

Welcome To Week 6: Iowa



OPPONENT: Iowa (3-1, 1-0 Big Ten)

Ohio State won its first Big Ten test on the road against Michigan State in Week 5 and comes back home a week later to play against Iowa, which is coming out of an off week.

The Hawkeyes are always known for their strong defense, and while it might not be as strong as it has been at times, it will still be a very tough test for the Buckeyes.

Iowa came into the season ranked in the top 25, but after a 20-19 loss to in-state rival Iowa State, it fell out of the rankings and hasn't been back in since, although they did receive some votes in the new poll that was released Sunday.

While the defense is still the strong side of the ball, the offense seems to be much improved from the past season with Cade McNamara still leading the charge and new offensive coordinator Tim Lester taking over for Brian Ferentz, the son of head coach Kirk Ferentz who was fired late in the 2023 season for not meeting goals that were set for him.

The Hawkeyes rushing attack is the focal point of the offense, and for good reason. They have one of the nation's leading rushers in Kaleb Johnson, who has run for 685 yards and nine touchdowns behind an offensive line that returned three starters.

"Once you get the run game going then everything changes," Lester said before the season. "Defenses have to change. Once they change, your explosiveness changes. But this whole offense is about - we're going to run the ball, and everything comes off of that."

"Overall, I try to be 50/50, but I've called 70 runs in a game, I've called 70 passes in a game, so it depends on who you're playing."

The Hawkeyes return eight starters on the defense, along with linebacker Jay Higgins, who led the team last season with 170 tackles. They have struggled some in the passing game defensively, allowing 210.8 yards per game through the air. But the run defense Iowa boasts has been dominant to this point in the season, allowing just 62.0 yards per game, which is fourth in the nation, so the 1-2 punch of Quinshon Judkins and TreVeyon Henderson will be tested.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

- LB Jay Higgins - Higgins leads the team with 34 tackles and has two interceptions and two passes broken up to go along with that. He returned to the Black and Gold after an All-American season, forgoing a chance at being taken early in the NFL draft.
- RB Kaleb Johnson - is on an early pace to break the Iowa program record for rushing yards in a season. He would have to pass Shonn Greene's 2008 season in which he ran for 1,850 yards.
- QB Cade McNamara - Whether McNamara will be able to limit mistakes against a strong OSU defense will be key in this game. He has two interceptions and three touchdown passes through four games with 588 passing yards (147.0 per game).
- CB Jermari Harris - One of two players on the Hawkeyes defense with two takeaways this season. Also has five passes broken up. Will he and the Iowa secondary be able to give Ohio State's receiver group a tough time?

SERIES HISTORY: This will be the 66th meeting between Ohio State and Iowa, with the Buckeyes holding a 47-15-3 advantage in the series. OSU won the last of the matchups on Oct. 22, 2022, but Iowa took the one before that when it beat the Scarlet and Gray 55-24 in a game in which J.T. Barrett threw four interceptions.

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Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Results	TV
Aug. 31	Akron	Columbus	W, 52-6	CBS
Sept. 7	Western Michigan	Columbus	W, 56-0	BTN
Sept. 14	Off	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept. 21	Marshall	Columbus	W, 49-14	FOX
Sept. 28	at Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.	W, 38-7	Peacock
Oct. 5	Iowa	Columbus	3:30 p.m.	CBS
Oct. 12	at Oregon	Eugene, Ore.	7:30 p.m.	NBC
Oct. 19	Off	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct. 26	Nebraska	Columbus	TBA	TBA
Nov. 2	at Penn State	State College, Pa.	TBA	TBA
Nov. 9	Purdue	Columbus	TBA	TBA
Nov. 16	at Northwestern	Chicago, Ill.	TBA	TBA
Nov. 23	Indiana	Columbus	TBA	TBA
Nov. 30	Michigan	Columbus	Noon	FOX