No. 1 Buckeyes Put Winning Streak On The Line at MSU

Contributed by Benton Vale
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Ohio State puts its 13-game winning streak and No. 1 ranking on the line this week at Michigan State. The 6-0 Buckeyes and the 3-3 Spartans are scheduled for a 3:30 p.m. (EDT) kickoff Saturday in Spartan Stadium. ABC will televise the game regionally. Jim Tressel's Buckeyes, who are coming off a 35-7 win over visiting Bowling Green last weekend, are 2-0 in the Big Ten Conference with wins at home against Penn State (28-6) and on the road at Iowa (38-17). The Buckeyes continue to hold down the No. 1 spot in the Associated Press, USA Today and Harris Interactive polls and own the nation's longest winning streak.

Ohio State leads the all-time series with Michigan State, 24-12, including an 11-5 mark in East Lansing. The Buckeyes have won the last four games between the schools, beginning in 2000. OSU coach Jim Tressel is 3-0 against MSU, including a 35-24 win last year in Columbus. The teams did not play in 2001 and 2002, Tressel's first two years at Ohio State.

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Quarterback Troy Smith is the all-time completion percentage leader in Ohio State history, connecting on 62.7 percent of his passes (318-507). He also ranks eighth in career passing yardage (4,438 yards) and ninth in career total offense (5,481) entering the game at Michigan State this week.

Receiver Ted Ginn Jr. has moved into ninth place on the all-time OSU receiving list with 109 receptions. Ginn also ranks 12th in career receiving yards with 1,621, for an average of 15.1 yards per reception.

The speedy Ginn has caught at least one pass in 25-consecutive games (beginning with Iowa in 2004) and has multiple catches in 23-consecutive games. His 10 receptions against Bowling Green last week is a career best, bettering his previous high of nine set last year at Michigan.

Ginn, who led the nation in punt returns as a freshman and kick returns last year, has returned six kicks for touchdowns - five punts and one kickoff. He needs three more scores on punt returns to break the NCAA record in that category.

Tailback Antonio Pittman has taken over the Ohio State scoring lead with 42 points on seven touchdowns. The hard-running junior has scored a touchdown in each of Ohio State's first six games, including a pair of scores in the 35-7 win over Bowling Green last Saturday. Pittman has at least one rushing touchdown in 11-consecutive games and has 14 touchdowns in that span.

Pittman also leads the Buckeyes in rushing with 628 yards on 109 carries, an average of 5.8 yards per attempt and 104.7 yards per game. He has topped the 100-yard mark four times this year and 12 times during his career. He currently ranks fourth in the Big Ten in average yards per game.

Michigan State won its first three games home games against Idaho and Eastern Michigan and on the road at Pittsburgh - but has since lost three games, falling to No. 12 Notre Dame, No. 6 Michigan and Illinois. The Spartans are 3-3 overall and 0-2 in the Big Ten and will travel to Northwestern next week after playing host to top-ranked Ohio State Saturday.

The Spartans are averaging 31.2 points and 413 yards per game. Quarterback Drew Stanton, who threw for 252 yards at Michigan last Saturday, is averaging 197.8 yards per game and has completed 101-of-163 passes for 1,187 yards and eight touchdowns. He has thrown six interceptions and has a 131.97 efficiency rating. Kerry Reed and Matt Trannon have combined for 51 receptions and six touchdowns. Reed has 26 catches for 334 yards and four touchdowns, while Trannon has 25 grabs for 274 yards and two scores. Javon Ringer is averaging 87.6 yards on the ground with one TD, while Stanton has run for four scores and is averaging 50.3 yards rushing.

Defensively, Michigan State is limiting opponents to an average of 25.7 points and 334.2 yards per game. The Spartansare allowing 209.8 yards passing and 124.3 yards rushing and have seven sacks on the year. The unit has recovered three fumbles and has five interceptions. Opponents are only 32 percent effective on third down, though are 8-of-11 on fourth down. Otis Wiley leads the team with 46 tackles while David Herron Jr. and Nehemiah Warrick have 36 and 35 tackles, respectively. Wiley paces the defense with five tackles for loss and Clifton Ryan has three sacks. Demond Williams has two interceptions.

The Buckeyes have been installed a –15 point road favorite with a total of 54 by most Las Vegas sportsbooks.

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