

Buckeyes Remain Perfect

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MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Instead of dancing on the Wisconsin Badgers' logo, the Ohio State Buckeyes gathered at midfield and knelt in prayer.

The fourth-ranked Buckeyes might have been thankful to pull out another close game on the road, edging Wisconsin 19-14 at Camp Randall Stadium on Saturday to keep alive their hopes of a national title.

The visiting team has won the last four games in this series, but the Buckeyes (8-0, 3-0 Big Ten) ended a recent trend in which the victorious players danced on the other team's logo.

Ohio State has just three formidable opponents left - Penn State, Minnesota and Michigan - and they all must go to Columbus. Since the Buckeyes don't play Iowa this season and don't have to play in a conference championship, they could have the inside track to a Fiesta Bowl berth.

"There have been some questions about the quality of our schedule," defensive tackle Tim Anderson said. "But this was certainly a quality win for us."

Freshman Maurice Clarett ran for 133 yards on 30 carries to lead the Buckeyes, who also escaped Cincinnati and Northwestern with close calls.

Clarett had a shoulder stinger on his final carry. But coach Jim Tressel said his running back - who is closing in on Robert Smith's school freshman rushing record - should be just fine for next week's game against Penn State.

The Badgers (5-3, 0-3), who lost for the eighth time in their last 10 conference home games, took a 14-13 lead into the fourth quarter, but Craig Krenzel threw a 3-yard TD pass to Ben Hartsock with 10 minutes left to put the Buckeyes back in front 19-14.

"I was catching that with every part of my body possible," Hartsock said. "It was like there was a baby in there."

Michael Jenkins caught five passes for 114 yards and a touchdown for Ohio

State. Krenzel completed 12 of 19 passes for 204 yards, and Chris Gamble made big plays on both sides of the ball.

Krenzel overthrew Ryan Hamby on the 2-point conversion after the TD pass to Hartsock, but the Badgers had to use a timeout because they had only 10 men on defense.

Wisconsin also burned a timeout on a first down on offense, and those two stoppages cost them. The Buckeyes took over with 4:29 left and ran the ball nine straight times to use up the clock.

Krenzel set up the winning score with a 45-yard pass to Jenkins on third-and-6 from his own 16. Jenkins, who caught a 47-yard touchdown pass in the first half, outleaped B.J. Tucker and Brett Bell for the ball.

"I just saw the ball in the air for a very long time," Tucker said. "By the time it came down, I swatted through it. I didn't think he was going to come down with it, but somehow he did."

That play was the backbreaker, Badgers coach Barry Alvarez said.

"They hadn't done much for a quarter and a half, and the ball was up in the air. We had two guys in position. No one made a play on the ball," Alvarez said.

The Badgers reached the Buckeyes 29 on the next series, but Gamble, a flanker, lined up at cornerback and intercepted Jim Sorgi's pass toward Jonathan Orr in the end zone.

"You see the way he can go after a football," Tressel said. "It doesn't matter if it was intended for him or if he was covering the guy. He can go up and catch the football. He is just outrunning athletes, and you wish you could play him all the time."

Sorgi replaced starter Brooks Bollinger, who got a concussion on his fourth sack midway through the second quarter. Sorgi put Wisconsin ahead 14-13 with a 42-yard touchdown strike to Orr just before halftime.

Both teams flashed their quick-strike capability in the first half. Jenkins caught a 47-yard touchdown pass from Krenzel when Tucker went for the

interception in man coverage and fell down.

The Badgers responded with their own three-play scoring drive later in the first quarter when Anthony Davis (25 carries for 125 yards) scored untouched on a 41-yard run to tie it at 7.

Two plays later, Krenzel hit Gamble on what would have been an 80-yard touchdown play, had Gamble not tripped at the Wisconsin 32. The Buckeyes settled for Mike Nugent's school-record 16th consecutive field goal, a chip shot from 27 yards, for a 10-7 lead.

Nugent's 25-yarder made it 13-7 after Ohio State safety Mike Doss recovered Bollinger's fumble at the Badgers 32. Doss had 14 tackles.

The Badgers, who fell to 0-9-1 against top-five teams under Alvarez, drove to the Buckeyes 28 before Bollinger was sacked on consecutive snaps. The last one, by Simon Fraser, put the Badgers out of field-goal range and ended Bollinger's afternoon.