

OREGON FOOTBALL

Ducks no match for Bulldogs

Georgia romps to 49-3 win

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Stetson Bennett and the Georgia defense picked up where they left off in last year's national championship game, even with a bunch of their former teammates now playing in the NFL.

Bennett threw for 368 yards and accounted for three touchdowns, a revamped defense didn't miss a beat, and the No. 3 Bulldogs looked very much like a champion intent on repeating with a 49-3 rout of No. 11 Oregon on Saturday, Sept. 3.

Bennett completed 25-of-31 passes with two touchdowns and ran for another score in the season opener before calling it a day in the third quarter. By that point, Georgia led 42-3 and had thoroughly ruined the debut of Oregon coach Dan Lanning.

Georgia really opened it up on offense, throwing 37 times for 439 yards.

"I think when you watch what they did today, if you're watching from home, you're saying, 'Man, I'd love to come play in that offense,'" coach Kirby Smart said.

After spending the last three years as Georgia's co-defensive coordinator, Lanning got a look at his former team from the opposing sideline in a game played before a predominantly red-clad crowd at the home of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons.

He saw just how far the Ducks have to go.

"That locker room is hurting a little bit," Lanning said. "But they're ready to grow."

Bennett, the former walk-on who led a storybook run to Georgia's first national title since 1980, returned for a sixth college season with a firm grip on the starting job after battling for playing time most of his career.

Bennett was the offensive MVP of both Georgia victories in last year's College Football Playoff.

He started his final season with a career high for passing yards.

"It's always good to go in being the guy," Bennett said. "It was pretty cool."

He guided the Bulldogs to the end zone on all six possessions he played. He ran



Georgia Bulldogs running back Kenny McIntosh (No. 6) scores a one-yard touchdown run during the second quarter against the Oregon Ducks in the Chick-fil-A Kickoff game at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2022, in Atlanta.

for a 1-yard score and tossed TD passes of 4 yards to Ladd McConkey — spinning away from a pass rusher who appeared to have him corralled — and 18 yards to Adonai Mitchell.

There were some questions about the Georgia defense, which had five players off the 2021 unit selected in the first round of the NFL draft.

Any doubts were quickly put to rest by a swarming group that looked very much like last year's defense for the ages, making life miserable for new Oregon quarterback Bo Nix.

"One of our mottos is, 'No one in our end zone,'" said Christopher Smith, who had one of Georgia's two interceptions.

Nix transferred to Eugene after starting at Auburn the last three seasons. He immediately found himself facing a team he lost to three times while playing in the SEC.

Make it 0-4. Nix's frustration was evident when he buried his helmet in his hands after a false-start penalty.

Georgia's day was epitomized by a short pass to Darnell Washington that turned into a big gain when the

6-foot-7, 270-pound tight end shrugged off one defender hitting him high and hurdled another who tried to bring him down low.

QUITE A DEBUT

Freshman Malaki Starks looks like one of the new stars of the Georgia defense.

He made a brilliant interception while falling backward at the Georgia 8 and wound up leading the team with eight tackles.

NIX IN GREEN

Despite his poor showing, Nix has a solid grasp on the Oregon quarterback job.

Nix completed 21 of 37 for just 173 yards, and his second interception — the one picked off by Smith — was an especially poor decision.

"He forced a throw he didn't need to force," Lanning said. "Bo knows that."

Even though he didn't name a starting quarterback leading up to the game, Lanning never considered giving someone else a shot.

Nix is still No. 1 on the depth chart.

"He's our quarterback," Lanning said. "He did a good job handling some adverse situations. Now he's got to figure

out how he can improve."

THE TAKEAWAY

Oregon: Lanning clearly has a lot of work to do to bring the Ducks up to a truly elite level. While there's no shame in losing to a team such as Georgia, Oregon expected to be much more competitive in their new coach's first game.

Georgia: The Bulldogs are off and rolling in defense of their national championship. They weren't threatened at all by perhaps the toughest team on their schedule until a Nov. 19 game at Kentucky.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

The Bulldogs are more than worthy of their No. 3 ranking. Smart has built a program that reloads rather than rebuilds.

Oregon is sure to tumble in The Associated Press poll. But at least every game from here on out looks much easier than facing the Bulldogs.

UP NEXT

Oregon: Home opener next Saturday against FCS school Eastern Washington.

Georgia: While this seemed like a home game for Georgia, its actual home opener is next Saturday against FCS opponent Samford.

OREGON STATE FOOTBALL

Beavers handle error-prone BSU Broncos

BY GARY HOROWITZ

Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Chance Nolan passed for two touchdowns and Oregon State's defense forced five turnovers in a season-opening 34-17 victory over Boise State on Saturday, Sept. 3.

The Beavers, who are hoping to build on last season's first bowl-game appearance since 2013, took control early behind their opportunistic defense and a few big plays offensively.

Oregon State snapped its six-game losing streak in season openers.

"I mean, getting that first one at home, I think that just kind of puts the season into motion," said Nolan, who completed 14 of 23 passes for 251 yards and two touchdowns with two interceptions.

Boise State received a lift off the bench from backup quarterback Taylen Green, who replaced an ineffective Hank Bachmeier and sparked a second-half comeback.

Bachmeier, a fourth-year starter, was pulled in the second quarter and did not return after tossing two interceptions and losing a fumble.

Green showed promise, especially as a runner with 102 yards on the ground. His 74-yard touchdown gallop late in the third quarter cut Oregon State's lead to 27-10. He also scored on a 4-yard keeper early in the fourth quarter that brought Boise State within 27-17.

Green completed 19 of 28 for 155 yards with one interception.

"We had to make an adjustment," Boise State coach Andy Avalos said of replacing Bachmeier. "To be able to put Taylen in there and get his opportunity to run the offense, he gave us a spark and got us going."

With the Beavers' offense in neutral, short-yardage specialist Jack Colletto broke loose up the middle on a third-and-2 play for a 41-yard touchdown with 10:39 remaining to provide the final margin of victory.

Oregon State had 470 total yards to 311 for the Broncos.

"Defensively, really pleased with the effort, physicality on both sides of the ball, and tackling and running and playing with energy," Oregon State coach Jonathan Smith said.

The Beavers opened the scoring on tight end Luke Musgrave's 27-yard touchdown catch, which followed Bachmeier's second interception of the first quarter.

After a three-and-out by

Boise State, Nolan hit Tyjon Lindsey for a 47-yard touchdown, giving Oregon State a 14-0 lead at 1:15 of the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, Riley Sharp's sack of Bachmeier forced a fumble that Colletto recovered at the Broncos' 6-yard line. Boise State's defense held and Everett Hayes kicked a 23-yard field goal to increase the lead to 17-0.

The Broncos whiffed on their best scoring opportunity in the first half when Ashton Jeanty lost a fumble at the Beavers' 2-yard line.

A 74-yard catch-and-run by Anthony Gould set up Deshaun Fenwick's 12-yard touchdown to increase the Beavers' lead to 24-0 at the break.

Nolan was intercepted early in the third quarter on a sideline pass that he appeared to try and throw out of bounds. Despite taking over on the Beavers' 25-yard line, Boise State settled for a 41-yard field goal by Jonah Dalmas to get on the scoreboard.

A 41-yard pass from wide receiver John Dunmore to Trey Lowe led to Hayes' 24-yard field goal and a 27-3 Beavers' lead, but Green's long touchdown run gave the Broncos life.

Oregon State safety Jaydon Grant, who had a forced fumble and interception, said turnovers was the difference.

"I think that any time you take the ball away it's huge," Grant said.

THE TAKEAWAY

Boise State: Is it time for the Taylen Green era at quarterback? Bachmeier struggled mightily. Green is a work in progress as a passer, but he gives the Broncos another dimension with his running ability and speed. Will Bachmeier bounce back or could there be a quarterback controversy brewing?

Oregon State: The Beavers' defense was superb in the first half, forcing four turnovers that were instrumental in building a big lead. Nolan, a returning starter at quarterback, displayed his big-play capability in the passing game, but he also was intercepted twice. Avoiding turnovers will be a priority for Nolan moving forward.

UP NEXT

Boise State: The Broncos will play at New Mexico on Saturday, Sept. 10.

Oregon State: The Beavers will play at Fresno State on Saturday, Sept. 10.



Oregon State running back Deshaun Fenwick rushes for a touchdown as the Beavers face the Boise State Broncos in an NCAA college football game at Reser Stadium in Corvallis, Oregon, on Saturday, Sept. 3, 2022.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

No. 2 Ohio State wears down No. 5 Notre Dame

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio — With its vaunted offense bogged down, No. 2 Ohio State leaned on its revamped defense in a top-five opener against a former Buckeye that tested its toughness.

C.J. Stroud threw two touchdown passes and Ohio State shut out No. 5 Notre Dame over the final 42 minutes in a gritty 21-10 victory on Saturday night, Sept. 3.

"The story of the night was the defense, to turn around and play the way they did after what's been said about them in the offseason, questioning their toughness, and play the way they did against the No. 5 team in the country ... I thought the energy was off the charts for the defense tonight," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said.

The first regular-season meeting of the storied programs since 1996 was a homecoming for first-year Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman. The former Buckeyes linebacker has made a meteoric

rise to lead the Fighting Irish at the age of 36.

Freeman is 0-2 as a head coach after losing a bowl game just weeks after being named Brian Kelly's successor.

The Irish hung with the high-scoring Buckeyes for most of three quarters, frustrating Heisman Trophy finalist Stroud and putting together a couple of first-half scoring drives.

"We battled for 2 1/2 quarters, but then they scored with 17 seconds left in the third and we didn't respond," Freeman said.

Ohio State's defense, too generous against the run last season, put the clamps on the Irish and new starting quarterback Tyler Buchner in the second half.

"We were called soft all last year and we had to sit there and just eat," Ohio State defensive back Lathan Ransom said. Day turned over his defensive staff in the offseason, bringing in Jim Knowles from Oklahoma State to be coordinator.

How quickly the Buckeyes

would pick up a scheme that is considered more complicated and multiple than the one they have been running was an open question.

Looked good in Game 1. The Irish managed just 253 yards and punted on their last six possessions. Tommy Eichenberg had two of Ohio State's three sacks.

"We got a lot to prove. And everyone just played extremely confident, too," Eichenberg said.

The Irish D could only hold up for so long.

On a third-and-long, Notre Dame brought multiple blitzers and Ohio State gave Stroud plenty of time to find Xavier Johnson open down the vacated deep middle for a 24-yard score. That put the Buckeyes up 14-10 with 17 seconds left in the third quarter.

On its next drive, Ohio State asserted itself. The Buckeyes went 95 yards on 14 plays, bringing in Jim Knowles from Oklahoma State to be coordinator. How quickly the Buckeyes

Williams ran for 84 yards on 14 carries and TreVeyon Henderson had 91 on 15 attempts.

Ohio State led the nation in scoring and yards per play last season, but for much of the night it was a slog for Stroud. And Day seemed thrilled to see his team endure.

"We wanted to be known as something other than talented," Day said.

Playing mostly without star receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who took a hard hit on the first series, Stroud threw for 223 yards, including a 31-yard TD to Emeka Egbuka to make it 7-3 in the first quarter.

But that was it for the Buckeyes in the first half.

Buchner and the Irish responded with a long drive capped by Audric Etime's 1-yard touchdown leap in the second quarter to put the Irish up 10-7.

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