

## Buckeyes Bury Big Ten Title Hopes For Michigan, 26-20

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**ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP)** - Jim Tressel gave Ohio State fans exactly what he promised on the day he was hired, beating Michigan and making the Buckeyes faithful proud.

Jonathan Wells ran for 129 yards and three touchdowns as the Buckeyes built a 23-point halftime lead and held off the 11th-ranked Wolverines 26-20 on Saturday.

Ohio State (7-4, 5-3) prevented Michigan (8-3, 6-2) from sharing the Big Ten title and playing in the Fiesta, Sugar or Orange Bowl. The victory was Ohio State's first in Michigan Stadium since 1987 and third in the rivalry since its last win in Ann Arbor.

"They've been disrespecting us a lot," Wells said, "telling us this isn't a rivalry game anymore. Well, if it wasn't, it is now!"

The victory validated Tressel who pointed to this game on the day he was hired, when he said, "I can assure you that you'll be proud of our young people - in the classroom and in the community, and most especially, in 310 days in Ann Arbor, Mich."

Earle Bruce was the last Ohio State coach to win his first game against Michigan, in 1979, and he was also the last Buckeyes coach to win in Michigan Stadium, in 1987, his final game.

John Cooper was fired last year in part because of his 2-10-1 record against the Wolverines.

"As we all know, playing Michigan can be a career-stopping game," said Ohio State's Mike Doss, a Thorpe Award semifinalist, who made his eighth and ninth interceptions of the season.

"Ohio State coaches are always on the hot seat, but especially against Michigan. This is huge for coach and it's big for our program."

Michigan scored touchdowns with 10:02 and 2:26 left, but it couldn't do

enough to pull off the largest come-from-behind victory in program history.

Tressel was asked what the last 15 minutes of the game felt like.

"Like 310 days," he said.

Illinois won the outright Big Ten title and will represent the conference in the Bowl Championship Series at the Fiesta, Sugar or Orange Bowl.

The Wolverines might play in the Citrus Bowl for the third time in four years and the Buckeyes could play in the Outback Bowl.

Wells, who left the game with leg cramps midway through the third, rushed for 122 yards on 23 carries in the first half.

Craig Krenzler, in his first career start, was 11-of-18 for 118 yards and an interception. He replaced Steve Bellisari who was arrested for drunken driving just over a week ago. Bellisari was at the game in uniform, after a three-day suspension, but he didn't leave the sideline.

"I was surprisingly calm," said Krenzler, who grew up 42 miles away from The Big House in Sterling Heights.

Michigan's John Navarre was 21-of-47 for 206 yards with two touchdowns, a fumble and four interceptions. He has thrown 10 interceptions in the past five games.

"You can't turn the ball over five times and beat anybody, especially a good football team," Michigan coach Lloyd Carr said.

Marquise Walker caught 15 passes, which tied his own school record, for 160 yards and two touchdowns. He moved past Anthony Carter as the school's leading receiver with 171 career receptions.

Michigan teased its fans into thinking a remarkable comeback was possible on the opening possession of the second half.

Navarre threw a 21-yard TD to Walker, which made it 23-7, on the opening possession of the second half.

The Wolverines didn't do much on their next four possession, but Anthony

Jordan gave them life again by blocking Michigan's seventh punt of the season early in the fourth quarter.

Askew scored on a 2-yard run to cut Michigan's deficit to 10 at 23-13, but the 2-point conversion pass failed.

Doss' second interception, which he returned 36 yards to Michigan's 9, set up Mike Nugent's 33-yard field goal to pad Ohio State's lead to 26-13 with 5:58 left.

Navarre's 11-yard TD pass to Walker made it 26-20 with 2:26 left. Ohio State's Chris Vance recovered the onside kick. The Buckeyes were forced to punt, but on the final play, Navarre threw his fourth interception at midfield.

Navarre's first interception set up the Buckeyes' first score.

Derek Ross caught a tipped pass and returned it 35 yards to Michigan's 4. After Wells broke a tackle behind the line, he sprinted to the outside untouched for his 1-yard TD.

On a fourth-and-1 from Michigan's 46, Wells slithered through a hole and then ran untouched to put Ohio State ahead 14-0 early in the second quarter.

Navarre's second interception led to Wells' third TD. Darrion Scott deflected the pass at the line and Tim Anderson intercepted it at Michigan's 32.

Wells ran through a huge hole and through Cato June's arms to put the Buckeyes ahead 21-0 late with 4:34 left in the half.

Navarre fumbled at Michigan's 21 a few minutes later, but Krenzler made one of his only mistakes by throwing an interception to Todd Howard in the end zone.

Carr replaced Navarre with Jermaine Gonzales on the ensuing possession. On Gonzales' third play, he was looking to his right when the shotgun snapped sailed well over his head.

The redshirt freshman knocked the ball out of the end zone with his hand, which gave Ohio State a safety and its 23-0 halftime lead.