

## Ohio State Smothers Akron, 20-2

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**COLUMBUS, Ohio** - The Ohio State Buckeyes, ranked 11th by USA Today and 12th by the Associated Press, used a smothering defensive performance and two second-half touchdowns to defeat Akron, 20-2, Saturday at Ohio Stadium.

The win was the 31st-consecutive for Ohio State over a school from Ohio, dating back to a 7-all tie with Wooster in 1924. Ohio State's last loss to an Ohio school came in 1921 to Oberlin, 7-6.

It was an atypical win, with Ohio State (2-0) committing five turnovers to Akron's one, but the discrepancy did not hurt the Buckeyes because their defense was terrific. After allowing 34 yards and two first downs on the initial series of the game, the Buckeyes held the Zips without a first down for 13-consecutive series. Akron (1-1) finished with only three first downs, 3 yards rushing and 69 total yards and for the second-consecutive game the OSU "D" did not allow a touchdown.

"Our defense dictated the tempo for the entire game," [Jim Tressel](#), Ohio State head coach, said. "Akron made some nice special teams plays early in the game but as the game took fold, regardless of anything, our defense was in command and did an excellent job."

Offensively, Chris "Beanie" Wells looked powerful while leading Ohio State with a career-high 143 yards rushing. Quarterback [Todd Boeckman](#) shook off two interceptions by finding [Brandon Saine](#) and [Brian Robiskie](#) for second-half touchdowns. He finished 14-for-23 for 131 yards.

"Offensively, we can't turn the football over and we have to execute better," Tressel said. "And I think we did [execute better] over the course of the game."

Ohio State led by the soccer score of 3-2 at halftime. Gray, overcast skies, three Ohio State turnovers, some rain, no touchdowns and a total of 11 punts left little to cheer about during the half. Ohio State's kick coverage - kickoffs and punts - was exceptional. And both team's punters performed well with Akron's John Stec averaging 44 yards off eight kicks and Ohio State's [A.J. Trapasso](#) averaging better than 47 yards for his three kicks. Stec had two of his punts downed inside the Ohio State 10-yard line.

And, both team's defenses were confident

and competent. The Buckeyes' defense was particularly effective, limiting Akron to three downs on seven of its eight drives, including the final seven drives of the first half.

Perhaps most notably in the first half, Akron, led by its veteran secondary unit, did not seem awed about coming into Ohio Stadium and taking on the nation's 11th-ranked team. The Zips took an early 2-0 lead after Stec's initial punt was downed at the Ohio State 2. On first down, Beanie Wells was stopped by Akron linebacker Brion Stokes in the end zone for a 2-yard loss and a safety.

Then it started raining, and it took Ohio State four series to get untracked offensively. Boeckman fired two first-down strikes to [Brian Hartline](#). Beanie Wells went wide left and ripped off a 24-yard rush for a first down at the Akron 23. But on third down from the 21, Boeckman threw left, his receiver was going right and Akron's Reggie Corner intercepted the pass going out of bounds at the 7 yard line.

After OSU's defense held, the ensuing punt gave Ohio State the ball on its 38, but on second down Boeckman was intercepted again when an Akron defender tipped the ball into the hands of teammate John Mackey. Once again, the Ohio State defense would force a three-and-out, and this time the offense cashed in.

Starting at the OSU 34, the Buckeyes focused on the run and marched down to the Akron 17. An illegal shift penalty nullified a first down and the drive stalled on the 20. [Ryan Pretorius](#) connected on a 37-yard field goal to give the Buckeyes the lead, 3-2, with 7:54 to go in the first half.

Ohio State should have had decent field position with 2:25 to go in the first half, but [Brian Hartline](#) fumbled at the end of his punt return and Akron recovered at the OSU 49.

That set the stage for the second half. Blue skies were visible as Ohio State took over on the Akron 49 after another three-and-out by the defense. Boeckman stayed with the short passes underneath and moved the Buckeyes into field goal range. Pretorius connected on a 33-yarder and Ohio State increased its lead to 6-2.

With 8:22 to go in the third Boeckman found Robiskie along the right sideline for 39 yards and the biggest cheers of the day. That gave OSU a first down on the Akron 23. Beanie Wells then powered for gains of 4, 7 and 10 yards to set OSU up first-and-goal at the 2. A false start penalty moved the ball back to the seven and on third down Boeckman found [Brandon Saine](#) out of the backfield for the touchdown and a 13-2 lead.

Meanwhile, the Ohio State defense continued to stifle Akron's offense. Four straight Akron drives in the third quarter ended with three-and-outs giving the OSU defense 13-straight series of not allowing a first down.

Beanie Wells then unloaded on the Akron defense with consecutive runs of 6, 25 and 40 yards to set OSU up on the Akron 12. He stiff-armed an Akron defender to the ground on the 40-yarder. Three plays later Boeckman found Robiskie for a 13-yard touchdown pass and a 20-2 lead.

Akron finally snapped its run of three-and-out series midway through the fourth quarter.

Coach [Jim Tressel](#)'s teams are now 9-2-1 all-time vs. Akron. His Ohio State teams, as expected, are 2-0 vs. the Zips. And something not be overlooked or unappreciated - especially with all the talk this week about ranked I-A schools losing to Football Championship Subdivision (formerly I-AA) teams - is the fact Tressel's Division I-AA Youngstown State teams beat Division I-A Akron six times in nine tries with one tie. Akron was still I-AA during one of YSU's wins, but it was never ranked.