

Top-Ranked Buckeyes Blow By No. 13 Hawkeyes, 38-17

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IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) - The toughest part of Ohio State's schedule is behind the Buckeyes.

And Troy Smith and Co. handled it with ease.

Smith threw for 186 yards and four touchdowns and No. 1 Ohio State picked up its second road win over a ranked opponent by manhandling No. 13 Iowa 38-17 Saturday night.

The Buckeyes (5-0, 2-0 Big Ten) faced three ranked teams in September - Texas, Penn STATE and the Hawkeyes - and beat them all by at least 17 points.

"That's something we talked about, how brutal that September schedule is," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "We've played against some tough teams who brought all they could bring us."

Ohio State, which extended the nation's longest winning streak to 12 games, won't face another team currently ranked until their season finale against Michigan on Nov. 18.

Iowa (4-1, 1-1) fell to 0-10-1 against No. 1 teams and couldn't put up much of a fight in the most anticipated game at Kinnick Stadium in more than 20 years.

The Buckeyes were just the fifth top-ranked team to visit Kinnick, the last being Miami, who beat Iowa 24-7 in 1992. And the last game to generate this much buzz in Iowa also came in 1985, when the top-ranked Hawkeyes beat No. 2 Michigan 12-10.

All the buzz, and a loud sellout crowd, wasn't enough to stop the Buckeyes.

"By my vantage point, this is the best they've played all year," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said of the Buckeyes. "This wasn't an easy one to walk into as a visitor."

Ohio State broke open a 21-10 game with long scoring drives on its first two possessions of the second half. Anthony

Gonzalez, who caught two touchdown passes, took the air out of the Kinnick crowd with a spectacular 30-yard TD catch that put the Buckeyes ahead 28-10 early in the second half.

Gonzalez caught the ball on the left hashmark, cut back toward the right sideline - using his hand to keep from falling down - and fought through a tackle to reach the pylon.

Ohio State's next drive only netted an Aaron Pettrey field goal. But it ate almost eight minutes off the clock and gave the Buckeyes a 21-point lead heading into the fourth quarter.

The Hawkeyes pulled within 31-17 on a 4-yard TD pass from Drew Tate on fourth down. But Ohio State forced a fumble and two interception on Iowa's next three possessions. Smith put Iowa's comeback hopes to rest with a 12-yard touchdown pass to Brian Robiskie.

"He was in command the whole game," Tressel said of Smith. "I thought he was one of the elite ones (in the nation) before this game. But he keeps getting better."

Antonio Pittman and Chris Wells combined for 55 yards rushing on a 12-play, 89-yard scoring drive late in the second quarter. Smith capped it with a 6-yard strike to seldom-used senior Roy Hall.

The Buckeyes rushed for 124 yards in the first half - just 15 shy of their game average heading into Saturday - and picked up 5.9 yards a carry against an Iowa defensive line considered one of the Big Ten's strongest.

Iowa got as close as 14-10 on a 15-yard touchdown run by Albert Young.

The Buckeyes moved ahead 14-3 by capitalizing on an interception by Brandon Mitchell, who returned it to the Iowa 30. Pittman followed a 23-yard rush with a 4-yard TD run.

Ohio State scored on the game's opening possession, marching 53 yards in just 2:24. Smith, who finished 16-of-25 passing, found Gonzalez for a 12-yard TD pass to give the Buckeyes a 7-0 lead.

Tate had his worst game last season

against Ohio State. He wasn't much better Saturday. He finished 19-of-41 for 249 yards and three interceptions for Iowa. Ohio State turned both of Tate's picks into touchdowns.

"I gave them two touchdowns," Tate said. "You take two of them away, it's a pretty close ball game."

Pittman rushed for 117 yards and a touchdown.