

Top-Ranked Buckeyes Come Alive for 37-7 Victory vs. Cincinnati

ohiostatebuckeyes.com

September 16, 2006

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Top-ranked Ohio State scored 24 points in the second half to blow open what had been a 13-7 lead at the half en route to a 37-7 win over visiting Cincinnati in front of 105,037 fans Saturday at Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes found their stride in the fourth quarter, scoring 17 points in the final stanza. Ohio State finished with 444 yards, getting 155 of 166 rushing yards from Antonio Pittman, who carried the ball 16 times and scored one touchdown. Heisman Trophy candidate Troy Smith completed 21-of-30 passes for 203 yards and two scores. He was joined by three other quarterbacks - Justin Zwick, Todd Boeckman and Rob Schoenhof - on the field in the victory. Anthony Gonzalez made five catches for 85 yards. Ted Ginn Jr., also a candidate for the Heisman Trophy, was on the receiving end of both of Smith's TD passes. He finished the game with five catches for 33 yards.

Ohio State's defense also had a big day, intercepting three Cincinnati passes, recording eight sacks for 59 yards and holding Bearcat rushers to -4 yards rushing. James Laurinaitis intercepted his second pass in as many games and finished with nine tackles and one sack. Anderson Russell and Malcolm Jenkins also had interceptions for the Silver Bullet defense.

Dustin Grutza completed 18-of-22 passes for 202 yards and the lone Cincinnati touchdown. He was picked twice. Nick Davila was 2-for-2 for 14 yards, while Bill Poland's lone pass was intercepted.

Ohio State scored first when Aaron Pettrey kicked a 47-yard field goal with 8:46 to play in the first quarter. After keeping Cincinnati to only one first down on the opening drive of the game, the Buckeyes took over on their own 42-yard line. They used nine plays to move the ball 28 yards in 3 minutes, 32 seconds before Pettrey delivered the

longest kick of his young career.

Cincinnati got the answer it was looking for, moving the ball 80 yards in just five plays for the go-ahead score with 6:36 remaining in the first. The Bearcats used three big plays on the drive, capped by a Grutza 22-yard pass to Jared Martin to make the score 7-3. Grutza set up the score with a 23-yard run and hit Derrick Stewart two plays earlier for a 28-yard pick up.

The Buckeyes put together another scoring drive and it again yielded a field goal. The drive began with back-to-back first-down runs by Pittman of 14 and 23 yards, putting the ball at the UC 30-yard line. Pittman got another yard and Smith ran for three yards, but it was as close to the end zone the Buckeyes would get before Pettrey delivered a 43-yard field goal, pulling within a 7-6 score with 9:17 to play in the second quarter.

The OSU defense did not allow Cincinnati to pick up a first down on its next possession. The Buckeyes took over at their own 20-yard line after a touchback and put together a nine-play, 80-yard scoring drive to retake the lead, 13-7 with 3:00 to play in the first half. Smith spread the ball around on the drive as six different players contributed on the drive that was capped by a 12-yard touchdown pass to Ginn. Rory Nicol had a 15-yard reception, while Stan White Jr. caught a 10-yard pass and Gonzalez hauled in passes of nine and 33 yards. Pittman had three carries for a total of 12 yards.

Ohio State outgained Cincinnati in total yards in the first half, 173 yards to 148. Smith completed 11-of-15 first-half passes for 117 yards and one touchdown, hitting Gonzalez three times for 58 yards. Ginn reeled in four first-half catches for 24 yards and a score. Pittman carried the ball eight times in the first half for 52 yards. Grutza completed 9-of-11 passes for 119 yards and a touchdown. The Bearcats only had 29 rushing yards in the opening half.

It remained a six-point game until Ohio State's second possession of the second half when Smith hooked up with Ginn for a 9-yard touchdown strike. After

Pettrey's point after, the Buckeyes had a 20-7 lead with 7:10 to play in the third. Smith handed the ball to Pittman the first four plays of the drive, netting 38 yards. Gonzalez had a 13-yard reception before Ginn's second TD of the game.

Pittman gave the Buckeyes a 27-7 lead with 9:57 remaining in the game when he ran 48 yards down the left sideline getting into the end zone thanks to a key block by Ginn. The Ohio State drive covered 85 yards, the longest scoring drive of the season.

On the next UC drive, the Buckeye defense intercepted its third pass of the game. This time it was Russell who out-leapt a UC receiver to corral the ball. Maurice Wells broke a couple of tackles and carried the ball nine yards for pay dirt. The touchdown was the second of his career and the first since the 2005 Northwestern game. It gave Ohio State a 34-7 lead with 7:45 to play in the game. Zwick engineered this scoring drive, finding Ray Small for a 36-yard completion and Brian Hartline for a 27-yard catch.

Ryan Pretorius gave Ohio State a 37-7 lead with a 52-yard field goal, the first of his career, with 1:14 to play in the game.

Cincinnati fell to 1-2 on the year and is 0-1 in the Big East.

Ohio State moved its winning streak to 10 with the victory over the Bearcats. It is the second-longest current streak in the nation.

Ohio State (3-0 overall) opens Big Ten play next Saturday against Penn State, the team it shared last year's Big Ten championship with. The game will kick off at 3:30 p.m. and will be televised by ABC Sports.