

What We Learned From Ohio State's 45-24 Win Over Northwestern in the Big Ten Title Game



INDIANAPOLIS - Ohio State's 45-24 win over Northwestern wasn't always pretty, but the Buckeyes found a way to not only win the game, but put up some impressive numbers along the way.

The Wildcats made a third quarter push to cut the game to 24-21 after back-to-back scores, but the Buckeyes rattled off three more touchdown passes in the second half to push Ohio State over the top for a second straight Big Ten title.

Ohio State won't play for another month (more on that in a second) so without further delay, let's get to our five takeaways from the Big Ten Championship Game win.

1. Dwayne Haskins is a Heisman Finalist

This really doesn't need said, but Dwayne Haskins at the very least deserves an invite to New York City for the Heisman ceremony.

His 499 yards are the most in program history and the most in the eight-year history of the Big Ten Championship Game. He shredded a Northwestern defense that played almost exclusively zone coverage and even made plays with his feet, extending plays and completing throws well downfield.

He is the best pure quarterback in school history and he deserves to be honored as a Heisman finalist, if not the Heisman winner.

2. Ohio State is a Conference Champ, Not a National Champ

Like it or not, Ohio State does not deserve to be in the playoff. The Buckeye defense is not a national championship caliber defense and the inconsistencies that have plagued them all season came back to bite them at times against Northwestern.

The Buckeyes gave up yet again another big run of 70+ yards and were out of position on multiple plays. Ohio State is also one of the most penalized teams in the nation. Neither of these traits are that of a national title contender.

Yes the Big Ten is one of the best conferences in the country, but a 29-point loss to 6-6 Purdue is worse than Oklahoma's three-point loss (which they avenged on Saturday in the Big XII title game) to Texas. If Notre Dame had even one loss, we might not even be having this discussion and making plans for Dallas or Miami instead of Pasadena. That said, the Rose Bowl is the best consolation prize in sports and...

3. Ohio State *Should* Paste Washington

The Buckeyes are going to draw the Huskies in the Rose Bowl in a game for all intents and purposes should not be close.

Washington managed just three points on offense in the Pac 12 title game, with the only touchdown scored in the game coming on an interception return. The Huskies have some weapons on offense and a solid defense, but don't have nearly the skill players or depth Ohio State does.

Oh and by the way, Dwayne Haskins said he is playing in Ohio State's postseason game no matter what happens. That counts for a lot and he has at least one more big game in him.

4. Chase Young is a Future Top-5 Pick

The Ohio State defensive end proved tonight that he is capable of being the best player on the field every down if he gives consistent effort.

The only knock on Young has been his motor. However, if he brings it every play and every down, he can easily be the best player on the field every snap. He had three sacks and a forced fumble against Northwestern on Saturday night and he has another year of eligibility in Columbus.

Young will be a top-five pick in the 2020 draft assuming he doesn't suffer a major injury, so Ohio State fans should enjoy him for his final season and bowl game before he is off to the NFL.

5. Hire Brian Hartline Permanently

Ohio State's interim wide receivers coach should have his interim tag removed yesterday.

Brian Hartline is everything the Buckeyes should want in a receivers coach. He is a former Buckeye, an Ohio native, someone with NFL experience and took an Ohio State receiver group that had largely underperformed in recent years and made them arguably the best unit in the country.

Hartline clearly has a passion for this and as long as he can prove himself on the recruiting trail, he should be retained on Urban Meyer's or Ryan Day's staff, regardless of who is coaching Ohio State in 2019.

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