Northwestern Wildcats Vs Purdue Boilermakers

By: Ethan Kihiu

Northwestern will be hosting the Wildcat Classic football game against the Purdue Boilermakers at Wrigley Field, in Chicago, Illinois. Although this is the first year there will be a Wildcat Classic, it has been anticipated by fans and sports networks for weeks now. People have been scheduling time and buying tickets to watch the game. Before everyone gets so excited, let us review how these teams' season has been so far.

The Northwestern Wildcats are currently at a record of 3-6, with a 1-5 record in their conference. They are not ranked by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and will not qualify for the playoffs. Compared to their 2020 season, the Wildcats season is looking like a complete flop. In 2020, with all the covid restrictions and canceled games, they were able to put together a 7-2 record season overall, which seeded them at the top of their conference. This year, however, they have a below average season, with double the losses to wins. The team's QB and wide receiver core have been having a fair share of struggles. However, the run game is looking strong heading into the last games of the season.

This year, the Purdue Boilermakers have put on a show. The team has a 6-3 record, with a 4-2 record in the conference. They also showed their worth in Week 9, when they upset Michigan St. 40 to 29, proving their worth. They are currently tied with the Wisconsin Badgers and the Minnesota Golden Gophers at 6-3 heading into Week 10. All considered, they have had a plethora of injuries, and going into their game against Ohio, they will be without a large chunk of their tight-ends.

Going into this game, both teams have had stunning and shocking seasons compared to last year. Purdue has an average record compared to all other conferences and a large upset against Michigan St, while Northwestern has played a lack-luster season, being blown out of the water multiple times.

Going into this game, Purdue has been ranked 19th overall, while Northwestern has ranked 97th. This matchup, from all statistics and rankings, can predict that Purdue will win this game comfortably. Purdue has had much better stats than Northwestern this year, so it speaks for itself. The Wildcats best QB has less than 800 yards, and only four receivers have actually surpassed 100 receiving yards. In contrast, Purdue's starting QB, Aidan O'Connell has completed over 2,000 passing yards and the backup QB, Jack Plummer, has completed 862 passing yards. Eight receivers have surpassed 100 receiving yards, with one receiver surpassing the 1,000 receiving yard mark. In the run game, Northwestern has performed better. In total, all Boilermaker running backs have an added total of 1,040 rushing yards. Northwestern has a combined total of 1,795 rushing yards.

In the Wildcat Classic, Purdue is expected to have a hard time running the ball, but their passing game and receiving shouldn't be a problem. Northwestern is anticipated to have a smooth time getting their run game going, but passing and receiving will be an offensive struggle. On the defensive side, Purdue has had less total tackles than Northwestern, so they might need extra practice against Northwestern's strong run game. For Northwestern, they need to get turnovers against Purdue's strong passing game, by focusing on finding gaps and batted passes for turnover opportunities.

Finally, each team will need to find a rhythm in the places they're struggling so they can be a stronger overall team. If they both find their rhythm, the game will be very exhilarating and exciting, with lots of big plays and nail-biters. From a standpoint of an overall season view, many predict Purdue will likely win, but as we have seen in other matchups, never underestimate an opponent. "It is never over until it's over."

References

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