In Part II of Furls unit by unit matchups for Saturday's epic showdown, he takes a look at the battle between the Buckeyes offensive line and the Wolverine's defensive line. Do the Buckeyes have any answer for All-World defensive linemen Alan Branch and LaMarr Woodley? Furls provides the lowdown.

Click here for Part I: Ohio State Defensive Line vs. Michigan Offensive Line

Ohio State Offensive Line vs. Michigan Defensive Line

Here comes our daily Mark May analysis moment:

If the Wolverines defensive line can control the line of scrimmage than Michigan should be able to stop the Ohio State running attack, making the Buckeyes one dimensional.

Mark May didn't really say that, but he probably will at some point. And it's another good example of the dumbed down macroanalysis we often see from the talking heads on TV. Let's take a proper look at this crucial matchup ...

The Wolverines defensive line has been the absolute strength of the team defense. As a result Michigan is #1 nationally against the run allowing about 50 yards per game. This impressive squad is anchored by two phenomenal NFL prospects and probable first rounders, DT Alan Branch and DE LaMarr Woodley. These guys are every bit as good as advertised.

Not only do the Wolverines feature a very talented defensive line, they are also very active. They do a lot of stunting, twisting, and looping in an effort to confuse blockers. They have been very successful at all aspects of the game, whether it is pressure on the quarterback in the passing game or stopping the run.

This formidable opponent will be matched up against a good, veteran Ohio State offensive line. Alex Boone, projected by many to be next year's Jake Long, will have his hands full with Woodley and actually does not match up very well against him. Boone is enormous and strong, but he has been a bit slow in engaging outside rushers and as a result has been forced to hold good defensive lineman in a last ditch effort to protect Troy Smith's blindside.

Upfront the Buckeyes offensive line has been good this year, but not exceptional. The Buckeyes have been unable to take the ball up the middle of the field and opposing defenses have had success in gaining penetration and driving the middle of the line back. I do not really expect to see this change, as the Michigan defensive line is better than any other that Ohio State has faced this year.

Look for center Doug Datish to be used to double Alan Branch, freeing the middle linebacker, in much the same way that the Wolverines will be forced to double Pitcock, freeing Laurinaitis.

As much trouble as the Buckeyes have had run blocking, they have done a terrific job, in general, in pass protection. If that trend continues, the Wolverines will be unable to augment the efforts of this defensive line with linebackers and will be forced to spend a large portion of the game in nickel playing zone.

With an aggressive, penetrating defense like the Wolverines front four, look for the Buckeyes to try to nullify their aggressiveness with trap blocks, counters, draw plays, screen passes. Overaggressive lineman can cause wide gaps and lose containment on the outside, watch for the Buckeyes to attempt to exploit that.

All in all, match up for match up, the Buckeyes will probably struggle with the Wolverines upfront, but thankfully, Lloyd Carr defenses are generally rather undisciplined and this leaves the door open for the Bucks. If the Buckeyes can keep the Michigan front four out of the backfield they will run away with this game, so as usual, the game could be determined in the trenches.