lines in the MAC, led by Rimington Award watch list recipient and potential future NFL center Jacob Gideon, so it should be a challenge for the Buckeyes' rushmen to stop the run and get to quarterback Hayden Wolff. I think Ohio State's front four

will gradually assert their will and have a dominant outing, holding Wolff to under 200 yards passing and last year's MAC freshman of the year running back Jalen Buckley to under 70 yards rushing.

Ohio State's top portal acquisition last year, safety Caleb Downs, had a quiet debut last weekend, so I'll say he'll be the Buckeyes' top defensive performer against the Broncos and come away with an impact turnover that helps the team cruise to another "cupcake" win at home. **Ohio State 41, Western Michigan 3**

### **Bobby Gorbett: Ohio State Crushes Western Michigan**

Without a marquee matchup on the nonconference schedule, this is the stretch of the year where games can feel a little repetitive. Even if the Buckeyes play with their food in the first 20 minutes of the game as they did in Week 1, they will likely still take home a comfortable win. However, they seem motivated to improve upon their mediocre start against Akron and to dominate for 60 minutes.

I think the Buckeyes achieve their goals and look much better in the first half, but as any Mid-American Conference fan knows, there's a huge difference between Akron and Western Michigan. The Broncos put that on full display when they led Wisconsin in the fourth quarter at Camp Randall.

After a first-half outburst from Will Howard, Quinshon Judkins and Emeka Egbuka, the Buckeyes will get out to a 24-3 lead at halftime. In the second half, the Broncos show their mental and physical toughness, and get their running game going to keep things closer than some will expect. Still, it will be an improved effort for the Buckeyes and a step in the right direction to their year-end goals. **Ohio State 41, Western Michigan 10**

### **Greg Wilson: Newcomers Fully Mesh In Week 2**

While there may have been a bit of a speed bump in the first half against Akron on the way to a 52-6 victory, the offense was able to put together a dominant second half performance, which was expected from the beginning. Ryan Day believes that slow start could be due to the game having been the first time playing in Ohio Stadium for a lot of the transfers and freshmen.

Well, now they have that first game in Columbus under their belt and the rust is gone. The transfers and incoming freshmen who get time on the field this game have already played together now, and I think the offensive production this week will reflect that.

Western Michigan presents a different challenge than the Zips did in Week 1. The night before the Buckeyes handled Akron, the Broncos were taking Wisconsin down to the wire, holding a lead in the fourth quarter before the Badgers had 15 unanswered points. But Ohio State won't put themselves in the same position and will get out to a big lead quickly this time around. It might be tough to put up the same amount of points as they did the week before, but this will still be a tune up game for the Buckeyes.

Will Howard's connection with the talented group of pass catchers is only going to get better every week, and I'm predicting a touchdown for each of TreVeyon Henderson and Judkins, who will both be able to use their explosiveness to find their way into the endzone.

This defense has been searching the last two seasons for a shutout, but their opportunity was likely missed against Akron. However, it's never out of reach if they were able to put together a game like

they are capable of. **Ohio State 45, Western Michigan 6**