

# Buckeyes Searching For Answers To Get Out Of Losing Stretch



Ohio State entered the new year with plenty of promise while boasting a 9-3 record and possessing one of the nation's most impactful offenses.

The optimism surrounding the Buckeyes remained after they dispatched Northwestern with ease on New Year's Day and brought then-No. 1 Purdue to the brink of an upset on Jan. 5. But, Ohio State entered a downward spiral, losing seven of its last eight games in January to end the month with an 11-10 record and 3-7 mark in Big Ten play.

Despite conference losses stacking up and their NCAA Tournament hopes quickly fading, guard Sean McNeil said the Buckeyes are staying the course while trying to find an answer that will help turn their fortunes around.

"The only thing I can say is that we're going to continue to trust the coaches and do everything they ask of us," McNeil said after Ohio State's 86-70 loss to Indiana on Saturday. "It's hard to pinpoint one thing, I think it's a lot of little things. It's not like we're really far off from getting over the hump."

Ohio State's losing stretch started with the previously mentioned Purdue game, which also served as the first of five-straight losses — all of which came by single digits. The Buckeyes finally secured a win on Jan. 21, dashing past Iowa 93-77 with the hopes it would serve as a building block moving forward in Big Ten play.

However, the Buckeyes couldn't take advantage of the win, losing their next two games to Illinois and Indiana by an average of 12.5 points. As the scoring margin widened in their last two losses, McNeil said Ohio State looking for a solution by remaining as a tight-knit unit.

"It sounds cliché, but (we're) just leaning on each other," McNeil said. "In tough stretches like this, it's upsetting. The staff and players, we're all upset. It's tough when you lose and drop games in the way we

have. But it's only going to come from within, so leaning on the guys to your left and right and the coaching staff and just trusting and doing what they say."

Although Ohio State produced just a 2-7 record during January, greatly impacting any postseason hopes, forward Zed Key said he has confidence that the Buckeyes still have what it takes to turn the season around.

"I know my guys," Key said. "They're a very talented team. I've been seeing it since the beginning of the summer, since we got here.

"People say you look worried, but I'm not worried, we'll be fine."