## SEPT. 28, 2019 ✦ MICHIGAN VS. RUTGERS

**Game Info**

**Site:** Michigan Stadium (107,601)

**Kickoff:** 12:00 p.m.

**Television:** BTN

**Radio:** Michigan/IMG Radio Network (950 AM in the Detroit Area; SiriusXM channel 195) with Dan Dierdorf, Jim Brandstatter and sideline reporter Doug Karsch, a regular contributor to TheWolverine.com.

**Series Facts:** Though the programs are two of the oldest in college football, Saturday will mark just the sixth meeting in the series … U-M leads 4-1 and has won each of the last four matchups … In two previous showdowns at Michigan Stadium, the Wolverines have posted 49-16 (2015) and 35-14 (2017) victories … Jim Harbaugh's team comes into the game ranked 20th in both the AP and coaches' polls … It is the first time in the past 10 games U-M is ranked outside the nation's top 10.

# Previewing Rutgers With A Scarlet Knight Insider

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

With the Michigan Wolverines' football team set to take on Rutgers this Saturday at The Big House, The Knight Report's Richie Schnyderite was kind enough to swing by and break down the Scarlet Knights' squad prior to the matchup.

Schnyderite explained what fans should expect to see from Rutgers this weekend, while also providing his final score prediction at the end.

### Rutgers Football's Projected Starters On Offense

• Sophomore QB Artur Sitkowski — Head coach Chris Ash announced on Monday that fifth-year senior McLane Carter (who started the club's first two games) is in concussion protocol and Sitkowski will receive the start as a result. The sophomore is completing 61.4 percent of his passes this season with one touchdown and two picks, after connecting on just 49.1 percent of his throws last year with four scores and 18 interceptions.

• Junior RB Raheem Blackshear — The do-it-all-weapon in Rutgers' offense is once again off to a fabulous start, leading the team in catches (22), receiving yards (255) and scoring grabs (two), despite serving as a running back. Blackshear is also the second-leading rusher on the team with 23 attempts for 77 yards, trailing only sophomore Isaih Pacheco's 46 touches for 239 yards.

• Junior WR Bo Melton — His nine receptions and 186 yards are both second on the squad, while his 20.7 yards per reception lead the club and are the fifth-best mark in the Big Ten. Melton had the best performance of his career in the season opener against Massachusetts, when he hauled in six grabs for 127 yards and a touchdown.

• Redshirt junior WR Mohamed Jabbie — He has five catches for 50 yards, after only hauling in one grab for 14 yards all of last season. The veteran has nine career starts under his belt, but has reeled in more than 14 yards in a game just once in his career.

• Freshman WR Isaiah Washington — He has started the team's last two contests against Iowa and Boston College, and his 52 yards on the year are the third most on the roster. At 6-3, 198, Washington is four inches taller than both Jabbie and Melton, who are both 5-11.

• Redshirt freshman TE Matt Alaimo — He wasn't expected to be a starter this year, but has begun two of the team's first three games in the wake of fifth-year senior Kyle Penniston's season-ending injury. Alaimo stands 6-4, 237, and has hauled in four grabs for 51 yards.

• Redshirt freshman LT Raiqwon O'Neal — He has struggled mightily in 2019 according to Pro Football Focus (PFF), checking in with an overall grade of 50.1 (64 is considered average). That mark ranks 26th out of the 28 Scarlet Knight players who have seen offensive snaps this year.

• Fifth-year senior LG Zach Venesky — He was named a team captain prior to the season, and was one of three participants that Ash took with him to Chicago in July for Big Ten Media Days. Venesky's play has not reflected his high honorary stature, however, with PFF slapping him with a below-average grade of 62.2.

• Redshirt junior C Michael Maietti — He has started 24 of the 27 contests since his redshirt freshman season in 2017, including all three this year and all 12 last season. PFF has declared Maietti an outstanding pass blocker, awarding him with a 75.2 grade so far in that department.

• Redshirt junior RG Nick Krimin — He has played in 22 of the club's 27 contests since the start of 2017, earning six starts in that span. PFF has actually pegged him as the team's best pass blocker, awarding him with a phenomenal 79.9 grade in that category.

• Fifth-year senior RT Kamaal Seymour — He is the most experienced of the Scarlet Knight offensive linemen, having started 32 of the team's 39 tilts since the beginning of the 2016 campaign. At 6-6, 324, Seymour is the heaviest player on the entire roster and is tied for the tallest.

### Rutgers Football's Projected Starters on Defense

• Redshirt sophomore DE Mike Tverdov — His 52.7 overall grade from PFF is the third

lowest of the 29 Rutgers athletes who have seen defensive snaps this season. Tverdov has yet to pick up his first sack or tackle for loss, but is tied for the team lead in quarterback hurries with two.

• Redshirt junior DT Julius Turner — His 13 tackles are the most of any defensive lineman on the team, while his 73.9 tally from PFF as a run defender is fourth best on the roster. Turner has participated in all 27 of Rutgers' contests since the start of 2017.

• Fifth-year senior DT Willington Previlon — His two tackles for loss are tied for the club lead, and his 169 snaps played are the third most on the entire defense. PFF has him pegged as the third-best run defender on the squad, with a 74.7 grade in that area.

• Redshirt junior DE Elorm Lumor — He has started the first three outings at the "Jack" position, which serves in a hybrid linebacker/defensive end role. Seven of Lumor's 12 tackles on the year actually came in last week's 30-16 loss to Boston College.

• Redshirt junior LB Tyreek Maddox-Williams — Despite having received 154 snaps so far (fifth most on the defense), his 56.3 grade from PFF ranks 24th out of the 29 Scarlet Knight defenders who have seen action. Maddox-Williams' two tackles for loss are tied with Previlon for the team lead, while his 12 tackles are tied for seventh most.

• Junior LB Tyshon Fogg — The former four-star recruit leads the squad with 33 stops, which is 13 more than any other player on the roster. Fogg's 11 tackles per game are the third-highest mark in the Big Ten, trailing only Purdue fifth-year senior linebacker Ben Holt's 11.6 and Michigan senior viper Khaleke Hudson's 11.3.

• Junior LB Olakunle Fatukasi — His 20 stops are the second most on the squad, behind Fogg's 33. PFF has tabbed Fatukasi as the best tackler on the Scarlet Knight defense, awarding him with an 86.7 mark in that department.

• Sophomore CB Avery Young — He burst onto the scene last year as a freshman, starting the team's final 11 games and finishing third on the club with 66 tackles. Young is once again off to an outstanding start, with his 71.3 PFF grade checking in as the highest of the 11 projected defensive starters.

• Senior CB Damon Hayes — He has started 23 clashes since the start of the 2017 season, with 12 of them coming at safety and 11 at corner. Hayes has once again settled in at the latter spot for his final campaign and leads the defense with 215 snaps played through three games.

• Sophomore S Jarrett Paul — His 17 tackles are the fourth most on the team, though he has yet to record an interception or pass broken up from his safety spot. Paul's 59.2 PFF pass coverage grade checks in 19th out of the 24 Scarlet Knights defenders who have been asked to defend the pass this season.

• Fifth-year senior S Malik Dixon — He did not see action in 2018 after transferring in from Eastern Arizona Community College and having spent two years at South Florida prior to that. PFF has tagged him with a 52.4 mark through three tilts, which checks in 28th out of the 29 Rutgers defensive players who have seen game action in 2019.

## Rutgers Football's Projected Starters on Special Teams

• Junior K Justin Davidovicz — He has been perfect on his field goal attempts, connecting on all five with a long of 50 yards. Davidovicz has also recorded touchbacks on eight of his 15 kickoffs.

• Redshirt junior P Adam Korsak — He is averaging 45.6 yards on 16 punts, and has dropped 12 of his 16 kicks inside the opposing 20-yard line. Korsak was tabbed to the Ray Guy Award (nation's best punter) watch list in July, and took home the accolade's National Punter of the Week honor last Saturday against Boston College when he landed all five of his punts inside the 20-yard line.

## Rutgers Football's Biggest Offensive Strength

"The biggest strength of the offense is the group of running backs that Rutgers has," Schynderite explained. "Blackshear has multiple 100-plus yard receiving games this season, Isaih Pacheco is averaging 5.2 yards per carry and leads the team with four rushing touchdowns, and now freshman Aaron Young has been getting thrown into the mix more often as both a slot wide receiver/running back, most recently catching the ball three times for 35 yards against BC.

"You'll see Rutgers run multiple running back sets and do a lot of motion stuff to get the ball in these guys' hands. Overall the group is by far and away the most talented group on the offense and maybe even the team."

Pacheco has taken over as the club's primary rusher this year, with his 79.6 rushing yards per contest checking in as the fifth most in the Big Ten and his four rushing scores tying for sixth.

Blackshear, meanwhile, has only accumulated 77 yards on the ground after racking up 586 last season.

## Rutgers Football's Biggest Offensive Weakness

"The biggest weakness is the offensive line, without a question," the analyst noted. "This offseason Rutgers lost a lot of experience on the O-line when Tariq Cole [42 games, 34 starts] graduated and Jonah Jackson [29 games, 16 starts] transferred to Ohio State.

"This unit has struggled to block and create just about any type of holes for the running game recently, hence why the Scarlet Knights were only able to put up 76 rushing yards total against an average Boston College defense.

"I expect them to struggle once again against Michigan this weekend."

Rutgers' rushing attack is averaging a dismal 3.9 yards per carry through the first three contests, which is tied for 82nd nationally.

The club is also mustering just 120 yards on the ground per game, which is deadlocked for 103rd in the country.

**Rutgers Football's Biggest Defensive Strength**

"At the beginning of the season I would've likely said the linebacker unit, but now I'm not really sure," Schnyderite explained. "However, if I had to pick a unit, I'd say the cornerbacks are probably the best of the bunch.

"Sophomore Avery Young has been pretty good so far as the team's No. 1 corner. Damon Hayes was moved from safety this offseason back to cornerback and struggled a little in games one and two versus UMass and Iowa, but bounced back against Iowa a little.

"No. 3 corner and former OSU/Toledo defensive back Tre Avery has been very impressive so far in coverage and was The Knight Report's defensive player of the game for week one versus UMass."

The Scarlet Knight secondary has been outstanding statistically this season, allowing just 174.7 yards through the air per game (22nd nationally).

Opposing clubs are also having a difficult time connecting on passes at a high rate; Rutgers has only yielded a 55.7 opposing completion percentage, which is the fourth-best mark in the Big Ten and 26th overall in college football.

**Rutgers Football's Biggest Defensive Weakness**

"The weakest part of the defense right now is the defensive line," Schnyderite revealed. "This unit has struggled mightily over the past two games to generate any type of pass rush at all against Iowa and Boston College recently. Not to mention that same unit played a role in giving up 280-plus rushing yards to the Eagles last Saturday.

"If the defense wants to succeed at all, this unit needs to start generating some type of pass rush."

The squad's rush defense statistics aren't pretty as a whole on the year, with the front seven surrendering an average of 218 yards per game on the ground (118th nationally).

The Scarlet Knights have also had trouble finding their way into opposing backfields, with their 1.0 sack per contest ranking 113th overall in the land and their 4.6 tackles for loss an outing checking in 103rd.

## SCHNYDERITE'S FINAL SCORE PREDICTION

"I'm going to predict a big Michigan win this weekend," Schnyderite said. "I know the spread is -29 right now, and I fully expect the Wolverines to cover.

"After that big loss to Wisconsin last week, I expect the Wolverines to come out right away and pour on as many points as possible."

**Michigan 55, Rutgers 3**

# Keys To The Game: Michigan Wolverines Football vs. Rutgers

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

Michigan is now 2-1 heading into a home game with hapless Rutgers following a 35-14 loss at Wisconsin that probably wasn't as close as the final score. The Badgers bullied U-M, especially with their offense, and left head coach Jim Harbaugh and his staff searching for answers.

There's only one thing to do, Harbaugh said in the aftermath — get back to work and make sure one loss doesn't lead to two, which is highly unlikely given the opponent.

"To respond," Harbaugh said when asked what he expected of himself. "Same thing we've asked our players, coaches to do. Put the best possible game plan we can to get a win this week, win the next game … for the players to respond and learn that, understand it and eventually execute it on Saturday."

Michigan alums were embarrassed, especially those who wore the uniform, and once again they were pitied by former Buckeye and current analyst Chris Spielman.

"I'm not being facetious or I'm not speaking in hyperbole. Take the helmets off, and I might as well turn on Central Michigan, Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Ferris State, Wayne State, any other state up there, Grand Valley State, because that's not a Michigan team," he said on his podcast this week. "When you go to a place like Michigan, there's a certain standard that needs to be upheld. When you're not upholding that standard, there's going to be blowback.

"So I want to see if this 'Michigan Man' thing is anything to these guys. Are they going to come together? Are they going to respond? Are they going to have pride? Because this offense is not what they are. That offensive line was decimated and destroyed by Wisconsin."

If that doesn't motivate them, nothing will

Saturday's win (and it had better be that) will do nothing to prove anything to anyone, nor should it. The next test is Iowa the following week, a well-coached team that — like Wisconsin — wants to out-tough, out-physical and wear teams down with their toughness. That's when we'll find out more about this team's resolve.

In the meantime, here's what the Wolverines need to do to in order to get back on track and beat hapless Rutgers:

**Figure it out up front defensively:** Redshirt sophomore Donovan Jeter had a big spring and summer, and earned praise for his play, but he struggled in his first significant taste of action at Wisconsin. Senior nose tackle Carlo Kemp has been playing his butt off, even if he's undersized, but they need redshirt junior Michael Dwumfour back — or for others to progress quickly — to compete against the more physical teams on the schedule.

"Wisconsin played physical up front, the back had some really incredible runs, found the softness in the defense, exploited fits … there were some [bad] fits and poor tackling," Harbaugh said of last week.

But it starts with establishing the line of scrimmage. This week probably won't tell us much (unless Rutgers is able to move the ball on the ground — then there's a problem), but the following week against Iowa will be the week we find out if this defense really has a chance.

**Protect the ball:** This one seems like a broken record, but that's where we are. This team was great in that respect a year ago — this season the ball's like a hot potato to senior quarterback Shea Patterson and Co., and after four more turnovers Saturday, the Wolverines rank last nationally among teams that have played three games with nine giveaways. They're also tied for 118th overall against all NCAA teams.

Offensive coordinator Josh Gattis seemed lost as to how to fix it.

"We've devoted so much time to it. It's uncharacteristic, it really is, the time we've devoted to ball security," he said this week. "I wish I had an answer. I know each and every one of these guys don't want to put the ball on ground … it's become a little bit of an issue with so many turnovers so early in the game."

One in each opening drive of the year, in fact. Gattis admits it's indicative of an undisciplined team.

"We've got to keep stressing the issues of ball security. Each and every player has got to make it important on each and every play that we're protecting the ball, and those who have it," Gattis said. "It's not just the ball carrier. It's everyone finishing on blocks, blocking on the perimeter, blocking the secondary players so guys don't get hit at the second level."

**Figure out who really wants to play** … hard, on every play: Some of Michigan's best teams weren't its most talented. The 1985 defense, for example, was undersized at many positions, not particularly fast, but it played well together like few teams in the country.

Likewise, some of U-M's past wide receivers and linemen weren't even the most talented in the Big Ten, but they went on to long NFL careers because they laid it on the line every play.

Harbaugh is looking or guys who 'want it,' and he made the clear this week.

"Emphasis on physicality, emphasis on toughness and emphasis on hustle. We'll make that part of the practice plan more, and also playing the players that are dedicated and playing physically at all times," Harbaugh said. "Get those players in the ballgame."

Sometimes it takes a kick in the rear to get the best out of a guy.

## THE BREAKDOWN: RUTGERS AT MICHIGAN

We'll ask it here like we do every year … what was Jim Delany thinking?

The Big Ten Commissioner had New York market TV money on his mind, etc., when he pursued Rutgers, but it's been a failure. The Scarlet Knights haven't been competitive on the gridiron in most of the years since joining the conference, and this season is no different.

Harbaugh praised Rutgers' running back duo of Raheem Blackshear and Isaih Pacheco, who ran for 193 yards total on 33 carries against U-M last year (including Pacheco's 80-yard touchdown run), but this is a bad football team. The Scarlet Knights were shut out and held to 125 total yards by Iowa, and are 27.5-point dogs for a reason.

It would be disappointing if this were a game at halftime.

## Michigan Wolverines Football News & Views: Is There Hope Up Front?

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

The Michigan Wolverines have issues on both lines … and the problems go well beyond that.

We tackle some of the bigger concerns in this week's News and Views segment, following Jim Harbaugh's Monday press conference.

**NEWS:** Wisconsin owned the lines of scrimmage against Michigan, running for 350-plus yards to U-M's 40. The Badgers were more physical from the jump and never let up, while Michigan was sporadic.

**HARBAUGH:** "You can [teach physicality] and it will be an emphasis. Emphasis on physicality, emphasis on toughness and emphasis on hustle. We'll make that part of the practice plan more and also playing the players that are dedicated and playing physically at all times. Get those players in the ballgame."

**VIEWS:** This program has had some attitudes over the years among guys who later blossomed into great leaders and players and realized their potential. Sometimes it's a challenge from a coach that brings out the best in them (1980 linebacker Andy Cannavino) … other times it's a parent at home (2003 Doak Walker Award winning back Chris Perry's mother).

Parents of malcontents are doing their kids a disservice if they're coddling them or encouraging them to "get theirs" before putting team first. As for the others … it's on the

coaches to get everyone on the same page with a common goal, specifically Harbaugh himself. Guys who don't want to buy in need to sit; others, hopefully, will come around and become leaders like Cannavino was to help lead a successful turnaround.

Analyst and Ohio State alum Chris Spielman once again played the "lack of talent" card recently, like he did when Rich Rodriguez was here. U-M is lacking in spots (specifically, defensive line), but there is plenty of talent at other positions — several returners have already earned All-Big Ten honors, and there is very good young talent we haven't seen yet. It wouldn't be surprising to see some of the younger guys get a shot going forward … but not if they aren't ready.

So no, Chris, this is not "Mike Martin and a bunch of kids who look like they belong at Indiana." There is hope.

**NEWS:** Several offensive plays have gone awry this year due to one player doing something wrong on a play … and it always seems to be someone new.

**HARBAUGH:** "Players have to focus … always have to play with focus. That has to be coached, too. That's not getting done. We're missing detail at one position and then a mistake pops up at another position on the next play; there's always one guy. That's coaching and focusing by the players, make sure they're doing their job.

"We've got to make sure it's done and done right. As the week of practice goes on, if it's not done right then we've got to do it again. I've got to make sure of that, and that's part of my responsibility"

**VIEWS:** At the same time, offensive coordinator Josh Gattis said Wednesday, practices have been quite good. The offense has moved the ball well and the mistakes aren't being made like they are on Saturdays.

There are probably a few reasons for that. One — as Gattis noted — they aren't seeing the level of defense they're lining up against on Saturday. They usually go against the 'twos,' and that's not close to what they see against, say, Wisconsin's first unit. They don't usually hit anymore, and there's as difference between a guy 'thudding' a ball carrier in practice and a defender trying to put his helmet on the ball.

No. 2, the guys making the plays in practice aren't the guys getting a lot of the reps in games (at least a handful). Guys like freshman running back Zach Charbonnet, receivers Tarik Black and Donovan Peoples-Jones have been missing practice with bumps and bruises … to expect them to perform at a high level probably isn't reasonable.

Bo Schembechler used to have a rule — you want to play Saturday, you've got to practice full go by Wednesday or Thursday. Peoples-Jones stepped on the field Saturday without practicing all week, Gattis said Wednesday.

That might be a policy worth revisiting.

**NEWS:** Michigan lined up fifth-year senior linebacker Jordan Glasgow at defensive tackle on the goal line a few times against Wisconsin, once leaving the 'A' gap open. It didn't work. Harbaugh was asked if freshman defensive linemen Chris Hinton and Mazi Smith could help in that area.

**HARBAUGH:** "We're looking for players that are going to help us. Maybe somebody can help us on a cover team, on a return team, run down to cover a kickoff or run down to cover a punt. We're looking for guys to step up and play with that great focus, physicality and hustle that this level demands."

**VIEWS:** That's how you go about not answering a question you don't want to answer.

It's clear at this point that defensive line is a weakness, and judging by Harbaugh's response, neither Smith nor Hinton are answers (yet). Senior Carlo Kemp is busting his tail and has been good, especially getting penetration at the snap. Redshirt sophomore Donovan Jeter struggled up front against the Badgers, and junior Ben Mason just isn't the answer.

That leaves more questions than answers at this point, especially with redshirt junior Mike Dwumfour's status in doubt (he's been dressing, but not playing). Defensive coordinator Don Brown has his work cut out for him.

**NEWS:** Michigan's offensive line, with four returning starters, has not met the early-season hype, especially in the running game.

**HARBAUGH:** "Offensive line, we talked about that being an experienced group. They've got to play good; they've got to hustle and they've got to protect the quarterback and they've got to play physical in both areas, in pass protection and the run game. It's our job to get them to do that.

"We've got backs that need holes. We expect our offensive line to move people and that didn't happen this past game. We weren't as physical as our opponent on the offensive or defensive line. It all ties into all 11."

**VIEWS:** Junior center Cesar Ruiz, for one, hasn't been the guy many hoped he would be through three games. He should be playing at an All-Big Ten level, but he's been average through the first three games — and he's better than that.

The line did some solid things in pass protection early, but the breakdowns came fast and furious from the end of the second quarter on. There was some fire on the left side in the second half, which was good to see, but this group is way too inconsistent … and it shouldn't be there at this point in their careers.

It's time to step up and take pride in their jobs beyond "this is my assignment." Right now, they're not playing winning football.

# Wolverine Watch: Time For Some Fire-Breathing Prep

John Borton • TheWolverine

Jim Harbaugh strode into the interview area at Schembechler Hall on Monday with a purpose. Those on the receiving end, frankly, braced for the worst.

Harbaugh isn't crazy about this setting, at high noon each Monday during the football season. Given the option of being staked down in the sun, covered in honey and set upon by fire ants, he might take it.

He enjoys friendlier outlets, like his podcast and his radio show. He endures these moments, like a week earlier, when he stared and stiff-armed his way through roughly 11 minutes of pre-Wisconsin chatter.

So inquiring minds could only imagine his approach, after his team got its collective backside handed to it at Wisconsin. This promised to be short, and anything but sweet.

They were surprised. This was Good Jim — engaging, helpful and ready to pull back the curtain a bit.

He acknowledged what he described as obvious "to the entire football world."

"From A to Z, it wasn't good," Harbaugh said of the 35-14 chastening in Cheeseville. "It wasn't good enough. Not acceptable. It starts really with, it's not acceptable to me. You start self-critical and determined to get it fixed. That speaks for me and everybody on our team, players and coaches. Not a day we're proud of.

"We didn't play physical enough. We were out-hustled. I take responsibility for that. In any ways that we were out-schemed, I take responsibility. That's my job, to make sure we're completely sound in all offenses, defenses, everything we're running.

"And, in how I manage the team and get them to play hard, play tough. Like I said, A to Z, it wasn't good enough. We all take responsibility for that, we've all got fingerprints on it. We're determined to get it fixed."

Boom. There it is. Any questions?

Well sure, a few. Like how, after months of preparation for a season, aspects such as physicality and toughness can be enhanced within one? He answered that as well, hinting at personnel changes based on those competitive characteristics.

"You can — and that will be an emphasis," Harbaugh assured. "An emphasis on physicality, an emphasis on toughness, an emphasis on hustle. You make it part of the practice plan more, and also playing the players who are dedicated to playing physically and hustling at all times. You get those players in the ball game."

In short, Harbaugh sent a message to his players, his coaches, former Michigan players barking on social media, and Johnny Message Board or Jimmy Talk Show Caller.

Not acceptable. And we're not accepting it.

Now, Harbaugh didn't have to do that, with regard to the latter groups. What he says to reporters at noon on Mondays at Schembechler Hall has as much effect on Michigan's success as whether he pours whole milk or Gatorade on his cereal in the morning.

But in this case, getting Good Jim means something. He came down the staircase at the facility named for his former coach with a purpose. He vowed to get things fixed, with a purpose.

In the days to come, his players and coaches need to experience Good (Or Good And Angry) Jim, and respond to him.

They did a poor job in Madison, albeit against a team that could very well wind up atop the Big Ten. They didn't push back nearly hard enough against a crew that bullied them right into the Camp Randall Stadium turf.

They didn't block well, tackle well, or — as several former Michigan offensive linemen forcefully pointed out — play with the sort of edge that intimidates, rather than getting intimidated.

They were too passive, in some minds, when the Badgers knocked redshirt sophomore quarterback Dylan McCaffrey from the game on a dirty, head-hunting hit.

Harbaugh says he's looking for more physicality and toughness. He's played on teams with plenty. He's coached teams that overflowed with it.

He may need to force it — not by tweeting at other coaches, breaking buckeye nuts over Schembechler's grave or smashing clipboards. But the fire he brought to Michigan might need a little stoking.

"That stuff doesn't necessarily make you a great head coach, but he had a swagger to him that I think the team kind of adopted," Michigan Radio sideline reporter Doug Karsch observed. "It seems to have changed.

"Some people wanted him to change. I wonder if he needs to get some of his swagger back."

Harbaugh's players indicated he dropped this on them at practice: "Winning cures more illnesses than penicillin."

That's true. What he didn't say (but knows) is this: losing reveals more illnesses than a health screening in a third-world country.

Harbaugh's team needs plenty right now — more capable defensive linemen, a nastier edge, savvier pass protectors, better health and nobody saving himself for the NFL.

It also needs Good Jim, Ultimate Competitor Jim, breathing fire back into the furnace.

# By The Numbers: How Harbaugh's Teams Have Fared After Double-Digit Losses

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

Saturday's 35-14 loss at Wisconsin was the seventh double-digit setback since Jim Harbaugh took over as the head coach of the Michigan Wolverines' football program prior to the 2015 campaign.

The chatter that has ensued this week from both the players and coaches has surrounded how the team will respond from the blowout, with senior linebacker Josh Uche perhaps summing it up best on Tuesday night:

"You have to respond to adversity; everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth, like Mike Tyson said," he explained. "We got punched in the mouth — what are we going to do about it? Are we going to lay down? No. I'm going to get up and keep fighting and keep swinging — that's what this team is going to do.

"Winning cures everything."

In his first two and a half years at the helm, Harbaugh did an outstanding job of not letting one loss turn into two, with the club dropping consecutive games only once (the 2016 defeat at Ohio State and then the setback to Florida State in the Orange Bowl).

The U-M head man coined the phrase "Putting steel in your spine" following the 2015 heartbreaking loss to Michigan State, and that mantra has seemed to work perfectly early in his tenure.

A three-game skid to close out the 2017 campaign (at Wisconsin, Ohio State and then to South Carolina in the Outback Bowl) marked the longest losing stretch of Harbaugh's tenure at Michigan, however, and double-digit setbacks to the Badgers and Buckeyes during that span were just the second and third defeats by such a margin under the 55-year-old's tutelage.

Two straight losses occurred once again to conclude the 2018 season, with the Wolverines dropping each of their final two contests in blowout fashion to Ohio State and Florida, respectively.

| Michigan's Double-Digit Losses Under Harbaugh And What Followed | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Game (Score)** | **Ensuing Game (Result)** |
| 2019 | at Wisconsin (L, 35-14) | Rutgers (?) |
| 2018 | vs. Florida* (L, 41-15) | Middle Tennessee State (W, 40-21, the following season) |
| 2018 | at Ohio State (L, 62-39) | vs. Florida* (L, 41-15) |
| 2017 | Ohio State (L, 31-20) | vs. South Carolina* (L, 26-19) |
| 2017 | at Wisconsin (L, 24-10) | Ohio State (L, 31-20) |
| 2017 | at Penn State (L, 42-13) | Rutgers (W, 35-14) |
| 2015 | Ohio State (L, 42-13) | vs. Florida* (W, 41-7) |

\* — bowl game at neutral location

After losing just one game by 10 or more points in Harbaugh's first two years on the job (a 42-13 setback to Ohio State in 2015), U-M has now done so six times since the 2017 season began.

Granted, all six of those were against Associated Press top-15 teams, but it also needs to be noted that Michigan suffered just one defeat by 10 or more points against a combined six AP top-15 clubs from 2015-16.

The Maize and Blue bounced back from their blowout loss to the Buckeyes in 2015 in impressive fashion, taking out their anger on the Florida Gators in a 41-7 Buffalo Wild Wings Citrus Bowl destruction.

U-M also rebounded nicely from a 42-13 setback at Penn State in 2017 by handling Rutgers 35-14 the following week at The Big House, and they'll have the opportunity for a similar bounce back against the same foe this weekend.

The aforementioned three-game skid to close out 2017 clearly mars the table above a bit, as do the back-to-back blowout losses to Ohio State and Florida to end the 2018 season.

A triumph over Rutgers on Saturday would improve Michigan's record to 4-3 following double-digit defeats under Harbaugh, with the three previous victories having occurred by an average of 24.6 points.

Granted, two of those triumphs were against Rutgers in 2017 and Middle Tennessee State in 2019, but the 41-7 Outback Bowl destruction of a 10-win Florida squad on Jan. 1,

2016, was no small feat.

The fact of the matter remains that when Michigan wins its games immediately following double-digit defeats, it comes out on top by a wide margin.

## BY THE NUMBERS: RUTGERS AT MICHIGAN

**5** Players on Michigan's roster who hail from New Jersey, which has been a state the U-M staff has targeted heavily on the recruiting trail under Harbaugh — redshirt junior defensive tackle Michael Dwumfour, junior safety Brad Hawkins, redshirt sophomore defensive back Hunter Reynolds, junior center Cesar Ruiz and fifth-year senior left tackle Jon Runyan Jr.

**9** Turnovers committed by the U-M offense this season (seven fumbles and two interceptions), which is tied for 118th (out of 130 teams) nationally. The Maize and Blue only coughed the ball up 12 times all of last year, which was the eighth-best mark in the country.

**11.3** Tackles per game for senior viper Khaleke Hudson, which is the second most in the Big Ten (behind only Purdue fifth-year senior linebacker Ben Holt's 11.6) and the ninth most nationally. His 34 total tackles are seven more than any other Wolverine defender.

**47.6** Yards per punt for redshirt junior punter Will Hart this season, which leads the Big Ten and is the sixth-best mark in the entire country. Hart averaged 46.9 yards per boot in 2018 and took home the Big Ten Punter of the Year award.

**50** Percent chance of precipitation on Saturday in Ann Arbor, including scattered thunderstorms, a high of 70 degrees and maximum wind gusts of nine miles-per-hour.

**204-37** Is the combined margin U-M has outscored Rutgers by since Harbaugh took over prior to the 2015 season. Perhaps the most famous of those meetings was the 78-0 shellacking in Piscataway in 2016, which marked the Wolverines' biggest margin of victory in any game since they defeated Chicago 85-0 in 1939.

**233** Passing yards per contest Rutgers is averaging this season, which is 100.8 more than it tallied last year (132.2). Michigan's pass defense, on the other hand, currently ranks fourth in the nation, yielding just 135 yards through the air per game.

**1869** and **1879** Is when Rutgers and Michigan played their first-ever football games, respectively, making the Scarlet Knights the oldest Football Bowl Subdivision program in the country, while the Maize and Blue are tied with Navy and Massachusetts for the third oldest. Rutgers defeated Princeton, 6-4, in the first-ever college football game on Nov. 6, 1869, while Michigan took down Racine, 1-0, in its debut contest on May 30, 1879.

# Updates On Every Former Michigan Wolverine In The NFL: Week Three

Ryan Tice • TheWolverine

Tom Brady threw for 306 yards with two touchdowns and no interceptions Sunday while leading a win over the Jets. It marked his 89th regular-season contest with more than 300 yards through the air (he trails only Drew Brees' 116 and Peyton Manning's 93) and his 28th victory over that franchise, his second most behind 30 against the Bills.

Brady has turned performances like that into simply footnotes of his great career, so we turn our attention to three former Michigan defensive linemen who shined in week three of NFL action.

Rashan Gary (though he now plays linebacker) picked up his first career sack, while Frank Clark (Chiefs) and Taco Charlton (Dolphins) each notched their first quarterback takedown with their new clubs. Charlton was released by the Cowboys, who made him inactive for their first two games, midweek last week then picked up by the Dolphins, who were playing the Cowboys Sunday, so that sack may have been a bit sweeter for the former first-round pick.

Rookie linebacker Devin Bush Jr. also enjoyed another solid Sunday, matching his career high and leading his team with 11 tackles.

A full breakdown of former Wolverines in the NFL is below:

### OG Ben Braden, Green Bay Packers

Spent the first week with the New York Jets on their practice squad, but was released and quickly picked up by the 3-0 Packers for their practice squad.

### QB Tom Brady, New England Patriots

Led the 3-0 Patriots to another win, a 30-14 victory over the Jets … Completed 28 of 42 passes (66.7 percent) for 306 yards with two touchdowns and no picks, good for a passer rating of 103.9 … It was actually his lowest rating yet this year … On the season, he has completed 72 of 106 attempts (67.9 percent) for 911 yards with seven touchdowns and no interceptions … Has a passer rating of 116.5 … Is tied for fourth in the league in scoring throws and ranks sixth in passing yards … Also ranks fourth among passers with at least 50 throws in rating and 11th for completion percentage.

### TE Ian Bunting, New York Jets

Is on the 0-3 Jets' practice squad.

### LB Devin Bush Jr., Pittsburgh Steelers

Tied his career high and led the 0-3 Steelers with 11 tackles and recovered two fumbles while starting in a 24-20 loss to the 49ers … Set a new career best with nine solo stops and played all 79 defensive snaps … Through three games and two starts, he has 29 tackles and

three fumble recoveries … Is ranked sixth in the league in total tackles and leads the NFL in fumble recoveries.

### TE Jake Butt, Denver Broncos

On injured reserve with the 0-3 Broncos after what he called on Twitter a "minor scope" to his knee.

### DE Taco Charlton, Miami Dolphins

Was picked up by the 2-1 Dolphins on Thursday and made his season debut by coming off the bench to record a pair of tackles, including a sack, in a 31-6 loss to the Cowboys, the team that cut him … Was in for 30 snaps, 42 percent of Miami's defensive plays.

### WR Jehu Chesson, Washington Redskins

Is on 0-3 Washington's practice squad.

### DE Frank Clark, Kansas City Chiefs

Started the 3-0 Chiefs' 33-28 win over the Ravens and racked up three tackles, including one sack … Has started all three games and tallied seven stops with one sack and an interception.

### C/G Mason Cole, Arizona Cardinals

Played four special teams snaps in the 0-2-1 Cardinals' 38-20 loss to the Panthers … Has appeared off the bench in all three games.

### WR Devin Funchess, Indianapolis Colts

Started for the 2-1 Colts and broke his collarbone in week one, after hauling in three passes for 32 yards, and is now on injured reserve.

### LB Rashan Gary, Green Bay Packers

Played 26 snaps (36 percent) on defense and also on special teams while recording his first NFL statistics in the 3-0 Packers' 27-16 win over the Broncos … He notched four tackles, including his first sack, and recovered a fumble … Has appeared in three contests and racked up four stops with a sack and fumble recovery.

### LB Ben Gedeon, Minnesota Vikings

Started at weakside linebacker and logged 18 defensive snaps (31 percent) in the 2-1 Vikings' 34-14 win over the Raiders … Has started both games he appeared in this year and logged one tackle.

### TE Zach Gentry, Pittsburgh Steelers

Made his NFL debut in the 0-3 Steelers' 24-20 loss to the 49ers and played 10 snaps (19 percent) … Actually recorded a tackle after a fumble recovery by San Francisco.

### OL Graham Glasgow, Detroit Lions

Started at right guard in 2-0-1 Detroit's 27-24 win over the Eagles … Played 50 offensive snaps (78 percent) and also appeared on special teams … Has started all three games this year.

### DT Ryan Glasgow, Cincinnati Bengals

Was not active with a thigh injury for the 0-3 Bengals … Has started once and played in both games so far, notching two tackles.

### DE Brandon Graham, Philadelphia Eagles

Started and tallied a trio of stops in the 1-2 Eagles' 27-24 loss to the Lions … Has started all three games so far this year and notched eight tackles.

### QB Chad Henne, Kansas City Chiefs

On injured reserve for the 3-0 Chiefs after breaking his ankle in the preseason.

### RB Karan Higdon, Houston Texans

Is on the 2-1 Texans' practice squad.

### S Lano Hill, Seattle Seahawks

Started at free safety in the 2-1 Seahawks' 33-27 loss to the Saints and had a tackle … Has appeared in three games (two starts) and totaled four stops.

### DT Maurice Hurst, Oakland Raiders

Came off the bench to tally four stops and break up one pass in the 1-2 Raiders' 34-14 loss to the Vikings … Has started twice on the year and totaled eight tackles with one pass broken up … Was on the field for 33 defensive snaps (52 percent) and also played special teams.

### FB Joe Kerridge, Cleveland Browns

On injured reserve with the 1-2 Browns.

### OT Taylor Lewan, Tennessee Titans

Is serving a four-game suspension; the 1-2 Titans lost 20-7 to the Jaguars.

### CB Jourdan Lewis, Dallas Cowboys

Played off the bench in the 3-0 Cowboys' 31-6 win over Miami … Notched a tackle to give him four in three appearances this year … Was in for 27 defensive snaps (38 percent) and also played on special teams.

### CB David Long, Los Angeles Rams

The third-round rookie has been inactive for the 3-0 Rams' first three games.

**OL Erik Magnuson, Buffalo Bills**

Currently resides on the 3-0 Bills' practice squad.

**DT Bryan Mone, Seattle Seahawks**

Came off the bench and appeared in the 2-1 Seahawks' 33-27 loss to the Saints … Was in for 22 defensive snaps (38 percent), but did not record any statistics … Has totaled three tackles in three appearances.

**OL Patrick Omameh**

Was active for the 2-1 Saints in their 33-27 win over the Seahawks, but did not play … Has appeared in one game this year.

**S Jabrill Peppers, New York Giants**

Started and set a season high, which tied his career best, with eight tackles for the 1-2 Giants in a 32-31 win over the Buccaneers … Finished with six solo stops and also broke up a pass and had a quarterback hit … He was second on the Giants in tackles and played every defensive snap … Has started every game and totaled 21 stops on the year, which ranks second on the team … Has also returned two punts for seven yards.

**QB Jake Rudock, Miami Dolphins**

Is on the 0-3 Dolphins' practice squad.

**LB Jake Ryan, Jacksonville Jaguars**

On the reserve/non-football injury list for the 1-2 Jaguars after suffering an offseason setback during his rehab from a torn ACL.

**OL Michael Schofield, Los Angeles Chargers**

Started at right guard in the 1-2 Chargers' 27-20 loss to the Texans … Played every snap … Has started all three games this year.

**CB Brandon Watson, Jacksonville Jaguars**

The undrafted rookie is on the 1-2 Jaguars' practice squad.

**S Jarrod Wilson, Jacksonville Jaguars**

Started at free safety in the 1-2 Jaguars' 20-7 win over the Titans and racked up four tackles … Played every defensive snap and also appeared on special teams … Has started all three games and notched 17 tackles with a pass breakup … Ranks fourth on the Jaguars in tackles.

**DE Chase Winovich, New England Patriots**

Assisted on a sack on just 13 defensive snaps (25 percent) in the 3-0 Patriots' 30-14 win over the Jets … Also played on special teams … Has played in every game off the bench and notched four tackles with two sacks.

**DE Chris Wormley, Baltimore Ravens**

Played in 2-1 Baltimore's 33-28 loss to the Chiefs and posted a quarterback hit on his 22 snaps (32 percent) … Started in Baltimore's week one win, but has not recorded any stats this year.

# Michigan Wolverines Football: Josh Gattis Is Still Looking For Answers

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

Michigan Wolverines offensive coordinator Josh Gattis met the media Wednesday to try to put U-M's offensive woes in perspective. The Wolverines ran for only 40 yards and were stymied most of the day by Wisconsin in a 35-14 loss that — once again — produced a number of turnovers.

Michigan, in fact, is tied for last nationally in turnovers lost among teams that have played three games and tied for 118th overall nationally. It's one of the main reasons the offense has struggled to get on track in September.

"If you went to the game, you don't really need to look at the stats. We didn't play great, obviously fell behind early," Gattis said. "We missed some opportunities to capitalize on

the big plays in the game that devastated the morale as an offense.

"The thing for us is responding from adversity early on. If you look at it, we had three opening drives that have all ended in fumbles. We've got to learn how to respond in those situations when we face adversity."

Or — better yet — how about not put themselves in that situation?

What we've heard from Michigan's players and coaches the last three weeks is what we used to hear from guys from different eras of the recent past when things weren't going well.

"It's always a different guy doing something wrong on a certain play."

"If only one more guy had finished his block."

"He missed the wide open receiver."

What it all adds up to is an offense that's got plenty of talent and not a whole lot to show for it.

"We ran what wanted to run … we just didn't capitalize on the plays we had in front of us," Gattis said. "Two first-half turnovers, 23 plays in the first half on offense. When you do that … in order to get more plays, you've got to capitalize on the plays you have. You've got to get first downs.

"We get a third-down penalty, but we immediately overreact and back ourselves up 20 yards because we overreact with a penalty. We can't have those moments where we beat ourselves in a game."

The best word to describe it is one fans use too often and coaches hate to hear, but Gattis brought it up.

"Overall when you look at it, obviously we've got some undisciplined characteristics showing up," Gattis said. "We've got to focus on being the most disciplined team that takes the field each week, maintain confidence in tough situations. That's the thing. These kids right now need confidence and leadership."

They also need to be on the field. Junior receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones didn't practice last week, and redshirt sophomore Tarik Black also missed a lot of time before the game. Freshman running back Zach Charbonnet played, but carried the ball only twice.

"Zach was definitely limited, as well as a number of different players. Donovan's first play Saturday was the first time he [played] all week long," Gattis said. "Tarik was out last week, and we had a number of different injuries we were battling throughout the week.

"We're managing Zach's situation … managing him just liken we're managing other players. At this point we've got a lot of guys with small little nicks and bruises they've got to manage. Nothing severe or nothing that can become dangerous to their health — just things we've got to manage to get guys to Saturday."

But they've also got to get them the right amount of reps to be able to play Saturday at a high level, something they haven't been able to do, and — frankly — won't if their guys are missing time with every little nick and bruise. The plays that worked in practice last week didn't against Wisconsin because it was often different guys running them ... guys who hadn't practiced.

"The biggest thing for us offensively is to get healthy and get guys into practice so we can get into rhythm and flow that can carry out through the game. It even goes back to spring," Gattis said. "We've got to continue to get healthy, manage the players we have, and make sure we keep them healthy and get them the right amount of reps and turn them into game reps."

So far, that's been easier said than done.

## Michigan Wolverines Football: Hard Questions Asked — It's Time For Answers

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh has made the rounds on the "talk show" circuit this week and been asked many tough questions. He responded to them honestly, but the answers everyone was looking for will come over the next several weeks.

Michigan's 35-14 beatdown at Wisconsin featured inconsistent offensive line play, stupid penalties, minimal defense and terrible (again) offense. There's enough talent on this team to have been competitive with the Badgers, and Harbaugh knows it.

"Unacceptable, and it starts with being self-critical," he said on 97.1 The Ticket Tuesday morning. "Looking at all the ways I can be better, need to be better … it's everything. It's coaches; it's players. We're determined to get it fixed, and it started right after the ball game.

"In terms of coaching, if you're beaten in a scheme type of manner, I take responsibility for that. Defense, if the fits aren't right, if we didn't tackle right and that led to a big play, which happened, I take that personally. I feel like that's my responsibility in terms of scheme, tackling, technique — and it's the same offensively.

"If we're being out-physicaled and not protecting the quarterback and running back like we should; if someone doesn't know what to do on a play, a mental error, it's something I need to see and make sure to run again, run again and get perfected during the week."

And there were plenty. There were moments Wisconsin was just more physical than Michigan, especially its offensive line compared to U-M's defensive line. That was expected.

What wasn't — guys missing fits on defense, blowing blocking assignments up front, allowing several hits on the quarterback and, at the end, a few guys quitting on plays.

"That's unacceptable to be out-physicaled, to have a team that hustled more than we do. Players have to take responsibility for that," Harbaugh said. "Make sure the players are playing that will give you that all-out effort, put you in position to be physical and win at the line of scrimmage.

"We have two [requirements] … be physical, and hustle. That's hustling at all times, constant hustle. That's getting guys in there who are going to do it for 60, 70, 80 plays. We've got to make sure we're coaching that. If it's not done right, do it again. That kind of mindset."

As for the so-called tougher questions …

Harbaugh has seemed numb on the sidelines at times. Fans on Twitter, media members and several others have wondered aloud where the 'fire and brimstone,' get-in-Pete-Carroll's-face, 'What's your deal?' guy has been, and Harbaugh was asked about it.

"No. I don't feel more mellow," he said.

End of discussion.

Asked about the quarterbacks, especially Shea Patterson (who has been hit quite a bit and hasn't gotten much help from his receivers at times, but has also missed a number of throws), Harbaugh noted: "I think Shea's good; a really good player, because he is. We've got to give him the protection, the time a quarterback needs. That's on all of us; that's on coaching staff, on the offensive line, receivers getting open, tight ends, as well. Just like I think our backs are good. They need space, holes, room to run.

"That would be my answer to those who don't think Shea is a good quarterback. He is."

He's got several games left to prove it, too. Quarterbacks are often only as good as their offensive lines, and that's where it starts. There were a lot of good things (believe it or not) they did evident on film, too, and we know they've got it in them. They've done it before.

It all starts at the top, though, and the guy who was brought in to make Michigan great again.

"They played a really good football game, did the things you have to do to win a game, in a manner that was better than us," Harbaugh said in crediting Wisconsin. "Without taking away from them, I'm just saying I'm determined to get it fixed.

"It is unacceptable, and it will get fixed."