What To Watch: Tide Head North To Wisconsin, No. 6 Missouri, No. 23 Boston College Clash In Week 3

Ohio State is off — or as Ryan Day and his time like to say it, "improving" — this week with no game on the schedule, but that doesn't mean that there aren't other matchups that Buckeye fans can occupy themselves with this weekend.

While the Week 3 slate doesn't necessarily have many marquee matchups, there are still some intriguing games that are worth watching:

No. 20 Arizona at No. 14 Kansas State (8 p.m., FOX — Friday)

Arguably the best matchup of this weekend takes place between two Wildcats on Friday night, when No. 20 Arizona travels to No. 14 for its first Big 12 matchup since joining the conference this offseason.

Arizona is off to a strong 2-0 start after dismantling New Mexico 61-39 on Aug. 31 then sneaking past heavy underdog Northern Arizona 22-10 on Sept. 7, and those wins came in large part due to the explosive combination of quarterback Noah Fifta and wide receiver Tetairoa McMillan. Fifta threw for a whopping 422 passing yards and four touchdowns to one interception against New Mexico, and 304 of those went to McMillan, giving the junior wideout a school record for receiving yards in a single game.

Arizona's high-flying offense — which is coming off a bit of a disappointing performance against Northern Arizona — could continue to excel against a Kansas State defense that gave up 342 passing yards to Tulane in a narrow 34-27 win, which means the traditional Big 12 Wildcats will have to match that offensive efficiency at home. They have the capability of doing that, with the unit — led by quarterback Avery Johnson and star running back DJ Giddens — averaging 37.5 points and 422.5 yards across their first two games. Giddens totaled 124 and 114 rushing yards in his first two games. **BSB Prediction: Kansas State 31, Arizona 28**

No. 4 Alabama at Wisconsin (12 p.m., FOX)

FOX's "Big Noon Kickoff" gives us a very unique matchup Saturday afternoon when SEC titan No. 4 Alabama travels nearly 900 miles straight north to Madison Wisc., to take on Luke Fickell and the

Badgers in what is just the second matchup between the two schools.

The Crimson Tide have yet to play a true road game against a school north of the Mason-Dixon Line since Sept. 10 2011, when then No-3 Alabama went up to Happy Valley and defeated then-No. 23 Penn State 27-11 behind 163 passing yards and a touchdown from AJ McCarron and 111 rushing yards and two touchdowns from Trent Richardson. More than 14 years later, the Tide return north with a much-different identity led by dual-threat quarterback Jalen Milroe and first-year head coach Kalen DeBoer.

Milroe has had a strong start to his second year as Alabama's starter, completing 23 of his first 35 passes (65.7 percent) for 394 yards and five touchdowns to zero interceptions, while also adding another 127 yards and four scores on the ground on 22 carries. Milroe's job is made easier with several NFL-caliber weapons to throw to, including true freshman Ryan Williams, who has been close to matching Jeremiah Smith with 207 receiving yards and three scores in his first two collegiate games.

Wisconsin under Fickell does have a strong defense that could limit the Tide, as they have allowed just 14 and 13 points, respectively, to its first two opponents en route to a 2-0 start. That defensive effort could be further ignited by what should be a raucous crowd, but the Tide certainly have the edge on the other side of the ball, where a unit full of former highly touted recruits will go against a Badgers' offense who often struggles to throw the ball down the field. Quarterback Tyler Van Dyke has averaged 203 passing yards so far this season while throwing just a single touchdown on his first 63 attempts.
BSB Prediction: Alabama 38, Wisconsin 10

No. 24 Boston College At No. 6 Missouri (12:45, SEC Network)

This matchup between ranked opponents has flown a bit under the radar, but it still provides much intrigue considering both of these programs are looking to put their names into College Football Playoff consideration for the first time.

Missouri — an opponent Ohio State fans know well — is best positioned for a CFP run, as they reclaim a good portion of their impact players from last year's talented squad who handedly defeated the Buckeyes in the Cotton Bowl last December. That is especially the case on offense, who are once again led by veteran quarterback Brady Cook and Biletnikoff Award watch list recipient Luther Burden II.

Both Cook, who is also on several preseason watch lists (Maxwell, Davey O'Brien, Johnny Unitas Golden Arm, etc.) and Burden have both gotten off to slow starts this season, with Cook throwing just one touchdown in 67 attempts and Burden totaling 21 receiving yards on two catches, but they could be poised for a breakout against a much more serious opponent in the Golden Eagles.

Boston College — now led by Bill O'Brien, another name Ohio State fans should be familiar with — has surprised many this season following an upset victory over then-No. 10 Florida State followed by a 56-0 drubbing of Duquesne in Week 2. The strong start has been attributed to a physical brand of football installed under O'Brien's leadership, beginning with their running game, who has averaged 282.5 yards in their first two games, a mark that is eighth in the NCAA.

The Golden Eagles' rushing game should face a stiff test against a formidable Tigers defense that has yet to allow a point in its first two games while also allowing just 86.0 rushing yards per game, and 254 yards overall. **BSB Prediction: Missouri 24, Boston College 1**3

No. 9 Oregon at Oregon State (3:30 p.m., FOX)

An old rivalry is restored Saturday afternoon when No. 4 Oregon travels to Oregon State for the two teams' first matchup since the Ducks joined the Big Ten.

Oregon will be looking for a major bounce back against their rivals after sleepwalking through their first two games against Idaho and Boise State, a sluggish start that dropped them from No. 3 to No. 9 in the AP top 25 rankings. Despite these struggles the Ducks have still gotten excellent production out of sixth-year transfer quarterback Dillon Gabriel, who has lived up to the hype, completing 59 of his 70 pass attempts (84.3 percent) for 623 yards, four touchdowns and zero interceptions.

Gabriel has been one of the lone bright spots for Oregon so far this season, and they will need more team-wide production against an Oregon State team who has impressed some at the start of this season. The Beavers, led by first-year head coach Trent Bray, are 2-0 on the season after coming away with a 21-0 shutout win over San Diego State last Saturday. This start has mostly been driven by its defense, who has given up 245.0 total yards per game this year, including just 77.0 on the ground. **BSB Prediction: Oregon 31, Oregon State 17**

Other Games To Watch:

- West Virginia at Pitt (3:30 p.m., ESPN2)
- No. 18 Notre Dame at Purdue (3:30 p.m., CBS)
- No. 16 LSU at South Carolina (noon, ABC)
- No. 1 Georgia at Kentucky (7:30, ABC)
- Arkansas State at No. 17 Michigan (12 p.m., BTN)