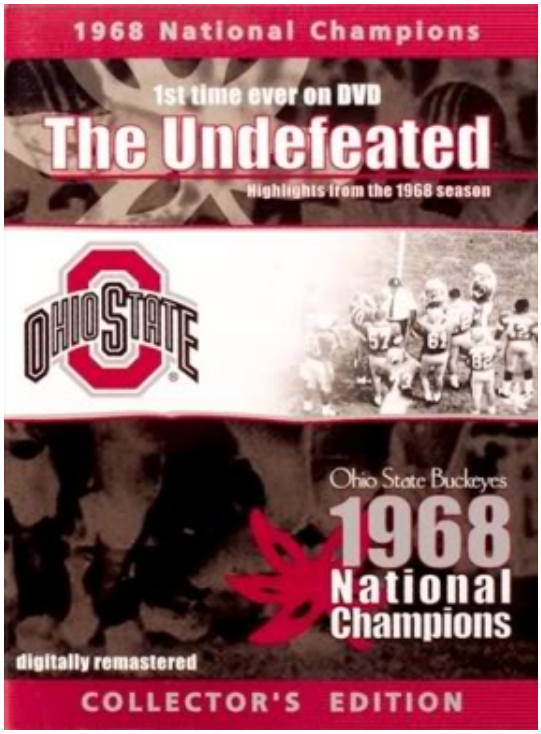
#2 on our list of the greatest seasons of Ohio State football is 1968, the last perfect National Championship season before the Tressel era.



#2 on our list of the greatest seasons of Ohio State football is 1968, the last perfect National Championship season before the Tressel era.

The Magnificent Six : #6 - The 1961 Ohio State Buckeyes

The Magnificent Six : #5 - The 1973 Ohio State Buckeyes

The Magnificent Six: #4 - The 1944 Ohio State Buckeyes

The Magnificent Six: #3 - The 1954 Ohio State Buckeyes

Kern. Tatum. Stillwagon. Brockington. Sensibaugh. White. Zelina. Anderson. Jankowski. Provost. Foley. Mayes. Hayden. Otis. The Super Sophomores. The 1968 Ohio State Buckeyes- undefeated, untied, undisputed National Champions.

2.) 1968

Record: 10-0 (7-0 Big Ten)

Big Ten Conference Champions

National Champions

SMU (8-3) W 35-14

Oregon (4-6) W 21-6

Purdue (8-2) W 13-0

Northwestern (1-9) W 45-21

@ Illinois (1-9) W 31-24

Michigan State (5-5) W 25-20

@ Wisconsin (0-10) W 43-8

@ Iowa (5-5) W 33-27

Michigan (8-2) W 50-14

Rose Bowl

USC (9-1-1) W 27-16

Hopes ran high in Columbus as the 1968 season began. The highly touted freshman class of 1967 was now eligible, and after some lean years- lean by Buckeye standards, at least- Ohio State fans were ready to see their team return to college football's blueblood set. But although the Bucks looked impressive in a pair of opening victories over SMU and Oregon, few expected a National Championship right off the bat.

They got a clue about what kind of season 1968 would be in the third week, when top-ranked and heavily favored Purdue, armed with quarterback Mike Phipps and two-way halfback Leroy Keyes, came to Columbus. The previous season, the Boilermakers had crushed the Buckeyes 41-6. Not this time. With sophomore linebacker Jack Tatum terrorizing Keyes and junior safety Ted Provost opening the scoring with a 35-yard return of a Phipps interception, the fourth-ranked Buckeyes stunned the Boilers 13-0, in one of the most cathartic victories in the

history of the program.

Even after the Purdue game, Ohio State's road to the national title was hardly a smooth one. The Buckeyes had to survive close calls against Illinois, Michigan State and Iowa. Against Illinois- winners of one game in '68- Ohio State blew a 24-0 halftime lead, allowed the Illini to tie the game on three touchdowns and three two-point conversions, and had to put together a last-minute drive behind backup quarterback Ron Maciejowski to win. The Buckeyes were undefeated, but hardly overwhelming. Until, that is, they met fourth-ranked Michigan at the Horseshoe on November 23, 1968.

The game didn't start out as a rout. The two teams, both undefeated in Big Ten play, traded touchdowns in the early going. At halftime, Ohio State led just 21-14. But in the second half the Buckeyes, hammering a sagging Michigan defense with their power running game, took charge and began to dominate. The score became 27-14, then 30-14, then 37-14, then 44-14. With 1:23 remaining, Jim Otis barged over for his fourth touchdown of the afternoon, hurling the ball into the joyous mass in the stands behind the north end zone. It was now 50-14. But Woody wasn't through. Just as he had done in 1961, he ordered up a two-point conversion attempt, which, in this case, failed. When asked why he'd gone for two with such an enormous lead, Woody gave his famous reply: *"Because I couldn't go for three."*

It was on to the Rose Bowl, Ohio State's first since 1958, where college football fans were treated to that delicious pre-BCS rarity: the 1-vs-2 showdown. The top-ranked Buckeyes squared off with second-ranked USC, featuring Heisman Trophy winner O.J. Simpson, and at first it was all Trojans. Southern Cal jumped to an early 10-0 lead, including a

dazzling 80-yard broken-field touchdown run by Simpson, but it was just a matter of time before the Buckeyes stormed back- and they did. Ohio State tied the game 10-10 at the half, then, as in the Michigan game, took over in the second half. While Rex Kern directed a mistake-free offense that scored 27 unanswered points, Ohio State's defense bottled up the Juice and forced five USC turnovers, including two that led directly to the touchdowns that blew the game open in the fourth quarter. Ohio State won going away, 27-16, and there was no doubt as to who was the best team in America. The Super Sophomores, and everyone else in Scarlet and Grey, had delivered.