

Ohio State bounced from No. 1 in BCS poll

By CHRIS MASSE
Collegian Staff Writer

For the last three months, Ohio State has ruled the college football world.

Back in August, the Buckeyes were anointed the No. 1 team in both the Associated Press and ESPN/USA Today Coaches polls. Since then, they have met all challengers and run through their first seven games unscathed.

Suddenly, though, Ohio State's No. 1 rankings have taken on hollow significance.

Monday, the first-ever Bowl Championship Series standings were unveiled.

The BCS uses polls, computer ratings, strength-of-schedule and win-loss records, and it will determine which two teams will go to the Fiesta Bowl Jan. 4 to play for the national championship.

The surprise was that UCLA, not Ohio State, was the No. 1 team. The



Bruins' hold on the top spot means they would be the first team selected to go to the Fiesta Bowl. The Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) would be the second choice. Being in the second spot could prove harmful, however, with unbeaten Tennessee and Kansas State nipping at their heels.

"I'm a little surprised. It seems a little strange," Ohio State coach John Cooper said during yesterday's weekly Big Ten teleconference. "We've been No. 1 in the AP and the coaches polls, and I think those are the two most important ones. There's a lot of football that

has to be played still. Let's give this thing a chance."

Surging Michigan
Michigan is back in the top 25 after defeating Indiana 21-10 last Saturday for its fifth straight win. The victory was its 13th consecutive in the Big Ten. The defending national champions have not dropped a conference contest since losing to Penn State 29-17 Nov. 16, 1996.

The No. 22 Wolverines (5-2, 4-0) have used stingy defense to salvage their season after an 0-2 start and put themselves in contention for a second-straight Big Ten title. In its last 14 quarters of football, Michigan has allowed just 25 points and one touchdown.

"Michigan is a team that is getting better," Indiana coach Cam Cameron said. "I would not be surprised to see them challenge for the Big Ten title. They're a team that's going to be real tough to beat."

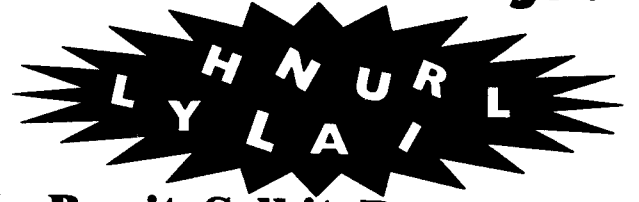
Featured matchup
The Ohio State-Indiana tilt is the Big Ten game of the week. Despite posting a 3-4 record, the Hoosiers have shown dramatic improvement from last season and could provide the Buckeyes with their toughest test before battling Michigan Nov. 21.

Indiana freshman quarterback Antwaan Randle El has breathed life into the Hoosier attack and is leading the team in both passing and rushing. His ability to run could give Ohio State's defense problems.

When these teams met two years ago in Bloomington, Ind., Indiana gave an unbeaten Buckeye team a scare and led 10-7 heading into the fourth quarter before falling 27-17.

"Without a doubt, Indiana is the most improved football team I've seen from one year to the next in quite some time," Cooper said. "They're impressive. This will be a very competitive football game."

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