

## Buckeyes Fall To No. 5 Michigan

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**ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP)** - John Navarre cradled the Big Ten trophy as he walked into the interview room with tears in his eyes and a championship hat on his head.

The coronation was complete.

Perhaps the most maligned quarterback in Michigan history will end his prolific career as a Big Ten champion.

Navarre made all the big plays in the biggest game of his life, throwing for 278 yards and two touchdowns Saturday to lead the fifth-ranked Wolverines to a 35-21 win that ended No. 4 Ohio State's hopes for a repeat national title.

"This is something we haven't had in a while. The Big Ten championship was our goal and the rest was gravy," Navarre said. "It's a dream come true."

The Wolverines (10-2, 7-1) snapped a two-game skid against their biggest rival and won the conference title outright for the first time since 1997.

They will play in the Rose Bowl unless they move up from ninth to second in the BCS standings and earn a berth in the national title game at the Sugar Bowl.

"We're excited about any opportunities we're presented with," Michigan coach Lloyd Carr said.

Ohio State's loss opens the door for Southern California and LSU, the two one-loss teams that trailed the second-place Buckeyes in the BCS standings.

"It's frustrating - to be that close to be back in the championship game," Buckeyes backup quarterback Scott McMullen said. "Losing to Michigan doesn't make it any easier."

Michigan used a balanced offense to hand the Buckeyes (10-2, 6-2) their second loss in 26 games. The Wolverines ran for 170 yards and threw for 278.

Perry ran through huge holes and Navarre had plenty of time to throw in the 100th edition in one of college football's greatest rivalries.

Braylon Edwards had seven catches for 130 yards and two scores for the Wolverines.

"They've got a great offense," Buckeyes quarterback Craig Krenzel said. "I think they're playing as well as any team in the

country."

Perry ran for 154 yards and two scores as Michigan's offensive line dominated Ohio State's stellar front seven, which led the nation by allowing 50.5 rushing yards per game.

Perry also had 55 yards receiving despite being helped off the field a couple of times after hard hits.

"There was no way I was coming out of the game," Perry said. "This is one of those games that's going to be remembered."

The victory was vindication for Navarre, who holds nearly all the passing records at Michigan but hadn't come up with the big wins until this season.

The target of boos for much of his career, Navarre received a loud ovation from the NCAA-record crowd of 112,118 when the seniors were honored before the game.

Then he delivered to cap a season featuring wins over Michigan's three biggest rivals: Ohio State, Michigan State and Notre Dame. He was mobbed as the students rushed the field after he took a knee on the final play.

"I felt I was established already," Navarre said. "But the reality was I was going to be defined by this game."

Navarre accomplished something the more heralded Tom Brady and Drew Henson couldn't by winning Michigan's 16th outright conference title.

The win came 34 years to the day that Michigan spoiled Ohio State's repeat bid for a national championship and started a 10-year battle between Bo Schembechler and Woody Hayes that elevated the intensity of the rivalry.

That was one of many times the Wolverines spoiled the Buckeyes' championship dreams, including in 1993, '95 and '96. But those wins came against John Cooper - who was 2-10-1 in the series before getting fired - and didn't give Michigan a Big Ten championship.

The Buckeyes hung tough, cutting a 28-7 lead to 28-21 early in the fourth quarter, but Michigan's defense held after Chris Gamble intercepted a pass from Navarre.

On the next drive, Navarre delivered a perfect 30-yard strike to Tyler Ecker on third down that set up Perry's 15-yard touchdown run with 7:55 remaining.

Krenzel was 20-for-33 for 221 yards and two scores. He was replaced briefly by McMullen after separating his left shoulder and struggled when he returned.

Santonio Holmes, who didn't start after being charged with disorderly conduct following a campus fight last weekend, caught two touchdown passes.

The Buckeyes, who have struggled offensively all year without suspended star tailback Maurice Clarett, managed only 54 yards rushing.

Perry's 30-yard run on Michigan's opening drive of the second half made it 28-7. Perry had the biggest rushing game against Ohio State all season, topping the 125 yards by Wisconsin's Booker Stanley in the Buckeyes' other loss.

Michigan took a 21-0 lead midway through the second quarter behind a sharp first half by Navarre.

He led an 18-play, 89-yard drive to open the scoring before serving as a decoy on the touchdown. With Navarre lined up wide, receiver Steve Breaston took the snap and ran an option for a 3-yard score.

Navarre then hit Edwards on touchdown passes from 64 and 23 yards to make it 21-0.

"We missed a tackle of two," Buckeyes coach Jim Tressel said. "When you miss a tackle on guys who can go, they go."

Krenzel's 8-yard pass to Holmes got the Buckeyes on the board late in the half. Michigan had outscored its opponents 150-0 in the first half at home this year before the score.