

Ryan Day Lauds History Of Ohio State-Penn State Matchup



Since Penn State joined the Big Ten in 1993, animosity has grown between Ohio State and the Nittany Lions.

The hate has only festered since the Buckeyes and Nittany Lions were forced to share a division, with both occupying the Leaders division from 2011-13 and the East division from 2014 to the present day. While Ohio State fans tend to dismiss Penn State as just another game, rather than a rivalry matchup, Buckeyes' head coach Ryan Day recognized the importance of their yearly meeting in terms of divisional title and College Football Playoff implications.

"When you look at the schedule year-in and year-out, you want to know where Penn State is on the schedule if you want to get to Indy," Day said. "When you look at the tradition and the games that have been played between Ohio State and Penn State, not only in the last decade but further back than that, they're some of the biggest games that we've had. When you think about some of the games, even in 2018, 2017 and 2016 on the road, there's been some huge games here.

"That's one of the reasons why you come to Ohio State, to play in games like this," he continued. "I think they recognize that. We talk about that in recruiting. And I think they have a feel for that, I've heard some guys talk about it this week."

The Buckeyes have largely dominated the Nittany Lions in recent seasons, winning nine of the last 10 meetings and are rolling along on a five-game winning streak against Penn State. However, the Nittany Lions have not made it easy on Ohio State.

In 2016, the Nittany Lions dashed Ohio State's playoff chances with a go-ahead touchdown on a blocked field goal return with 4:27 to play in regulation. Penn State would go on to win that game 24-21, but it marked the last time head coach James Franklin and Co. got the better of the Buckeyes. However, it's hard to say it's been all Ohio State since then, the Buckeyes needed a furious fourth-quarter comeback to down the Nittany Lions in 2017 — rallying from down 11 with less than five minutes to play. It took another comeback for the Buckeyes to triumph in 2018, as OSU needed a pair of touchdown passes from Dwayne Haskins to erase a 12-point deficit with less than seven minutes in regulation.

Ohio State turned in a pair of double-digit wins in 2019 and 2020, while the Nittany Lions gave the

Buckeyes all they could handle in 2021 — but OSU kicker Noah Ruggles put the game on ice with four field goals en route to a 33-24 win.

As the Buckeyes have played several classic games against the Nittany Lions across the last decade and beyond, Day emphasized that Penn State always provides challenges regardless of their record entering the game.

“No matter when you go into Penn State, it’s going to be a challenge,” Day said. “They do a great job with the atmosphere. There’s still a handful of guys that went in 2018, but not all of them. When we went in 2020, it was different, there was COVID. But we know, whether its a night game, afternoon game or a noon game, it’s going to be a challenge. Their crowd is going to be in it and they’ll play a factor.

“They’re a good team, you can see what they did last week,” he continued. “Really good coaches, really good players.”