The Split Personality Round Table is a weekly column where I let my split personalities argue about sports topics. Sometimes I'm an optimist, sometimes I'm a pessimist, and sometimes I'm a realist. Most of the time, I'm all at once. Continue at your own risk.

The Buckeyes officially bounced back after their debacle in Miami with a 37-17 victory over Colorado, improving to a 3-1 record on the year. With their non-conference opponents in the rear-view, the Buckeyes can now look forward to the meat of their schedule -- the conference slate.

Ohio State's Big Ten schedule begins this Saturday when the Buckeyes host the Michigan State Spartans. Sparty will bring the best overall defense in the country (statistically) to the 'Shoe -- a defense that has held four opponents to an average of just 172 yards of offense per game. Granted, those four opponents (Youngstown State, Florida Atlantic, turnover-happy Notre Dame and Central Michigan) aren't really the hardest teams to stop, but it's not like the Buckeyes offense is scaring anyone these days. And that brings us to this week's debate topic..

Debate Topic: Ohio State has dominated Michigan State over the last decade, beating the Spartans all six times they've played since 2002. Will that stretch continue this week?

Swisher (The Pessimist) Yeah, that stretch is going to end in a fiery, painful death. Let's look at this realistically, shall we?

Can anyone remember an Ohio State offense that looked as inept as the 2011 edition? The passing game is absolutely non-existent right now (I honestly don't see Ohio State completing more than 100 passes this season), and the Buckeyes leading receiver to date is *the A-Deck*. And that's no one's fault really -- Joe Bauserman and the A-Deck developed quite the chemistry during spring and fall camp... I'm pretty sure they were roommates.

The Buckeyes were stone-walled by the only legitimate defense they played this year, and in case you haven't realized it yet, Miami sucks . Real bad . Michigan State is worlds apart from Miami on defense, and that doesn't bode well for the Bucks.

Not to mention Sparty's offense, which is actually quite effective. Kirk Cousins is off to a fantastic start through four games, throwing for 947 yards while completing 69% of his passes. The Spartans have three very good running backs that wear defenses down. And if Ohio State's best receiver were to put on a Michigan State jersey, he wouldn't be able to crack the two deep of their unit.

The streak ends Saturday. Buckeyes lose big.

Figz (The Optimist) Did I stumble down a flight of steps and fall into an alternate universe where Michigan State needs to be taken seriously?

Come on now Swisher. If you're looking at things "realistically", you can't ignore how terrible the Spartans have been against "real" competition over the years. When Dantonio took over the coaching position on '07, the program was supposedly "back" after four straight impressive wins. But in week five, they got bounced by an unbeaten Wisconsin team, and things went downhill from there. Following that game, when their schedule was populated by non-MAC squads, the Spartans went 3-5 (with their only wins coming against Indiana, Purdue and Anthony Morelli's Penn State squad). In '08 the Spartans were supposed to be even better, but they played three ranked opponents and lost each game by a combined score of 118-37 (including a 45-7 beat-down by the Buckeyes in East Lansing). 2009 was a forgettable year where they lost seven of 13 games.

Last year was the year things supposedly "turned around" for the Spartans as they marched off eight straight wins -- highlighted by a 34-24 victory over Wisconsin. Then October 30th rolled around, and Sparty was put in their place by a 37-7 drubbing at the hands of Iowa. Their only other legit opponent, Alabama, beat them into a bloody 49-7 pulp in the Capital One bowl. During that game, Michigan State punted on fourth and goal. Let me say that again:
Michigan State had to
punt on fourth and goal
.

Aside from Wisconsin last year (cough, fluke, cough), Michigan State hasn't been able to stay on the same field with a quality opponent in a long, long time.

That continues this week. Buckeyes win big.

Franky (The Realist) You guys can't keep reverting back to past experiences and apply them to the future as some kind of glance into what we should expect. That works in some cases, but it's not full-proof.

The two teams that take this field Saturday will be very different than what we've grown accustomed to over the last decade. Figz -- you're right in saying Michigan State has struggled

against quality opponents over the years, but they are showing progress in overcoming that. And regardless, who's to say Ohio State is a quality opponent? To date, they've soundly beaten two bad teams in Colorado and Akron, struggled against a decent but not great Toledo team, and then got hammered by a decent but not great Miami team. That isn't really the resume of a "quality team" in my eyes.

Michigan State will be the best defense Ohio State has played against this season, that much is certain. But on the flip side, the offense Ohio State puts on the field will be its best of the season so far. With Braxton Miller, the Buckeyes have the added dimension of a quarterback who can make something happen with his legs on third and long as opposed to sailing passes out of bounds to avoid a turnover. He also seems more capable of completing the home run pass, unlike Bauserman who was unable to hit his deep passes in games against Akron and Toledo.

In short, this isn't like the last six games Ohio State has played against Michigan State. The Buckeyes aren't as dominant, and Michigan State isn't the pushover they used to be. The gap between these two teams has narrowed on account of Michigan State improving in addition to Ohio State falling back a little bit.

It's going to be very close. The game could go either way -- but with the Buckeyes playing at home, they should be able to squeak this one out.

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