

Welcome To Week 12: Michigan



It's all been leading to this.

After a long season of trials and tribulations – some self-inflicted, at least in Michigan's case – Ohio State and Michigan will meet on the field in The Game, set for a noon kickoff in Ann Arbor. Ohio State is looking for revenge after back-to-back losses, while Michigan is looking to win three straight over the Buckeyes for the first time since 1995-97.

Check back every Monday at BuckeyeSports.com for a brief preview of the Buckeyes' upcoming opponent, with stories and features throughout the week, and be sure to check out Buckeye Sports Bulletin's annual Michigan Memories issue, in the mail now and available online.

OPPONENT: Michigan (11-0)

Michigan has made it with few blights to this portion of the schedule, running roughshod over a poor non-conference schedule and taking care of business in the Big Ten to remain undefeated entering The Game. The Wolverines have done so behind one of the nation's best defenses, ranking first nationally in total defense (234.8 yards) and scoring defense (9.0 points) and among the national leaders in a bevy of additional categories.

The defense has been buoyed by a serviceable offense, averaging 38.3 points (11th) and 399.6 yards (53rd). Most of that production has come from the rushing duo of Blake Corum and Donovan Edwards, though quarterback J.J. McCarthy has been solid in his own right. But the Wolverines have shown their share of vulnerabilities in the last two weeks against Penn State and Maryland, undoubtedly the best competition through the first 11 games of the season.

The offense totaled just 287 yards (5.3 per play) against Penn State and 291 yards (4.3 per play) against Maryland, both the two lowest marks of the season for Michigan. And defensively, the Nittany Lions gained 238 yards and the Terrapins collected 262 yards, the latter the third-most given up by the Wolverines this season.

On the flip side of things, Ohio State – albeit against lesser competition in Michigan State and Minnesota – has seemingly found its stride over the last two weeks, with the most complete performances yet on both sides of the ball against the Spartans and Gophers.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

- **QB J.J. McCarthy** - It's been an up-and-down season for McCarthy, who has completed 73.8 percent of his passes for 2,335 yards and 18 touchdowns, though he has not thrown a touchdown pass in the last four games. But don't forget about what he was able to do at Ohio Stadium last year.
- **RB Blake Corum** - One player who did not take the field in a meaningful capacity against Ohio State last year was Corum, but he will be fully available for the Wolverines on Saturday. He has rushed for 888 yards and 20 touchdowns on 180 attempts this season.
- **LBs Junior Colson, Michael Barrett** - Colson and Barrett have been one of the best linebacking duos in the country this season, combining for 102 tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss, two sacks, a pass breakup and three forced fumbles.
- **DEs Jaylen Harrell, Josiah Stewart** - This pairing has been a menace off the edge for Michigan, combining for 49 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, 10 sacks and seven quarterback hurries.
- **SAF Mike Sainristil** - He has helped Michigan to the nation's second-best pass defense this season (behind only Ohio State), collecting two pass breakups and four interceptions, two of which he has returned for touchdowns.

GAME INFO: Michigan Stadium, 12 p.m., FOX

Ann Arbor will be the hottest location in college football on Saturday, with ESPN's College GameDay and FOX's Big Noon Kickoff both setting up shop on Michigan's campus.

The Buckeyes will play in their sixth noon game of the season, and Ohio State's fourth game on FOX. Always among the most-watched games in a given season, there's no reason this year's edition of The Game - with Ohio State at No. 2 in the AP Top 25 and Michigan at No. 3, with a top-three matchup also expected according to the College Football Playoff rankings - should not be a ratings juggernaut.

SERIES HISTORY: This will be the 119th all-time meeting between Ohio State and Michigan. Depending on who you ask, Michigan leads either 60-51-6 or 60-52-6, with the Buckeyes having vacated their 37-7 win in 2010.

After an unprecedented run from 2012-19, winning eight consecutive games against Michigan, Ohio State has suddenly lost back-to-back contests against the Wolverines. The last time Michigan won three straight was in 1995-97, when it won 31-23 in Ann Arbor in 1995, 13-9 in Columbus in 1996 and 20-14 in Ann Arbor in 1997.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day is the program's first coach to lose at least two games to Michigan, the last being John Cooper, who went 2-10-1 from 1988-00. Day is looking to avoid a third loss, an unfortunate accomplishment that has also been reached by Cooper; Woody Hayes (16-11-1, 1951-78); Wes Fesler (0-3-1, 1947-50); Francis Schmidt (4-3, 1934-40); Sam Willaman (2-3, 1929-32); John Wilce (4-7, 1913-28); and Albert Herrnstein (0-4, 1906-09).

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Result	TV/Streaming
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