

Predictions: Ohio State Rolls In Final Tune-Up Ahead Of Michigan



Ohio State will celebrate 21 players on Saturday that are participating in Senior Day, and the team is hoping to send them out on a strong note when Minnesota comes to Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes will host the Gophers in a 4 p.m. matchup on the Big Ten Network. Here are our predictions for how Ohio State will fare against Minnesota:

Patrick Engels: Buckeyes Cruise To Victory Again In Final Tune-Up For Michigan

Coming off its most dominant win of the season against Michigan State, Ohio State will be looking to keep the positive momentum going against an inferior 5-5 Minnesota team. Luckily for Ohio State, they should be able to win big again with an obvious talent gap at just about every single positional group.

The Buckeyes' advantage on Saturday afternoon obviously starts with their defense, who will be lining up against a Gophers offense that has managed just 22.5 points and 318.6 total yards per game, which ranks eighth and ninth in the Big Ten, respectively. Minnesota does have an interesting weapon on that side of the ball in wide receiver Daniel Jackson, who is third in the big ten with 681 receiving yards this year. But that is where the Gophers' explosiveness ends, with the rest of their pass catchers failing to eclipse 400 yards on the year.

If the vaunted Buckeyes' secondary can limit Jackson, they should have no problems putting forth an impressive performance similar to that of what they did against Michigan State. I can also see pass rushers J.T. Tuimoloau, Jack Sawyer and others getting to quarterback Athan Kaliakmanis on Saturday, as he has already been sacked 17 times on the year.

This could also be an opportunity for Ohio State's offense to turn in yet another strong performance leading up to the Michigan game. Minnesota also has the 10th-worst scoring defense and ninth-worst passing defense in the conference, so look for Kyle McCord, Marvin Harrison Jr. and others to have a field day in the air. If McCord can limit his mistakes again and be accurate, I see him once again turning in one of his more crisp performances of the year. This could also be an opportunity for Harrison to build his Heisman Trophy campaign, and Emeka Ebguka to get back into the rhythm of the offense.

I see this one going similarly to the Michigan State game, meaning the Buckeyes will create some early

separation and put the game out of reach by halftime — setting up a potential all-time matchup of the undefeateds in Ann Arbor, Mich. on Nov. 25. **Ohio State, 42 Minnesota 6**

Braden Moles: Ohio State Looking To Avoid Sleepwalking Ahead Of Michigan

Last year's penultimate regular-season game against Maryland was a little closer than anybody at Ohio State would have preferred, so the Buckeyes will be hoping that things look a little easier in this year's home finale, as well as the last game before Ohio State travels to Ann Arbor.

Minnesota does not exactly strike fear into the opposition's heart, with an up-and-down season that has included some head-scratching losses. The Gophers don't do anything particularly well on offense or defense, and based on last week's win over the hapless Michigan State, the Buckeyes should have no trouble dispatching Minnesota with ease.

But, this will still be an important one for the Buckeyes, who have one last chance to work out any potential kinks before facing Michigan next week. Ohio State certainly seems to have figured things on defense and continuing to improve on offense, so another step will need to be taken against Minnesota to be in tip-top shape against the Gophers. **Ohio State 45, Minnesota 7**

Greg Wilson: Gophers No Match For Buckeyes

Minnesota is coming into Columbus with five wins looking for a spot in a bowl game. Ohio State is coming into this game looking to just get into rivalry week healthy. Of course, Ryan Day and Co. aren't saying that because they have to take it week by week, but we all know what this game really is for them.

It will likely look the same as it did with Michigan State coming into Ohio Stadium the week before, just with a slightly better, and more maroon-and-gold-colored football team on the opposing bench against the Buckeyes. Kyle McCord and the offense will look to get off to a fast start and should have no issues doing so against the Golden Gophers defense that has given up 25.8 points per game, including giving up 49 last week to a not-very-good Purdue offense.

Minnesota's offense has been worse, scoring just 22.5 points per game which is 100th in the country. Even with injuries on the defensive end, the Buckeyes will still be able to hold it in check with no issues. Day showed that he's managing these November games differently, taking out many starters early in the second half against the Spartans with a 32-point lead. The points will come early for Ohio State, but they will slow down when it begins to play more conservatively with the lead. **Ohio State 31, Minnesota 7**