

No. 10 Ohio State Claims Share of Conference Title With 42-7 Win Over Michigan

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – First Beanie then Boom then out went the lights on Michigan’s season. Chris “Beanie” Wells and Dan “Boom” Herron ripped off back-to-back 42- and 49-yard runs early in the third quarter, with Herron’s a touchdown to give Ohio State a 21-7 lead, and the Buckeyes rolled from that point on to clinch a share of their fourth-consecutive Big Ten Conference championship with a 42-7 win Saturday in front of 105,564 chilled but happy fans in Ohio Stadium.

The win not only clinched a fifth shared or outright Big Ten championship for Ohio State under coach Jim Tressel, but it also was the fifth-consecutive win for Ohio State over Michigan – a program first in 119 seasons of football. It also marked the seventh win over Michigan in Tressel’s eight seasons at the helm.

“It’s hard to believe because it’s just so difficult,” Tressel, Ohio State head coach, said regarding the team’s five-consecutive wins over Michigan.

Ohio State improved to 10-2 on the season and 7-1 in the Big Ten. Tressel has guided the Buckeyes to six 10-plus win seasons and time will tell if this team makes it to a sixth BCS bowl game. Michigan ends its season 3-9 overall and 2-6 in the Big Ten.

“It was a great day for those 28 seniors,” Tressel said. “Our kids played hard and Michigan played hard. I thought the turning point was when they punted to our 9 and two plays later we scored...with a big run by Beanie and a big run by Boom Herron.”

Leading by a 14-7 margin at halftime, Ohio State forced Michigan to punt on its first possession of the second half. Taking over on the 9-yard line, Wells burst through a hole on the left side for his second big gain of the day – he had a 59-yard touchdown run in the first

quarter that gave the Buckeyes a 7-0 lead – and Herron duplicated the left side success by taking it to the house for his career-long touchdown run.

Wells finished with 134 yards off 15 carries. The big junior has now rushed for 412 yards and four touchdowns in three wins over Michigan. Included in his totals are runs of 62, 59, 52 and 42 yards.

By no means was this game over when Ohio State was leading, 21-7. It soon would be, though. An 81-yard punt return by Ray Small on Ohio State’s second possession of the second half set up an 8-yard touchdown pass from Terrelle Pryor to Brian Robiskie, extending the lead to 28-7.

Pryor, who lofted a lovely pass that connected with Brian Hartline in stride and turned into a 53-yard touchdown play in the second quarter, was 5-13 passing for 120 yards and had two touchdowns. He did throw an interception on Ohio State’s first series of the game, but the Ohio State defense, as cold and hard as the November day, stopped the Wolverines without a first down and a 35-yard field goal attempt by K.C. Lopata was wide left.

Herron, who scored on a 2-yard touchdown run early in the fourth quarter that gave Ohio State a 35-7 lead, finished with 80 yards and two touchdowns.

Classy senior Todd Boeckman came into the game in the fourth quarter and handed the ball off twice before hitting Hartline with an eight-yard strike to increase the lead to 42-7.

There was some tough sledding early on in this game. More than 10 minutes into the game, Ohio State had gained eight yards off 13 plays and Michigan was in the hole: minus-nine yards on nine plays.

But then Wells busted his 59-yarder up the middle to give the Buckeyes a jolt of energy and a 7-0 lead. The touchdown put Wells over the 1,000-yard mark for the second-consecutive season and moved him past Keith Byars into fourth place on the team’s career rushing charts with 3,276 yards.

Michigan’s lone score came on a one-yard run by Brandon Minor in the second quarter that put Michigan back into the game at 14-7.

Ohio State’s defense came to play. The Buckeyes held Michigan to just 198 yards and 11 first downs, and the Wolverines went more than 22 minutes into the game before securing its initial first down. On the day, the Buckeye defense recorded 10 three-and-out series.

James Laurinaitis, one of 28 seniors playing in their final home game, led the team with 12 tackles and one sack. Kurt Coleman continued his fine play with 10 tackles. Marcus Freeman, Doug Worthington and Cameron Heyward also had six or more tackles. Dexter Larimore and Heyward had quarterback sacks.

Ohio State’s senior class has now tied the seniors of 1998 and 2005 with 43 victories. With four wins over Michigan and four pairs of gold pants, the class is guaranteed to be remembered as one of the best in Ohio State history.