

## **Buckeye Defense Pitches Second-Consecutive Shutout for First Time Since 1996**

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**COLUMBUS, Ohio** - Ohio State defeated Illinois, 30-0, Saturday to retain the Illibuck Trophy for another year as tailbacks Dan Herron and Brandon Saine combined to rush for 156 yards and the Ohio State defense forced three interceptions and limited the Illini to just 170 yards in marking the team's second-consecutive shutout. It was the first time the team had back-to-back shutouts since 1996.

"When your defense can throw another shutout, it makes it a heck of a lot more fun," Jim Tressel, Ohio State head coach, said. "We talked all week about playing fast, especially on offense and defense, coming out and getting after it and also playing very focused. There was talk all week long about how bad the weather was going to be and all this and that and we continually talked about the fact we've got to be focused regardless of conditions, delays, lightning, six-hour game, whatever. We had to stay in it and I thought our kids really did a good job focusing. The run game was called upon when those conditions got horrible and I thought they delivered. In the second half we got to throw a little bit, but our defense was playing so well. I thought our kids came out of the gate in the Big Ten the way you should."

Illinois, 1-2 on the year, had won three of last four games in this series in Columbus, including a stunning 28-21 win over No. 1 ranked Ohio State in 2007. But on a gray, muggy day, Ohio State controlled the action despite just 82 passing yards. The team rushed for 236 yards to notch its third win of the season against just one defeat.

Saine rushed for 81 yards, two shy of his career best, and Herron rushed for 75 yards and two touchdowns. Both totals represented season highs. Terrelle Pryor added 59 rushing yards on a day

where he threw just 13 times and completed eight for 82 yards and a late touchdown to Dane Sanzenbacher, who had 36 yards on three catches on the day.

Juice Williams, who had led Illinois to 815 yards of offense in the past two games vs. Ohio State, managed just 77 passing yards and 18 yards rushing against a stout Ohio State defense that was led by Kurt Coleman with nine tackles, Brian Rolle with eight and Thaddeus Gibson and Doug Worthington with a career-high seven each. Rolle had an interception, along with Jermale Hines (the first of his career) and Lawrence Wilson (his first since Sept. 6, 2008 vs. Ohio). As a group, the defense had eight tackles for a total loss of 41 yards.

Ohio State led 13-0 at the half with all but a couple minutes of the half played in a driving rainstorm. Two Aaron Pettrey field goals put Ohio State in the lead, 6-0, and Herron scored from the 4 to cap an 80-yard drive midway through the second quarter to increase the lead to 13-0.

Illinois couldn't capitalize on a golden opportunity late in the half. A muffed punt gave the ball back to the Illini at the 45, and then a pass interference penalty moved the ball to the 30. But from there the Illini went backward and ended up punting with 36 seconds left to play.

Pettrey's first field goal was set up when junior middle linebacker Rolle, dropping back into a zone coverage, read the play perfectly and picked off Juice Williams early in the first quarter and returned it 39 yards to set Ohio State up with a first-and-10 at the Illinois 46. Five plays later Pettrey connected on his sixth career field goal from at least 50 yards, with this one from 50.

The steady rain throughout turned into a torrential downpour late in the first quarter as Ohio State took possession of the football on its own 8. Someone must have thought "torrential rain means Brandon Saine" because the junior's number was called and he delivered consecutive runs of 19, 5, 10, 13 and 12 yards to drive Ohio State to

the Illinois 33. Pettrey delivered again when the drive ended, booting a 46-yarder through the rain drops for a 6-0 lead.

Illinois drove seven plays to the Ohio State 42 before having to punt on the next possession.

Two 15-yard penalties on Illinois helped Ohio State march 80 yards in six plays in just under three minutes. Herron carried the load on this drive, carrying five times for 34 yards, including the four-yard touchdown rush, his eighth-consecutive game with a touchdown.

A two-yard run by Dan Herron and a 27-yard Pettrey field goal increased the lead to 23-0 heading into the fourth quarter.

A Buckeye fumble as the game was winding down was recored by the Illini. However, on the first pass of Illinois' drive Hines picked off an Eddie McGee pass, his first throw of the game, marking Hines' first career interception. The Buckeyes drove 42 yards on the ensuing possession, ending with Pryor connecting on a three-yard touchdown pass to Sanzenbacher with 1:18 remaining. Illinois had one last chance to break up the shutout, but Rob Rose sacked McGee for eight yards on the final play of the game.

Herron will go after a ninth-consecutive game with a rushing touchdown next week as Ohio State travels to Bloomington, Ind., for a 7 p.m. game against the 3-1 Indiana Hoosiers.