

Predictions: Ohio State Overcomes High-Powered Maryland Offense



Ohio State is looking to continue momentum from the program’s 17-14 win over Notre Dame two weeks ago, but it won’t be easy with the undefeated Maryland Terrapins coming to Ohio Stadium on Saturday.

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The Buckeyes and Terrapins are set for a noon kickoff on FOX. Here are our predictions for the game:

Patrick Engels: Terrapins A Tough Test, But Buckeyes Continue To Push Forward

Coming off a much-needed bye week, Ohio State will match up with one of the most — if not the most — high-powered offenses they will see this season in Maryland, led by star quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa. The veteran thrower, who is the Terrapins all-time leading passer and has tacked on another 1,469 passing yards through five games this season, has a unique ability to extend plays with his legs, something the Buckeyes have not seen much of this season. This will be a significant test for the Buckeye rushmen, most notably defensive ends Jack Sawyer and J.T. Tuimoloau, who have yet to make a large difference this season off the edge.

If Ohio State’s defensive line can contain Tagovailoa and keep him inside of the pocket for the majority of the game, the Buckeyes should be able to limit this high-flying offense to their lowest point total this season. This will be a tall task, but from what we’ve heard from Ryan Day, Jim Knowles and the players this week, it seems they are up for the challenge. At this point in the season, I also have full faith in Ohio State’s defensive backs to dominate the opposition, so I am expecting them to curb the production of top Terrapin receivers Jeshuan Jones, Tai Felton and others.

Maryland's offense may get all the headlines, but their defense is no slouch either. They've allowed just 13.2 points and 382.2 yards per game this season, and have shown they can take the ball away, forcing 12 turnovers. Luckily for Ohio State, however, it feels like the offense has finally begun to hit their stride. Coming off a legendary performance against Notre Dame, I expect the always-confident Kyle McCord to have another efficient game. He will also have a healthy Marvin Harrison Jr. to throw to now, who said he is good to go after twisting his ankle in the third quarter against Notre Dame.

With that all said, I think this will be a tough test for Ohio State, and I can see Maryland keeping it interesting until at least halftime. But, like it usually is, the Buckeyes are just too talented to drop this one, and having the extra week to prepare surely helps their chances. I have Ohio State pulling ahead in the third quarter due to some stellar drives from McCord and company en route to a fairly comfortable win. **Ohio State 38, Maryland 20**

Braden Moles: Defense Shuts Down Tagovailoa

Could the off week have come at a better time for Ohio State? It was a grueling win over Notre Dame a couple weeks back in South Bend, but despite the win, it also showed plenty of areas that the Buckeyes need to improve in if they want to return to the top of the Big Ten this season.

Perhaps I'm being overly optimistic, but I'd like to think that the off week afforded them some time to self-scout and see what needed to be fixed - short-yardage situations, general play on the offensive line and a lack of noticeable pass rush among them. But I think Ohio State could be looking to make another statement in this game to avoid a potential letup after the emotional win over the Fighting Irish.

Tagovailoa will probably be the best quarterback Ohio State faces in the regular season, and he certainly hurt the Buckeyes last year. But the Ohio State defense has been lights out thus far this year, and I have no reason to believe that a strong performance - specifically in the secondary - won't continue, especially if the pass rush can start to find a rhythm.

Maryland's defense has also been among the best in the Big Ten so far this season - admittedly against not great opponents - but I still don't think they have the manpower to contend with Ohio State in what has been a shootout in recent seasons, though I expect the defense to keep the Terrapins in check this time around. **Ohio State 37, Maryland 10**

Greg Wilson: Ohio State Proves It Is A Top Team

Maryland comes into this week barely missing the AP Top 25 and with a 5-0 record. Its offense has been tough for opponents to stop, and its defense hasn't allowed more than 20 points since its last matchup against the Buckeyes when they scored 43 points.

The Terrapins are a very good team, and very possibly deserve to be in the Top 25, but Ohio State is going to remind everyone the big difference between that and a team that is in the playoff conversation. With an off week, the Buckeyes are coming into this game as prepared and rested as they could be, and all of that attention has been on an undefeated conference opponent, not looking forward to a different game.

Tagovailoa presents a new challenge the Buckeyes haven't seen this year yet as a quarterback that can get out of the pocket and make save plays with his legs along with his big arm, but the defense has shown to this point that they are able to make adjustments on the fly.

The offense still has the explosiveness that the Buckeyes have had so much of under Ryan Day, and the Terrapins won't be able to keep them contained for an entire game. **Ohio State 31, Maryland 14**