Hey national media ... put that in your pipe and smoke it. The most disrespected #1 team in recent college football history just kept rollin' last night, marching into Happy Valley and beating the snot out of Joe Pa and the Penn State Nittany Lions. Furls has been trying to tell us all season - this football team is good. The defense is the best in the country, and the offense continues to evolve. Furls hits on last nights big win.

Well that probably depends on your vantage point. If you are an avid follower of Ohio State, well then last night's dominant performance in Happy Valley is probably enough to convince you that Ohio State is not overrated at #1. From a national perspective, well, I am not sure anyone will put it better than Brian Hartline. Hartline said, "I'm sure somehow they'll [doubters] figure out Penn State isn't that good or something. But we're all right, we'll keep chugging."

Satisfaction has been a common theme for this year's edition of the Ohio State Buckeyes. It started in Spring Ball when Coach Jim Tressel instituted "Never Satisfied" as a team rallying call. It is an interesting contrast to last year's Buckeyes that seemed so satisfied with playing in the National Championship game that they decided not to compete in it. The lack of satisfaction is evident in post-game comments where Buckeye players critique every win as though it were a heartbreaking loss.

For Buckeye fans there was plenty to be satisfied with last night, particularly the offensive balance and diversified play calling. The coaching staff did a terrific job of throwing in running situations from running formations and running in passing situations from passing formations. Penn State had no idea what was coming and the Nittany Lions spent most of the game reacting.

When Penn State brought pressure the offensive line picked it up, heck, even Maurice Wells landed a couple of chip blocks. When the Nittany Lions dropped back into coverage Boeckman found the holes in the coverage and made them pay. The Buckeyes balance was never more evident than it was on third downs where the Buckeyes converted 12/16 against a defense that had previously holding opposing offenses to a meager 30% conversion rate. It was an efficient throttling if ever there was one.

There was also much to be unsatisfied about. Ohio State's heretofore-invincible defense revealed it first flaws, an inability to stop the run against a zone blocking scheme. The Buckeyes linebackers and safeties were consistently caught overpursuing, abandoning their gap assignments in their pursuit and leaving cutback lanes, and suddenly, the Buckeyes fundamentally sound linebackers and secondary have taken to shoulder tackling and hitting instead of wrapping up.

## Grading the Positions:

Quarterback: A. Yep, Boeckman threw an interception, but it was essentially negated by his 25 other good reads in the game. He continues to make every throw; downfield routes, slants, crossing routes, out routes, and he appears to be unflappable in the pocket. Todd Boeckman looks like the first legitimate NFL quarterback prospect to come out of Ohio State since Art Schlichter. Just think, he is coming back next year.

Running Back: A-. Well done, nothing to complain about. Even Maurice Wells ran with power, putting his head down and plowing right into the line. The pass pro is still a bit shaky. Buckeye backs are going to have to get a bit better at picking up blitzes.

Wide Receivers: A. Tedd who? Anthony what? Roy Hall? Brian Roboskie does not get a lot of press, but I am not sure that I have seen a more polished WR in the NCAA this year. All he does is run great routes, block downfield, make great adjustments in the air, and catch EVERYTHING. Quick note: Brian Hartline did drop a pass this week, destroying my theory that his hands are in fact small black holes.

Tight Ends: A++. Normally I just lump these guys in with the WRs, but their play this week was so exemplary that they definitely deserve their own grade. Rory Nichol and Jake Ballard are rapidly developing into some of the most lethal weapons on a loaded offense. Both of those guys do a lot more than catch the ball, they were perfect in their run blocking and seamless in picking up the pass rush.

Offensive Line: A. I guess the one nit picky detail in this game is the holding call on Kirk Barton negating a Chris Wells TD, but the Buckeyes scored a TD on the very next play anyway. The Buckeyes ran the ball for 200 yards against the nation's #9 run defense (#2 in the Big Ten) and held the nation's leading pass rush to 1 sack. Wow!

Defensive Line: B. Looks like Vernon Gholston is coming to life after a slow start. All of a sudden he is always present anytime there is a big play in the backfield. The D-Line did a great job getting some push, but did not do a great job occupying blockers. There were too many O-Linemen getting to OSU's defenders. Things should improve as Todd Denlinger's playtime increases.

Linebackers: B-. Buckeye linebackers were caught in over pursuit all

night long in the Penn State running game, and Marcus Freeman and company were overmatched in coverage by Penn State TE Andrew Quarless.

Secondary: B+. Anthony Morelli was dumfounded by Ohio State's coverage schemes and coverage all night. The Buckeyes held the Penn State passer to 12/21 for 124 and got him to make his token pick six mistake. Penn State's quarterback has now thrown more TD passes to Ohio State players than any other Ohio State player quarterback not named Todd Boeckman. Ohio State's DBs and safeties are playing ferociously, but they seem to have abandoned technique for highlight reel material while making tackles. It is nice to see some big pops, but all to often those turn into missed tackles and touchdowns.

Coaching: A-. The coaching staff did a great job of keeping PSU off balance. My one gripe was not going after Morelli early. The Buckeyes played conservatively on defense in the first series, giving 110,000 fans and a pretty decent Penn State team hope.

## Grading the Grader:

I said, "Don't be surprised if... -The Buckeyes come out throwing to start the game, not downfield but intermediate routes. It is no secret that the Buckeyes need to start well to get that crowd out of the game. Penn State and Ohio State both know that this game can be won or lost in the first five minutes

of the game." Four passes on the first series, one to Robo for 27 yards, yep, getting the ball in the air was definitely the early plan. The second drive was more of the same, featuring that 60 yard bomb to Ray Small. Teams and fans need to realize that the true essence of "Tressel Ball" is that he uses his team and game plans based on his personnel. This year's personnel dictate that the vertical game is part of this year's edition of "Tressel Ball." A.

I said, "Don't be surprised if ... Maurice Wells becomes the third string back this week. I have been harsh on him this year, but based on what I saw last week, I have no idea how you can keep him in the game. I counted no less than three completely blown assignments in pass pro against blitzers last week. He has been a disaster carrying the ball and really only brings a decent set of hands to the field, but he cannot protect well enough to be a suitable 3rd string back against an aggressive defense." Tressel continues to astonish me with his loyalty even in the face of overwhelming evidence. F.

I said, "Don't be surprised if... -The Buckeyes feature Ray Small in some misdirection tonight. Small has been electric the few times that he has touched the ball this year and you cannot help but think that against an aggressive defense, there might be some

opportunities for Small particularly from the slot and in misdirection. Penn State is going be watching for Robiskie and Hartline, the Buckeyes are going to need someone else to step up." Looks like the Buckeyes are not going to feature Small this year. I am guessing that he will remain a secret weapon of sorts. The guy that everyone forgets about due to Robo and Hartline. C.

I said, "Don't be surprised if... -James Laurinaitis has a big game tonight. Yep, predicting a big game out of Laurinaitis is a lot like predicting that Christmas will come, but Laurinaitis seems to be at his best in big games at night, when his team needs him most. Laurinaitis gets two turnovers tonight." Laurinaitis was not the star. He made some good plays, but nothing big. Malcolm Jenkins was the star, and if he returns I am sure he will scorch Joe Paterno for another score. D.

I said to take OSU and the Under. After seeing all the under predictions on the boards I should've known that the game would go over. After all, Vegas was not built by making people winners. Buckeyes were an easy cover, the Under was in big trouble within 10 minutes. C.

# Props to the Prognosticator of the Week: FUDU.

With a prediction of 27-16 Fudu got both OSU and the Over and a total point differential of 11 points. Good Call Fudu.

Next Week, Wisconsin. Let's get that run defense thing sorted out prior to the game.

Make your prediction here and perhaps it will be you that is the prognosticator of the week next week. There is no prize except knowing you are smarter than everyone else. Isn't that enough?