

## No. 1 Ohio State Out-Slugs No. 19 Wisconsin, 38-17

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**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – In a back-and-forth slugfest between two Big Ten teams known for their muscle, No. 1 Ohio State came from behind to defeat No. 19 Wisconsin, 31-17, before 105,449 sun-drenched and relieved fans in Ohio Stadium.

Chris Wells – “Beanie” – rushed for 169 yards and scored the tying, go-ahead and game-clinching touchdowns in the second half to lead Ohio State’s offense. Todd Boeckman and Brian Robiskie teamed for two touchdown pass plays and James Laurinaitis and Vernon Gholston led the defense that allowed just 281 yards. Laurinaitis recorded a career-high 19 tackles and a key fourth-down stop in the second half while Gholston tied a school record with four quarterback sacks.

The Badgers were led by quarterback Tyler Donovan, who passed for 238 yards and two touchdowns. Travis Beckum caught nine passes for 140 yards and one touchdown. The duo sparked the Badgers back from a 10-3 halftime deficit and into the lead before Ohio State charged back.

Ohio State moves to 10-0 overall and 6-0 in the Big Ten with its school record 28th-consecutive regular season win. The win also establishes a Big Ten record of 20-consecutive conference wins for the Buckeyes. The Badgers dropped to 7-3 overall and 3-3 in the Big Ten.

“We knew it would be a battle and it was just that,” Jim Tressel, Ohio State head coach, said. “Anything that came our way in terms of adversity our guys handled. We are awfully proud of the way we got after it. I don’t know if it was our greatest performance, but we ended up winning and we have a chance to fight another round.”

Ohio State took a 7-0 lead on its first series as Boeckman led a seven-play, 71-yard march that was finalized by a terrific athletic effort by Robiskie. After

catching a short pass over the middle, Robiskie spun around to elude a Wisconsin defender, used a hand on the ground to keep from falling and then sped into the right corner of the end zone for his team-leading ninth touchdown of the season.

Despite being a heavy underdog, Wisconsin was the first team to come into Ohio Stadium ready for a fight to the finish. The Badgers showed bite on their first drive by converting on a 31-yard fake punt to set up a 21-yard field goal by Taylor Mehlhaff that made the score 7-3.

The score stayed this way until inside of a minute to play in the half. Boeckman hit Brian Hartline, who had career highs of seven receptions for 95 yards, on a 45-yard gainer over the middle with 48 seconds remaining. Ryan Pretorius kicked a 27-yard field goal just before the half for a 10-3 Ohio State lead.

Then came the second half, one as entertaining – and stressful for Buckeyes fans – as any half all season. The Badgers opened with back-to-back scoring drives to take a 17-10 lead. The first score was set up by a Donovan-to-Beckum completion on third-and-16 for 46 yards, giving the Badgers a first down at the OSU 13. After a 15-yard illegal block penalty moved Wisconsin back to the 28, Donovan fired a laser into the end zone that Beckum caught for a touchdown to tie the game at 10-all. The score was the first offensive touchdown against Ohio State at home all season.

After an Ohio State punt, Donovan led the Badgers on an 8-play, 62-yard drive that culminated in a Donovan-to-Chris Pressley 2-yard touchdown pass and a 17-10 lead for the Badgers.

Pressed into a corner this late in a game for the first time this season, the Buckeyes came back determined and focused. The team marched 80 yards in 10 plays to tie the score with 2:41 to play in the third quarter. Beanie Wells burst over left guard to score from 31 yards for the tying touchdown.

After Ohio State forced a Badger punt on the next series, Wells and the

Buckeyes came right back to take a 24-17 lead. Wells scored on a similar play over left guard, this time at the north end of the stadium and from 30 yards away.

It was hard to know whether it was planned or not because the blocking didn’t seem to be there, but Wisconsin then tried another fake punt on fourth-and-3 from its own 27. It didn’t work. Laurinaitis stopped punter Ken DeBauche for a 2-yard loss and like a champion, Ohio State capitalized. Boeckman found Robiskie from 8-yards out for another touchdown and a 31-17 Ohio State lead.

Dexter Larimore recovered a fumble on the next UW series and Wells went 23 yards one play later for the clinching touchdown.

The Ohio State defense may have finally allowed a touchdown at home, but it was solid when it needed to be. Five first-half sacks and nine for the game – Gholston now has 10 on the year – kept the Badgers in check. So did an impressive second-quarter defensive effort that gave up just 13 total yards while Ohio State’s offense was unable to extend its lead.

In a second half full of big plays, one of the best occurred at halftime when the Ohio State marching band, performing a super heroes series of songs, formed a bow and arrow and blasted apart a giant Wisconsin “W.” Who knew it was a forecast of things to come. Go Band and Go Bucks!