

No. 2 Ohio State Rolls by Youngstown St., 43-0

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – The No. 2 Ohio State Buckeyes won their home opener for the 30th consecutive year with a 43-0 victory over Youngstown State before a crowd of more than 105,000 in Ohio Stadium Saturday.

“It was a good day for us,” Jim Tressel, Ohio State coach, said. “The issue wasn’t YSU, but what Ohio State needs to do to get better. It was good to see the special teams playing really solid. Our kickoff coverage was solid and there’s lots of great film to study.”

Ohio State scored on all six of its first-half possessions, including a 43-yard touchdown run by Chris “Beanie” Wells and a 31-yard pass from Todd Boeckman to Brian Robiskie, to take a 26-0 lead into the break.

Wells led Ohio State with 111 rushing yards off 13 carries. Unfortunately, the preseason Heisman Trophy candidate left the game after his 13th carry, midway through the third quarter, with what appeared to be an injury to his right leg. Later in the game he was walking around the sidelines wearing a boot on his right foot.

“From what I gather, it [the injury] is more of a foot thing,” Tressel said. “X-rays were negative.”

Boeckman completed 14-of-19 passes for 187 yards and two touchdowns. He shared time with freshman Terrelle Pryor, who came into the game midway through the first quarter and played several second-half series, and redshirt freshman Joe Bauserman.

Pryor was 4-of-6 passing for 35 yards and he was electric on his feet with 52 rushing yards including gains of 21 yards and 18 yards on his first second-half series. He capped his 18-yard run by extending his right arm over the goal line for a touchdown that gave Ohio State a 40-0 lead.

Ohio State’s defense was dominant. The Buckeyes allowed just 74 yards and

five first downs. The Penguins went nowhere on the ground, with minus 11 yards rushing. Marcus Freeman (six tackles), Tyler Moeller (six) and James Laurinaitis (five) led a balanced defensive effort. Seven players were credited with tackles for losses.

“Our defense is good and Youngstown was breaking in a new quarterback,” Tressel said. “I can find a better rehearsal for an offense than the Ohio State defense.”

Overall, the Buckeyes gained 495 offensive yards and 24 first downs. On the receiving end, five players caught at least two passes with freshman Devier Posey (four for 47 yards and a touchdown) and senior Brian Robiskie (three for 41 yards and a touchdown) leading the receivers.

Wells went 43 yards untouched into the end zone with less than three minutes gone to give the Buckeyes a 7-0 lead. In that first series alone Wells rushed for more yards – 55 – than he did in the entire game vs. Youngstown State (46 yards) last year.

Ohio State moved the ball regardless of who was in the game in the first half, out-gaining Youngstown State by 245 yards, 273-28. Pryor entered the game for the team’s third series and led the squad to a field goal. Bauserman played the fourth series and also guided the team to a field goal.

All of which led to a busy first half for the 29-year-old kicker Pretorius, a Buckeye by way of Durban, South Africa. Pretorius connected on a career-high four field goals, from 28, 31, 26 and 50 yards, plus made both extra points for a 14-point half.

Up next for the Buckeyes: a noon game Saturday in Ohio Stadium vs. Ohio.

A Few Notes:

A Glimpse into the Future

It was only the third series of Ohio State’s 2008 season – the new campaign was just over eight minutes old – and fans were already getting a glimpse of the future. The scoreboard clock read 6:52 and clocks everywhere else read 12:27 p.m. There wasn’t a cloud in the sky (the better to see the future clearly)

when freshman quarterback Terrelle Pryor entered the game. And so did fellow freshmen offensive linemen Mike Adams, J.B. Shugarts, Michael Brewster, and freshmen receivers Devier Posey and Lazaar Thomas.

The freshmen-led third series resulted in a 12-play, 51-yard drive that was capped by a Ryan Pretorius field goal for a 13-0 Ohio State lead.

Just for Kicks

Two kickers – Ryan Pretorius and Aaron Pettrey – kicked 50-yard field goals. Pretorius nailed a 50-yarder in the first half while Pettrey converted a career-long 54-yarder in the fourth quarter. Pretorius’ best is 52 yards vs. Cincinnati in 2006. The pair have now combined for five fields of at least 50 yards. Punter A.J. Trapasso, who joined Pretorius and Pettrey on the cover of the game day program, was not called upon to punt.

First Season-Opening Shutout Since... The shutout was the first season-opening shutout by Ohio State since shutting out Miami (Fla.), 10-0, in 1977. The shutout also represented the third shutout for a Jim Tressel-coached Ohio State team. The others were against Northwestern (20-0) in 2003 and Minnesota (44-0) in 2006.