- Saturday September 17, 2011

- Sun Life Stadium; Miami Gardens, FL

- Ohio State at University of Miami

- 7:30 p.m. (ET)

- TV: ESPN, ESPN3.com -

The Buckeyes hit the road for the first time in the 2011 season with a prime-time contest against the Miami Hurricanes on Saturday night. 17th-ranked Ohio State (2-0) will be trying to remain unbeaten against an unranked Hurricane team still looking for their first win of the campaign, but as they take their talents to South Beach, the Buckeyes still find themselves 2-point underdogs.

These two traditional powerhouses met a year ago in Columbus under completely different circumstances, with the 'Canes ranked No. 12 and Ohio State No. 2. All the talk then was of the duel between the two gifted junior quarterbacks, and the revenge factor for Miami in the first matchup of the teams since the 2002 national championship game.

Ohio State humbled the Hurricanes 36-24 that afternoon last September, and if Miami still has an axe to grind about 2002 , they've been pretty quiet

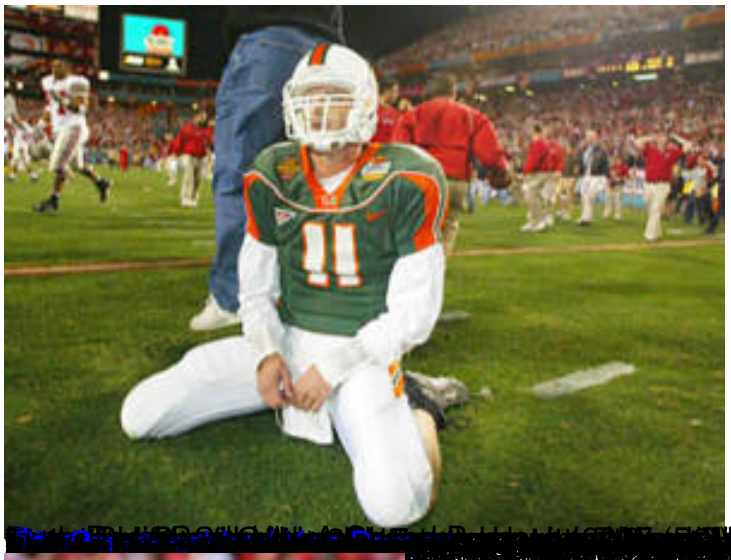
about it this time around. Hurricane quarterback Jacory Harris returns, looking for redemption for the four interceptions he threw a year ago, but the Buckeyes' quarterback situation is no less iffy after Joe Bauserman's up and down showing last week.

This will be the fifth time these teams have met, the Buckeyes having won three of the four prior contests. The official record book shows just three previous games, with a 2-1 OSU edge in the series, since last year's victory has been vacated by Ohio State as part of their sanctions for NCAA violations. Ohio State took a 10-0 decision in the 1977 opener in Columbus, and fell to the Hurricanes 23-12 in the 1999 Kickoff Classic. Then there was that Duel in the Desert on January 3, 2003.

Bad Boys

I'm going to go out on a limb here and predict that the ESPN telecast will mention that Ohio State has had some off-the-field issues affecting them this past off-season, and if they get around to it, some of Miami's troubles might find their way into the narrative as well. Both teams will still be short-handed, although both will be getting some players back for this game that have not yet seen action this season.

Ohio State had three players reinstated by the NCAA this week after serving 2-game suspensions for accepting improper benefits. Starting cornerback Travis Howard, No. 1 tailback Jordan Hall, and backup safety Corey Brown will all be available for Luke Fickell's Buckeyes on Saturday. Also coming back from an unrelated suspension is offensive guard Corey Linsley, who is likely to share playing time at right guard for the Bucks. And four star players for the Hurricanes, receiver Travis Benjamin, linebacker Sean Spence, defensive tackle Marcus Fortson, and the quarterback Harris will all be eligible to compete against OSU.



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(photo courtesy Bob Cleary/Image Ve.N Athenea.....Jim Davidson, The O2Ohio.net)