

Comeback Falls Short as Buckeyes Drop 26-18 Decision at Purdue

ohiostatebuckeyes.com

October 17, 2009

West Lafayette, Ind. - Ohio State made a valiant comeback behind 177 yards of fourth-quarter offense from Terrelle Pryor, but Purdue's defense did just enough to hang on for the 26-18 victory in front of 50,404 fans Saturday at Ross-Ade Stadium.

One week after gaining just 184 yards vs. Wisconsin, Ohio State managed just 110 yards through the first three quarters against a Purdue team that got stronger as the game went on. The Boilermaker win snapped their five-game losing streak and improved its record to 2-5 and 1-2 in the Big Ten. Ohio State, ranked No. 7 in both major polls, saw its four-game winning streak snapped and drops to 5-2 on the season and 3-1 in the Big Ten.

The loss also snaps Ohio State's school-record 16-game Big Ten road winning streak, one shy of tying the Big Ten record of 17.

Purdue quarterback Joey Elliott led a 312-yard offensive yard day for Purdue by passing for 281 yards and two touchdowns. He completed a personal-best 31 passes on 50 attempts, including 12 receptions to Keith Smith and 10 to Aaron Valentin. Smith finished with 125 yards while Valentin finished with 97.

The Buckeyes trailed 23-7 heading into the fourth quarter when the offense started to show signs of life as Pryor found receiver Ray Small for a 38-yard gain. Three plays later, Pryor rushed for 35 yards to the Purdue 3-yard line, but the Purdue defense held strong as the Buckeyes had to settle for a 24-yard field goal from Aaron Pettrey to make it 23-10.

After Purdue added another field goal, Pryor marched the Buckeyes down the field once again, highlighted by a 24-yard catch over the middle by Duron Carter to the Purdue 25. Then on 3rd

and 10, Pryor scrambled and passed back across the field to find his favorite target, DeVier Posey, for a 25-yard touchdown. Pryor then added a two-point conversion run to make the score 26-18.

Ohio State and Pryor would get the ball back one more time, getting inside the Purdue 40 with less than 3 minutes to go. But the Boilermaker defense would not break and Ohio State would eventually turn the ball over on downs.

Ohio State's dismal day included five turnovers - three lost fumbles and two interceptions - and nine penalties for 65 yards, including a costly 15-yard facemask penalty at the end of the game.

A 14-point Purdue third quarter extended its slim halftime lead to 23-7. The Buckeyes reached inside the Purdue 5 on its first possession of the fourth quarter, but settled for a field goal to get to within two touchdowns at 23-10.

In a first half oddly similar to the weirdness of last week's win over Wisconsin, the Buckeyes had just four first downs and three turnovers, but trailed only by a 9-7 count. That's because Purdue could not penetrate the end zone on any of its 47 plays and had two turnovers and a missed field goal.

Ohio State fumbled on its second play of the game, setting Purdue up on the Ohio State 20. Three plays later Carson Wiggs hit the first of his three first half field goals for a 3-0 lead.

Ohio State trailed for only 1:19, though. Brandon Saine, making his third career start, ripped off a 20-yard rush on his first carry and followed that with a career-long 40-yard reception to set Ohio State up at the Purdue 6. Terrelle Pryor scored off the left side to complete the three-play drive.

Wiggs added a 27-yard field goal midway through the second quarter and then a 55-yarder as time expired to give the Boilermakers the lead at intermission.

It could have been a greater deficit, but Chimdi Chekwa intercepted a halfback pass from Dan Dierking in the end zone

late in the first half.

Pryor finished the game 17 of 31 for 221 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions. He also ran 21 times for 34 yards, leaving him 2 yards short of 1,000 yards rushing for his career.

Posey, meanwhile, hauled in a career-high 9 catches for 87 yards and one touchdown. Small finished the day with five catches for 59 yards.

Ohio State returns to the Horseshoe next week to face Minnesota at Noon.