They've been playing each other for over a hundred years. It's the greatest rivalry in all of sports. Furls takes a look back at the five greatest showdowns in the long and illustrious history of this fine rivalry. Where does Saturday's game rank? GO BUCKS.

1. **1968: "Because I couldn't go for three!"**

I am a shameless Buckeye homer; that fact I cannot and will not deny. I will not pretend to have any type of journalistic objectivity, so under those premises I must admit that the pasting delivered by the 1968 "Super Sophomores" is my personal favorite Ohio State-Michigan game.

The Buckeyes went into half time leading this game 21-14, after that, it was all Buckeyes. The Buckeyes would go on to win the game by a final score of 50-14, the highest score and second widest margin of victory Ohio State has ever enjoyed over Michigan. The Buckeyes would put up an astonishing 420 yards on the ground and Woody Hayes called this game, "The best victory we ever had."

The best part for a Buckeyes fan? After scoring a touchdown late in the fourth quarter, driving the score to 48-14, Ohio State coach Woody Hayes did the unthinkable; he went for two in a game that was already decided.

When asked after the game why he went for two, Woody's replied, "Because I couldn't go for three." That right there pretty much sums up the rivalry.

1. **1969: Bo's Miracle**

In Shembechler's first season as head coach at the University of Michigan he was able to turn the program around and deal Ohio State one of its most crushing defeats. 1968 saw Ohio State win its 5th National Championship on the strength of the "Super Sophomores." Well, the 1969 version of the Buckeyes was one year old and one year better.

The names from the 1969 team are as memorable as the game itself; Stillwagon, Tatum, Kern, and Otis. Ohio State entered this game as the undisputed number one team in the nation and most writer's in the press thought they would not only win the '69 title but also the '70 title. Shembechler did not fall victim to the hype and brought his team into Ohio Stadium ranked 12th. After taking a 12-7 lead in the first half Ohio State was done scoring for the day and was ultimately defeated 24-12.

Shembechler's victory over his old boss and the #1 team in the country, in their own home, has to rank as one of the great upsets in college football history. Following the game, Woody Hayes said, "We were outplayed and outcoached." That is a pretty strong compliment for his former assistant.

This is not the first time that Michigan would ruin Ohio State's national championship hopes; the Wolverines made a habit of it during the 1990s, ending undefeated seasons in 1993, 1995, and 1996.

1. **1973: The Battle of Unbeatens**

The 1973 saw both Ohio State and Michigan come into the game unbeaten. The Buckeyes and Wolverines entered the game ranked numbers one and four in the nation respectively with a Rose Bowl berth on the line. This was the fifth year of the "Ten Year War" between Shembechler and Hayes, and after dropping the first game, Woody enjoyed a 2-1 advantage, evening the series heading into the biggest game in the rivalry to date.

If the #1 ranked Buckeyes were to win, they would clinch a berth in the Rose Bowl where a victory would bring home Ohio State's seventh national title. Both teams featured tremendous defenses, but it was the Buckeye's who struck first taking a 10-3 lead. The Wolverines rallied late in the game to tie it at 10 and after the Wolverines missed two late field goals, that is the way the game would end.

The strange thing is that the competition did not end there, on the field. Since both teams were undefeated and had tied in their head to head meeting, the berth in the Rose Bowl was left to a vote amongst Big Ten athletic directors. Speculation abounded as to who would win, but one factor above all others reigned supreme, or so one version of the story goes. The Big Ten had a substantial losing streak in the Rose Bowl and unfortunately for the Wolverines, their starting quarterback, Dennis Franklin sustained a serious shoulder injury and would not be ready for the bowl.

So, while most fans thought that the Wolverines deserved the nod for their dominance in the second half of that game, it was the Buckeyes that went off to Pasedena and shellacked the USC Trojans, 42-21.

Bo Shembechler, bitter about the vote, stated after his coaching career was over, that the loss dealt to his team by the Big Ten Athletic Director's and commissioner Wayne Duke in that vote was the worst of his career. Adding insult to injury, the Michigan Wolverines would amass a record of 30-2-1 for the 72, 73, and 74 seasons and would not play in a bowl game in any of those seasons.

2. **1950: The Snow Bowl**

The 1950 Ohio State-Michigan game was played in one of the worst blizzards in Ohio history. High winds, snow, and white out conditions altered the game so severely that it barely resembled football.

The weather was so bad that the Ohio State University Athletic Director Dick Larkins was offered the option of cancelling the game outright. The Buckeyes were leading the conference and the cancelled game would have clinched their Rose Bowl berth, but Ohio State did not want to receive such an honor under such unusual circumstances, so the game was played.

Michigan would go on to prevail in the game, 9-3, without ever completing a pass or recording a first down. The two teams would punt a combined 45 times in the game (usually punting on third down in the event of a fumble) hoping the other team would fumble or that they could achieve a field position advantage. All twelve points in the game were the direct result of blocked punts, Michigan recorded a safety on one and recovered another in the end zone for a touchdown.

Ohio State Heisman Trophy winner, Vic Janowicz would punt 21 times in the game and would kick one of the most amazing field goals in the history of football. Janowicz kicked a 27-yard field goal into a 30-mile per hour wind on an icy field. Visibility was so bad that the goal posts were not even visible from 27 yards away.

1. **2006: #1 vs. #2**

In the 101 meetings of these two perennial powerhouses, it has never happened. These two teams have never met while ranked first and second in the nation. This game features the most elite athletes and players in the NCAA. The Buckeyes and Wolverines rosters read like a who's who list of All American's and postseason college football awards show attendees. Most of the hype has been around what this game means to Troy Smith's Heisman candidacy, but this game also prominently features finalists for the Lombardi, Butkus, Thorpe, Lott, and Outland awards.

The winner of this game assures themselves a berth in the national title game, while the loser must cross their fingers and hope for a lot of help to get a rematch. Surprisingly, that in and of itself is not enough to make this the biggest game in the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry; these teams have played for high stakes in the past. What makes this the biggest game in the history of the rivalry is the growth of college football since the epic 1973 game. In those days college football, and sports in general, were less publicized, less commercialized, and less accessible.

Now every article written on the game is accessible, immediately, to every reader everywhere in the world. As if that wasn't enough pressure, under the current scholarship limitations, the most important part of the audience may be the blue chip high school athletes that both players are pursuing or will be pursuing, for this could be Ohio State's prime opportunity to establish supreme dominance in this series, winning five of six games; for Lloyd Carr and the Wolverines

football program the stakes could not be higher.

Regardless of the outcome, these are the two best teams in the country, much to the chagrin of the college football powers that be. This game will decide the true national champion in November, for after this game the BCS championship game on January 8th will feel exactly like what it is, an exhibition game.