

# Welcome To Week 11: Michigan State



Can Ohio State finally put everything together? After a series of closer-than-expected wins, the Buckeyes will have a chance for a defining performance against Michigan State, which will come to Ohio Stadium for Ohio State's lone night game of the season set for a 7:30 p.m. kickoff on NBC.

Check back every Monday at [BuckeyeSports.com](http://BuckeyeSports.com) for a brief preview of the Buckeyes' upcoming opponent, with stories and features throughout the week.

## **OPPONENT: Michigan State (3-6)**

Michigan State has hardly been able to focus on the on-the-field product this season given the situation with now-fired head coach Mel Tucker, who was let go by the university in late September following an investigation of him sexually harassing Brenda Tracy, a rape survivor and advocate against sexual assault, whom Tucker had invited to speak to the team.

It left a challenging situation for interim head coach Harlon Barnett - a longtime secondary coach for the Spartans - but he has tried to make the best of it, and is coming off the program's biggest performance since he took over, as Michigan State notched a 20-17 win over Nebraska on Saturday.

But Michigan State had lost the previous five games under Barnett for a reason, as these are not the Spartans that routinely battled with Ohio State through the late 1990s or mid-2010s. Michigan State has struggled on offense throughout the year and has been unable to determine a solid option at quarterback, with both Noah Kim and Katin Houser getting a shot under center, while freshman Sam Leavitt has also been brought into the mix in recent weeks.

The Spartans are also not particularly strong at the skill positions, with receivers struggling due to the carousel at quarterback and the rushing attack averaging just 3.3 yards per carry.

The defense has mostly led the way for the Spartans this season, allowing just 26.6 points and 350.9 yards per game, both ranking middle-of-the-pack nationally. But it has not helped against some of Michigan State's tougher competition on the schedule, as it allowed 41 points in a loss to Washington and was blanked 49-0 against Michigan on Oct. 21.

## **PLAYERS TO WATCH:**

- **RB Nate Carter:** Michigan State's offense has been mostly ineffective this season, but Carter leads the Spartans with 659 rushing yards and four carries, coming on 156 attempts for a 4.2 yards per carry average.
- **LB Cal Haladay:** Michigan's leading tackler at 65 stops this season, Haladay has five tackles for loss, a sack, an interception and two forced fumbles on the season, doing a little bit of everything for the Spartans' defense.
- **SAF Jaden Mangham:** He leads Michigan State with four interceptions this season and has added 39 tackles, a tackle for loss and three pass breakups.

**GAME INFO:** Ohio Stadium, 7:30 p.m., NBC

This will be the only night game at Ohio Stadium this season, though it will be the third in primetime on NBC, with the Buckeyes' previous wins over Notre Dame and Wisconsin late kickoffs on the network.

**SERIES HISTORY:** This will be the 52nd all-time meeting between Ohio State and Michigan State, with the Buckeyes holding a 36-15 lead in the series.

Ohio State has won each of the last seven contests against the Spartans, with the closest of those games a 17-16 win for the Buckeyes in East Lansing on Nov. 19, 2016. But in the six most recent games, Ohio State has won by an average of around 35 points.

Michigan State last won in Columbus in 2015, a 17-14 win over the Buckeyes that ended Ohio State's hopes of reaching the Big Ten Championship Game and the College Football Playoffs. For the Spartans' most recent win over the Buckeyes in East Lansing, however, one would have to go back to 1999, where Michigan State won 23-7.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time/Result</b>	<b>TV/Streaming</b>
Sept. 2	at Indiana	Bloomington, Ind.	W, 23-3	CBS
Sept. 9	Youngstown State	Columbus	W, 35-7	BTN
Sept. 16	Western Kentucky	Columbus	W, 63-10	FOX
Sept. 23	at Notre Dame	South Bend, Ind.	W, 17-14	NBC/Peacock
Oct. 7	Maryland	Columbus	W, 37-17	FOX
Oct. 14	at Purdue	West Lafayette, Ind.	W, 41-7	Peacock
Oct. 21	Penn State	Columbus	W, 20-12	FOX
Oct. 28	at Wisconsin	Madison, Wisc.	W, 24-10	NBC
Nov. 4	at Rutgers	Piscataway, N.J.	W, 35-16	CBS
Nov. 11	Michigan State	Columbus	W, 38-3	NBC/Peacock
Nov. 18	Minnesota	Columbus	W, 37-3	BTN
Nov. 25	at Michigan	Ann Arbor, Mich.	L, 30-24	FOX
Dec. 29	Cotton Bowl vs. Missouri	Arlington, Texas	L, 14-3	ESPN