



Courtesy Michigan Athletics

Chris Perry (with ball) leads the Big Ten and the nation with 183 rushing yards per game.

Perry sets sights on Michigan lists against Oregon

Chris Perry heard Lloyd Carr's suggestion of transferring and instead ran up Michigan's career lists

By **Mindi Rice**
Senior Sports Reporter

Fifty-four yards would surpass Harlan Huckleby and put him at No. 10 all-time.

If he rushes for 181 yards Saturday, he will run by Lawrence Ricks and take over the No. 9 spot.

And if tailback Chris Perry finds a few holes in the Oregon defense Saturday and exploits the Ducks for 240 or more yards, the nation's leading rusher would move to No. 8 on Michigan's career rushing yardage list.

An extra 1,662 yards during the rest of the season would give him the top spot all-time at Michigan.

The good news for the Wolverines — and the bad news for Oregon — is that it's possible.

"He is a tough kid," Michigan teammate Dave Pearson said. "He runs over people and it makes people miss."

As a freshman, Perry had 417 rushing yards and, as a sophomore, ran for a similar 495 yards.

Then he was given an out.

"Now last year I tried to get Chris to transfer, because he and I didn't see eye to eye for a long time," Wolverine coach Lloyd Carr told the Michigan Daily.

Perry took the challenge instead, rushing for 1,110 yards as a junior and for 549 yards in the first three games of his senior season.

"He's developed into a complete football player," Carr said. "He's smart — he's very smart — he's competitive; he's a big, strong guy with wonderful feet, and I really like him."

But the winds have changed.

When Perry gained his 500th yard of the season in the Wolverine's 38-0 whumping of Notre Dame, he joined John Vaughn as the only running backs in Michigan history to reach 500 yards in the third game of the season.

Vaughn had 578 yards on 76 carries in 1990.

Perry's 549 yards have come on 80 carries. He has seven rushing touchdowns this season and leads the nation in scoring with 48 points.

Saturday's victory over Notre Dame also had a play Perry may not have been as familiar with.

At the nine-minute mark of the second quarter, Perry caught a five-yard pass from quarterback John Navarre for the first receiving touchdown of his college career. He has ten receptions on the 2003 season for 84 yards.

"Mr. Perry — I say that with great reverence — does a great job," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "He can move the pile; he can bounce outside; he's a big, strong physical back who can make a lot of good things happen."

The All-America and Doak Walker candidate has only four negative yards this season, all coming in Michigan's 50-3 win against Houston on Sept. 6.

Perry ran for 184 yards and two touchdowns in 27 carries in that game.

On Aug. 30, Michigan's home opener against Central Michigan, Perry had 22 carries in the Wolverines' 45-7 victory. He scored two touchdowns and gained 232 total yards for a career-best and Michigan-opener record.

To complete the equation, the senior rushed for 133 yards in 31 carries against Notre Dame. He also tied a career-best with four touchdowns.

Perry scores a lot of points, but for a team averaging more than 44 points per game, his Big Ten and nation-leading 16 points per game is only a part of the Michigan puzzle.

Back at the Michigan career lists, the Advance, N.C., native is seventh in career attempts with 553. His 2,571 career yards are 53 shy of the top 10 and he is tied for eighth with 28 rushing touchdowns.

"He is a humble guy," Pearson said. "He is doing a great job of being patient and letting the holes open up. When there is not a hole there he is making the right decisions."

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