

No. 1 Ohio State Cruises by Indiana, 44-3

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COLUMBUS, Ohio - Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith threw four touchdowns, Ted Ginn Jr. threw another and Chris Wells ran for a score as the top-ranked Buckeyes easily got past Indiana for a 44-3 victory in front of 105,267 fans Saturday at Ohio Stadium. By winning for the 15th straight game, Ohio State improved to 8-0 overall and 4-0 in the Big Ten.

In the first half, Smith threw four touchdown passes to Rory Nicol, Ginn, Anthony Gonzalez and Jake Ballard and was 11-for-18 for 170 yards. He finished the game 15-of-23 for 220 yards before handing responsibility over to backups Justin Zwick and Todd Boeckman in the fourth quarter. Smith's four first-half touchdowns were the most by a Buckeye in a half since Bobby Hoying threw four TD passes in the first half in a 48-14 Ohio State victory vs. Purdue in 1994. Smith has topped 200 yards passing five times this season.

Ginn threw a 38-yard TD pass to Nicol on a flea-flicker to give the Buckeyes a 35-3 lead with 1:03 to play in the third quarter. Aaron Pettrey then kicked a career-long 51-yard field goal before Chris Wells ran for a 12-yard score. Pettrey missed on the PAT.

Ohio State finished with a season-high 540 total yards, getting 270 rushing and 270 passing. Antonio Pittman carried the ball 16 times for 105 yards, his fifth 100-yard game of the season. Chris Wells ran for 65 yards on 10 carries while Maurice Wells added 62 yards on nine carries. Smith had 38 yards rushing on four carries. Eight different receivers had a catch for the Buckeyes led by Ginn's five catches for 72 yards and a TD. Gonzalez had four catches for 69 yards and a score, while Nicol finished with 61 yards on his two touchdown grabs.

The defense limited Indiana to 165 total yards and allowed only seven yards rushing. It also recovered one fumble

and intercepted two second-half passes. Antonio Smith was the top tackler, recording 12 stops, one sack and a forced fumble. Joining Antonio Smith with sacks were Vernon Gholston and Jay Richardson, who had two. Malcolm Jenkins and Andre Amos had the interceptions.

Neither team scored on its opening possession of the game, but Indiana scored first thanks to a pair of key special teams plays. Tyson Beattie's 53-yard punt gave the Buckeyes the ball for the first time at their own 2-yard line, but they could not pick up a first down. A.J. Trapasso's 41-yard punt was fielded by Tracy Porter at the OSU 49-yard line and he returned it 34 yards to the OSU 15. Ohio State did not allow Indiana to pick up a yard and the Hoosiers were forced to settle for a field goal. Austin Starr's 34-yard kick gave Indiana a 3-0 lead with 7:59 to play in the first quarter.

The next time Ohio State got the ball, it took over at its 13-yard line. This time, though, it marched 87 yards to take a 7-3 lead. Troy Smith hit Pittman for a 22-yard gain and then on 2nd-and-6 from the OSU 39-yard line, Smith scampered 29 yards to the IU 32. Pittman got the ball and picked up nine yards before stepping on the left sideline. Troy Smith found Nicol open across the middle for a 22-yard touchdown pass that gave the Buckeyes a 7-3 lead with 2:55 to play in the opening stanza.

The Ohio State defense did not allow a first down and gave the Buckeyes the ball at its own 47-yard line after a 32-yard punt went out of bounds. Four plays later, Troy Smith hit Ginn for a 31-yard touchdown. Troy Smith appeared he was going to try and run the ball, but Ginn caught the quarterback's eye when he broke free toward the left side of the end zone. That score gave Ohio State a 14-3 lead with 14:52 to play in the first half.

Gonzalez caught a 5-yard pass from Troy Smith to give Ohio State a 21-3 lead with 6:32 to play before intermission. The score capped a nine-play, 78-yard drive. Gonzalez had a 24-yard reception on the second play of the

drive. Pittman carried four times in the drive for 27 yards.

The Buckeyes added a score just 20 seconds before halftime to take a 28-3 lead when Troy Smith found Ballard for a 1-yard TD. The reception was his first as a Buckeye. The Buckeyes started the drive with great field position. Before taking over, Indiana was about to cross midfield, but quarterback Kellen Lewis was sacked for a loss of seven by Richardson. After an incomplete pass, Gholston sacked Lewis for a 24-yard loss. Ginn returned Beattie's 43-yard punt 12 yards to the IU 49-yard line. Troy Smith found Brian Robiskie for a 21-yard pick up and then a personal foul on Indiana gave Ohio State 1st-and-10 at the 14. Troy Smith connected with Robiske for 13 yards before Ballard's score.

The Buckeyes fumbled on their opening possession of the second half, but scored in an unconventional way the next time they touched the ball. Troy Smith hit Gonzalez for a 21-yard pick up to set up 1st-and-10 at the IU 38. On the next play, Troy Smith took the snap and handed the ball to Ginn, who threw down field to Nicol, who had separated himself from a defender and went untouched into the end zone. The Buckeyes tried the play last week at Michigan State, but Ginn's pass fell incomplete. The score was Ginn's first completion of his career. He now has scored a touchdown passing, running, receiving and on punt and kickoff returns.

The 12-yard score by Chris Wells capped a nine-play, 68-yard drive and gave Ohio State a 44-3 lead. Pettrey missed the PAT, his first miss of the season.

Ohio State plays host to Minnesota next Saturday for homecoming. The game will kick off at 3:30 p.m. and be televised by ABC.