

Justin Ahrens Explodes For 29, Ohio State Upsets No. 22 Iowa, 90-70



Firmly on the NCAA Tournament bubble, Ohio State needed a quality win.

Behind a career-high in points from an unlikely source, the Buckeyes got the win they desperately needed on Tuesday night in Columbus.

Freshman Justin Ahrens, making just his second career start, poured in a career-high 29 points as Ohio State knocked off No. 22 Iowa, 90-70 at the Schottenstein Center.

Ahrens, who scored nine in his first career start on Saturday at Maryland, missed his first four shots from the perimeter before making six straight from long range to close the game. He finished 7-of-11 shooting, including a perfect 9-for-9 from the free throw line.

Nursing a 40-37 lead early in the second half, Ohio State rattled off an 11-4 run which was capped by three straight jumpers from behind the arc. Ahrens canned the first after missing his first four of the night. That shot was followed by a C.J. Jackson three-pointer with the shot clock expiring, before Ahrens made his second straight shot, forcing Iowa to call a timeout as Ohio State took a 51-42 lead with 15:27 to play.

Ohio State's lead swelled to 18 with 8:41 to play after Ahrens was fouled shooting a three-pointer. The attempt fell short, but Ahrens made all three free throws to give the Buckeyes a 74-56 lead. Iowa cut the deficit down to 11 with 4:08 to play before a foul called on Connor McCaffery, and a subsequent technical foul led to four straight free throws for the Buckeyes. Less than a minute later, Fran McCaffery, Iowa's head coach and father to Connor, earned a technical of his own as OSU coasted to a 20-point win.

The Hawkeyes opened the game on a 7-0 run, before the Buckeyes answered with a 9-0 spurt of their own. Ohio State led by as many as six in the opening frame following a Duane Washington fast break layup with 9:11 to play before halftime. Washington finished with 10 points, all in the first half.

Seconds later, Ohio State center Kaleb Wesson picked up his second foul of the first half, causing Buckeye head coach Chris Holtmann to direct his frustration at multiple referees. During the ensuing timeout, Holtmann was assessed a technical foul, which kicked off a 13-3 Iowa spurt, giving the

Hawkeyes a 31-25 lead, capped by a three-pointer from Iowa forward Nicholas Baer.

The Iowa run forced Holtmann to insert Wesson back into the lineup with 3:44 remaining in the half, which led to a pair of free throws from the Buckeye big man with 2:46 in the frame. On the following Hawkeye possession, Justin Ahrens stepped in front of an errant Iowa pass and converted a fast-break layup, drawing a Flagrant 1 foul in the process. He converted both free throws to knot the game at 31, before a layup from Kyle Young and three-pointer from C.J. Jackson gave the Buckeyes a 36-33 lead at the break.

Five Buckeyes scored in double figures as Kaleb Wesson finished with 18 points and 11 boards while brother Andre chipped in 11 points. Starting in place of C.J. Jackson, Keyshawn Woods scored 13. Iowa was led by Joe Wieskamp with 17.

Ohio State is set to return to action Saturday at No. 14 Purdue. Tip is set for 2 p.m.