

BATTLE FOR THE BUN YAN

Rivalry. Hatred. Brutality. These are just a few words used to describe the yearly Michigan-Michigan State rivalry game. This year, we had the 116th-ever battle between the in-state rivals, which has provided numerous memorable games, with Michigan State winning ten of the past 15 matchups. No. 2 Michigan faced little adversity so far this season, but even at 2-4, the Spartans attempted to silence the doubters, but to no avail.

Michigan State fell to Michigan, 49-0, in what was the worst home loss in Michigan State school history. The last time Michigan shut out Michigan State in East Lansing, current Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh was the starting quarterback for the Wolverines, all the way back in 1985. There have been many low points this season in East Lansing, but it definitely couldn't get lower.

Even at home, this game proved to be an uphill battle in every facet for Michigan State, as the Wolverines had the number one scoring defense among the entire Football Bowl Subdivision. Michigan State was held to just 190 total yards, with only 57 yards on the ground for the usually consistent running backs for MSU, especially redshirt sophomore running back Nathan Carter.

This game marked Katin Houser's second-ever start and first at Spartan Stadium, after making his first career start in green and white the previous weekend in a heartbreaking loss at Rutgers. Houser is a redshirt freshman quarterback who was a highly touted four-star recruit out of St. John Bosco, CA. Houser finished the game with 101 passing yards and an interception that was returned 72 yards for a touchdown by Michigan defensive back Mike Sainistril.

Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy threw four touchdown passes, including two to Colston Loveland and one each to A.J. Barner and Roman Wilson. MSU's defense could not slow down the Heisman hopeful, as he threw for 287 yards and averaged almost 13 yards per completion.

A large indicator of this loss for the Spartans was the penalties, accruing 11 penalties for over 100 combined penalty yards. Interim head coach Harlon Barnett expressed the importance of cleaning up the sloppy play, especially ahead of the two ranked games the Spartans have yet to play.

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“I didn't know it was 11 [penalties] again, but that's what it was against Washington,” Barnett said. “You can't play top 10 teams and have 11 penalties. It was the exact same number against those guys and you saw very similar results. We have a ways to go to get to that level, but we play top 10 teams and have our worst penalty games. Can't do that, we can't beat ourselves.”

The blowout loss also didn't sit right with the running back Carter, who transferred from the University of Connecticut in the spring of 2023.

“No one wants to lose to a rival, especially in our house, especially how we did,” Carter said.

Aaron Brule and Malik Spencer led the Spartan defense with 11 tackles apiece. These were two of the few bright spots in a game that may go down as one of the most forgettable and devastating in MSU program history.

