

Playoff Contenders?

The University of Michigan football team has had a very strong 2021-2022 season. Their 8-1 overall record, and 5-1 Big Ten Conference record, are a very evident sign of this. Throughout the last few weeks there has been much talk about who is in the College Football Playoff Picture. The teams that are at the top right now as of Week 10 is No.1 is Georgia, No.2 is Alabama, No.3 is Michigan State, and No.4 is Oregon. Michigan is ranked No.7 but with 3 games to go before the final playoff rankings come out there is the possibility of Michigan qualifying for the Postseason.

The Wolverines' first half of their season was spectacularly good after the way they ended their 2020-2021 season. They won all 6 of their matches and there were definitely a lot of memorable moments. Michigan's fan base has had a lot to do with their success at home. The first game of the season was in Week 2 against Washington, and it was the first game at home with full stadium capacity. The athletic department asked for a Maize Out, and that's what they got. "The energy in the stadium was so electric that Washington got called for a delay of game on its first play of the game." (Johnson) The Wolverines won the game 38-10 and the energy and intensity of that game set the tone of Michigan football this season.

Another memorable moment was J.J McCarthy's pass against Western Michigan in Week 1. Many people had been waiting for the debut of this young freshman and he definitely delivered. He had 4 completions for a total of 80 yards and 1 touchdown pass, which is quite impressive for a debut game. His most notable pass of the night was his touchdown pass. "This play saw him scramble and throw across his body to receiver Daylen Baldwin for a 69-yard touchdown." (Johnson). This was another moment that defined the season for this team.

The offensive and defensive stats this year have been very impressive for this team. Leading the passing is Quarterback Cade McNamara with 130 completions, for a total of 1,666 yards, and 9 touchdowns. Rushing leader is Running Back Hassan Haskins has rushed for 829 yards, with a long of 62 yards and has had 11 touchdowns. Right behind Haskins is fellow Running Back Blake Corum with 778 rushing yards, a long of 67 yards and a total of 10 touchdowns on the season. Receiving leader is Cornelius Johnson with 27 receptions for 449

yards, he also has a long of 87 yards and has scored 3 touchdowns this year. Overall the offense has 4,063 yards at this point in the season, and 38 touchdowns have been scored.

Defense has also had an impressive season as they have been able to hold teams to an average of 16.0 points per game, and is No.6 in the nation. Leading the defense in tackles is Linebacker Josh Ross with 29 solo tackles, 32 assisted tackles and 61 tackles in total. Fellow Linebacker David Ojabo leads the team with 8 sacks and 4 forced fumbles. Defensive End and Team Captain Aidan Hutchinson is also having an impressive season, with 6 sacks and a forced fumble. And Daxton Hill leads the defense with 2 interceptions on the season. Overall it's been an impressive year for Michigan and its players.

Michigan is tied with rival Michigan State in the Big Ten East and is one game behind Ohio State. So they are still in contention for the Big Ten Football Championship Game and a berth to the Rose Bowl Game. If Michigan is able to win the East division, they could play in this game this December at Lucas Oil Stadium.

As the weeks have gone on they have moved up the College Football Ranking one step at a time with each win. If they continue this approach throughout the rest of their season, they could definitely be heading to the postseason. I believe that the strength of the offense and defense has contributed to the success of this team and I look forward to seeing how their season ends.