

Key's Double-Double Powers Ohio State To 82-56 Win Over Charleston Southern



Junior forward Zed Key finished with his second consecutive double-double to open the season, dropping 17 points and corralling 13 rebounds, as Ohio State cruised past Charleston Southern 82-56 at Value City Arena on Thursday.

Key was off and running from the opening whistle, scoring Ohio State's first six points while corralling a pair of offensive rebounds in that span. The Bay Shore, N.Y., native completed his double-double with 2:01 remaining in the first half, dropping 13 points and snaring 10 rebounds during the opening frame while aiding the Buckeyes to a 46-22 lead heading into the locker room.

"The start of the game, with Zed's physicality, was really important," Holtmann said after the win. "I thought Zed was great on the glass, (grabbed) almost every loose ball and really set a tone early that I think gave our team a real lift."

Ohio State utilized a 17-1 run across the middle stages of the first half to run away from the Buccaneers, allowing the Buckeyes to cruise into the locker room. Despite the slow start, Charleston Southern found some success during the second half, as it settled into an offensive rhythm and hit 38.2 percent of its shots in the frame, up from its 29.0 percent mark in the first half.

As a matter of fact, the Buckeyes only outscored the Buccaneers 36-34 in the second half, largely attributed to Ohio State's waning defensive effort during the final 20 minutes of action.

"For us, we really kind of want to focus on just sustaining our effort throughout the whole game," Sensabaugh said. "(Holtmann) mentioned that. The second half of the game was a close game. If you reset it to 0-0, it would have been a close game. So, sustaining our effort and keep finishing possessions, getting stops like that, and kills, is going to be something that is important for us moving on."

Redshirt senior forward Justice Sueing remained a hot hand for the Buckeyes after his 20-point season-opener against Robert Morris, dropping 11 points while hitting on all five of his free-throw attempts. Freshman forward Brice Sensabaugh also carried over momentum from Monday, following up his 17-point outing against the Colonials with 14 points on 6 of 12 shooting in the win over the Buccaneers.

West Virginia transfer guard Sean McNeil also reached double figures, finishing with 13 points while also being the only Buckeye to hit multiple three-point attempts (2 of 5).

Key was imperative to the Buckeyes' 50-20 advantage in the paint, scoring nearly all of his points in the lane. Not only did Key impact Ohio State's dominance inside, but he also gave OSU a lift on the offensive glass — corraling six of OSU's 14 offensive boards. Ohio State turned those offensive rebounds into 18 second-chance points, of which Key produced eight. In total, the Buckeyes outrebounded the Buccaneers 47-28.

Key attributed his big night on the glass and in the lane to the work that he and his teammates put in over the offseason.

"We put in a lot of hard work during the summer, in the preseason, in practice and the weight room, just to be able to be in shape to sustain that effort," Key said. "I found myself getting tired a little bit, but I was able to push through it and keep going. I'm trying to do that for the whole season, just come out with that fire. It sets the tone."

Ohio State saw its turnover troubles pop up again against the Buccaneers, tallying 14 on Thursday — the same mark they posted against Robert Morris in the season opener. By comparison, the Buckeyes only tallied 11 assists against Charleston Southern, four of which were registered by graduate guard Isaac Likekele.

Charleston Southern was led by guard Claudell Harris Jr., who dropped 12 points on 6 of 16 shooting while dishing out three assists. Guard Tahlik Chavez added 13 points while hitting on 5 of 10 attempts from the field. Forward Taje Kelly also found himself in double-figures, finishing with 11 points.

Ohio State returns to action on Wednesday, when the Buckeyes close out their three-game homestand against Eastern Illinois with a 7 p.m. tip. The game will be televised on Big Ten Network.