

BuckEyes

Ohio State grade card

THIS WEEK

Northern Illinois (2-0) at Ohio State (2-0), ABC-TV, 3:30 p.m.

LAST WEEK

Ohio State 38, Hawaii 0
Northern Illinois 57, Murray State 26

SCOUTING REPORT

Buckeyes: Expect Ohio State to look sharper offensively over four quarters than it did against Hawaii when it might have been showing some effects from playing two games five days apart. OSU's offense production dropped by more than 200 yards from the opener against Virginia Tech.

Huskies: Northern Illinois will come out throwing. Huskies quarterback Drew Hare is averaging 359 yards passing per game and threw four touchdown passes against Murray State last Saturday. Wide receiver Kenny Golladay is his top target. Running back Joel Bourgnon is averaging 104 yards a game rushing.

PREGAME TAKEAWAY

Northern Illinois has been a traditional power in the Mid-American Conference. It was picked to win the West Division of the Mid-American Conference in a preseason poll of the league's coaches. Bowling Green's win over Maryland and Toledo's win over Arkansas last Saturday will no doubt be mentioned a few times to Ohio State's players by the coaches this week. OSU's pass defense will get a test from Hare and his receivers.

OSU defense grades out the highest

A Monday morning grade card on an Ohio State win over Hawaii in which the No.1 Buckeyes started slowly, finished strong and still almost matched the point spread the odds makers had set.

It wasn't as easy as many people thought it would be. But the bottom line is that OSU dominated the game, just not by quite as big a score as was expected.

OFFENSE: C+

The numbers don't lie. Ohio State's offensive production dropped off dramatically in its 38-0 win over Hawaii. After gaining 572 yards in the season opener at Virginia Tech on Monday night, it had only 363 yards against Hawaii.

Maybe the biggest surprise was the absence of big plays on offense. The longest running play of the day was 14 yards and the longest pass play covered 24 yards.

Cardale Jones started at quarterback again and was inconsistent. But when J.T. Barrett replaced him for the final two series of the first half, he did not light a fire under the offense, either. Braxton Miller rushed for 57 yards on eight carries.

Ezekiel Elliott ran for more than 100 yards for the seventh game in a row but he did it in small bites, carrying 27 times for 101 yards.

The offensive line had several false starts early, but was more steady in the second half. A 17-play, 91-yard scoring drive that took 8:05 off the clock to make it 24-0 was probably the best work by the offense as a whole.

DEFENSE: A

The defense's effort and timing both

were excellent. In a game where Ohio State's offense struggled, the defense picked up the slack.



Jim Naveau
Columnist

OSU's defenders had four quarterback sacks, two forced fumbles, two interceptions, scored a touchdown on one of the fumbles and never allowed Hawaii past the OSU 35-yard line. That is a good day by any standard.

Safety Vonn Bell scored the touchdown on a fourth-quarter fumble recovery and had an interception.

The defensive line welcomed All-American Joey Bosa back. While he didn't get a sack, Hawaii quarterback Sam Wittek definitely felt his presence.

Redshirt freshman end Sam Hubbard had a fumble recovery. Bosa says this is the most defensive line depth OSU has had in his three seasons as a Buckeye.

SPECIAL TEAMS: C

A botched field goal attempt when holder Cameron Johnston couldn't get the ball down, a kickoff that went out of bounds for the second straight game and roughing the punter when he was kicking out of his own end zone overshadowed some solid work by Johnston when he punted (43.6 yards a kick) and error-free punt return work by Jalin Marshall.

OVERALL: B

The standards are high and the expectations are even higher for Ohio State this season, so there was some impatience in the seats at Ohio Stadium when the lead over Hawaii was only 17-0 five minutes into the fourth quarter.

Coach Urban Meyer said he wouldn't allow the players or coaches to use the

quick turnaround from Monday night's Virginia Tech game as an excuse. But it might have been a factor, especially early in the game.

A 38-point victory is nothing to complain about. Ohio State will get better. It wasn't the Buckeyes' best game but it wasn't anything to get too worried about.

BuckEye Bio



EZEKIEL ELLIOTT

Position: Running back

Class: Junior

Hometown: St. Louis

High School: Burrroughs High School

Height, weight: 6-0, 225

Red zone: Elliott scored 50 touchdowns his senior season in high school and won four running events at the Missouri state track meet.