

Ohio State Upends Michigan by 16 points, 37-21

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COLUMBUS, Ohio - Troy Smith completed 13-of-23 passes for 241 yards and added 145 yards on 18 carries, while Ted Ginn Jr. tied the NCAA record with his fourth punt return for a touchdown in a season, an 82-yard jaunt in the third quarter that put Ohio State up 27-14, before it upset No. 7 Michigan, 37-21, Saturday in front of 105,456 fans, the second-largest crowd in Ohio Stadium history.

The win by Ohio State was its third in four years against Michigan under head coach Jim Tressel, who improved to 39-11 as the Buckeye skipper. He is 25-3 at Ohio Stadium and improved to 23-9 in Big Ten play, while improving to 6-1 against Top 10 teams. The win by the Buckeyes was just the second time since 1968 that they won by 16 or more points. The other was in 1994, when Ohio State defeated the Wolverines 22-6 in Columbus. The 37 points scored by the Buckeyes were the most since their 50-14 victory in 1968.

Smith threw for two touchdowns and ran for another as his 145 rushing were the second most by a Buckeye quarterback. The total was one yard shy of the school record set by Cornelius Greene with a 146-yard effort against Wisconsin in 1974. Smith finished with 386 yards of total offense, which ranks third all-time behind Art Schlichter's 412 yards against Florida State in 1981 and Joe Germaine's 388 yards at Penn State in 1997.

Smith got the scoring started early in the game, hitting Anthony Gonzalez for a 68-yard touchdown only 1 minute, 13 seconds into the game. The Buckeyes were facing third-and-12 from their own 32-yard line on its opening possession of the game when Smith avoided getting tackled from behind and hit Gonzalez for his first career touchdown to put the Buckeyes up 7-0.

Michigan equalized the score, 7-7, with 10:25 to play in the first quarter when

Chad Henne found Jason Avant for a 4-yard score in the back of the end zone. The Wolverines moved 87 yards in nine plays and 3:16. The Wolverines had good starting field position, taking benefit from a 21-yard punt by Kyle Turano to start at the OSU 43-yard line. Six plays later, Michael Hart crossed the goal line on a 1-yard run to give Michigan a 14-7 lead with 6:03 to play in the first quarter.

The Buckeyes tied the game, 14-14, on a 99-yard drive capped by a 2-yard keeper by Smith. Ohio State took the ball after a 59-yard punt by Adam Finley that was downed at the OSU 1-yard line. Fullback Branden Joe carried the ball three times for 17 yards to move the Buckeyes from the shadows of their own goal posts. Ginn followed with a 17-yard run and Lydell Ross carried three yards before the end of the first quarter. On the first play of the second quarter, facing third-and-four at the OSU 41-yard line, Smith found Santonio Holmes down the right sideline for a pickup of 34 yards to the UM 25-yard line. Smith carried twice for 19 yards before Joe added four yards and Smith's score.

After getting stopped on fourth-and-goal its possession before, Ohio State went to Nugent for his reliable leg when facing fourth-and-goal from the UM 4-yard line. Nugent connect for his 18th field goal of the year and the 66th of his career to give the Buckeyes a 17-14 lead with 2:16 to play in the first half. Ohio State began the possession at the UM 32-yard line after forcing the Wolverines to punt from their own end zone. Facing third-and-three, the Buckeyes moved the chains with a nine-yard completion to Gonzalez before a 15-yard run by Smith put the ball at the UM 1-yard line.

Nugent nailed his second field goal of the game as the first half expired, connecting from 42 yards to give Ohio State a 20-14 lead at intermission. At the half, the Buckeyes led 337-164 in total yardage including advantages of 232-111 passing and 105-53 yards rushing. Smith completed 11-of-18 first-half passes for 232 yards and had 11 carries for 75 yards. Ginn had four first-half receptions for 90 yards.

Ginn raced 82 yards to the end zone on his fourth punt return for a touchdown this season to give Ohio State at 27-14 lead with 9:56 to play in the third quarter. His fourth score by a punt return set the Big Ten record for punt returns for a touchdown in a season and tied the NCAA record. The 48-yard punt by Finley followed Michigan's second possession of the second half and the Buckeyes held the Wolverines to one first down and preventing them from advancing past their own 34-yard line.

On its next possession, Ohio State drove 97 yards in 10 plays to take a 34-14 lead with 1:53 to play in the third when Smith hit Holmes for a 12-yard touchdown strike. The biggest play of the drive was a 46-yard run by Smith on third-and-eight from the OSU 38-yard line that put the ball on the UM 18-yard line.

Michigan scored with 10:56 to play in the game, going 62 yards in four plays in only 1:04, as Henne found Braylon Edwards down the left sideline for a 38-yard touchdown reception to make the score 34-21. Nugent added his third field goal of the game from 48 yards with 7:15 to play in the game to put the Buckeyes on top by the final 37-21 margin.

Ginn finished with five receptions for 87 yards to go with 123 yards on four punt returns to finish with 210 all-purpose yards. The Buckeyes finished with 446 yards of total offense, including 205 yards on the ground, and limited Michigan to 71 yards rushing and 399 total yards.

Ohio State, at 7-4 overall and 4-4 in the Big Ten, will await a bowl invitation.