

No. 15 Ohio State Falls To Purdue 67-65 In Heartbreaking Fashion



The No. 15 Ohio State men's basketball team fell 67-65 to Purdue in heartbreaking fashion despite a 21-point, six-assist performance by junior guard Duane Washington Jr. at Value City Arena on Jan. 19.

Purdue freshman guard Jaden Ivey hit a cold-blooded step-back three-pointer over fourth-year junior wing Justice Sueing with just five seconds left to beat the Buckeyes in Columbus.

"They made a lot of really tough plays in the game, so give them credit," Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann said. "It was a hard-fought Big Ten game. We've got to figure out how to get better and move forward. This one obviously stings. We'll have to move forward.

The Buckeyes misfired on their chance to break a 64-64 tie when junior wing Justin Ahrens missed a contested three where he drew contact.

Trailing by five with just 1:48 left, Purdue junior forward Trevion Williams made a tough shot over sophomore forward E.J. Liddell before the Boilermakers forced a shot clock violation on the Buckeyes' next possession. Then, Boilermaker fourth-year junior guard Sasha Stefanovic drilled a three-pointer to tie the game at 64 with just 52 ticks remaining.

Liddell drew a foul with 2:11 on the clock, and after making the first foul shot, he missed the second. Senior forward Kyle Young grabbed the rebound on Liddell's missed free throw and then he found Ahrens for his fourth triple of the game to push the lead to 64-59 with 2:08 on the clock.

Ivey answered a 7-0 Ohio State streak with a 5-0 run of his own spanning 33 seconds to cut the deficit to 60-59 with 2:38 left.

The Buckeyes ripped off a 7-0 spurt to take a 60-54 lead with 3:35 to play, capped by a step-back three-pointer by Washington Jr. after a pair of buckets by Young and Liddell.

Purdue's leading scorer, Williams, slammed the ball down with a one-handed dunk off an offensive rebound to give the Boilermakers a 54-53 with 5:30 on the clock.

Purdue used a 6-0 streak to take a 52-50 lead with 6:19 left on a Euro-step finish by Williams off a steal, marking its first lead since 4-3.

The defensive intensity picked up for both teams midway through the second half, leading to sloppier play featuring turnovers and foul shots. From 11:22-7:30, neither team made a field goal and Ohio State committed four of its eight second-half turnovers during that stretch.

Washington Jr. drained a pull-up three pointer to extend the Scarlet and Gray edge to 48-41 with 12:23 on the clock. Ivey responded with a bucket after an offensive rebound by fourth-year junior forward Aaron Wheeler.

Ohio State and Purdue battled back and forth to open the second half, and the visitors cut the Buckeye lead to 43-39 with 15:56 left on Stefanovic's second and-one of the second half.

The Boilermakers bounced back from the Buckeyes' first-half onslaught of three-point shooting with an extended 9-3 stretch across 3:57 to cut an 11-point deficit to 35-30 with 1:02 until the break.

Ivey tied the game at 21 with a bucket with 7:24 left, and Ohio State responded with an 11-0 spurt in just 2:03 to take its biggest lead of the game at 32-21.

Washington Jr. led the run with eight points, capping it with back-to-back triples. The other basket during the stretch was an Ahrens three-pointer that came on the play of the game with 6:41 until halftime.

Liddell tracked down a defensive rebound, jumping out of bounds to save it and throwing it ahead to Sueing, who had stumbled on his rear end. Sueing caught the ball from the seat of his shorts near midcourt and tossed it to a trailing Young, who took one dribble before finding an open Ahrens across the court for a transition three.

"We played hard in stretches, just just not quite hard enough but we played really hard in stretches, really hard," Holtmann said. "We had some stretches of really good play and some stretches of really hard play."

After an Ahrens' triple gave Ohio State a seven-point first-half lead, the Boilermakers bounced back on a 9-1 rally to take a 17-16 lead with 10:22 until halftime.

Ahrens nailed a triple to push the Buckeyes' edge to 15-8 with 14:14 until the midway point.

Ohio State ripped off an early 9-0 run on three foul shots from Ahrens and a pair of triples from Sueing and Washington Jr. to take a 9-4 lead with 16:40 to play.

Williams, who led the Boilermakers to a 67-60 victory over Ohio State with 16 points, nine boards, and a career-high eight assists on Dec. 16, attacked Liddell on the first two possessions to take a 4-0 lead. The versatile 6-foot-10 playmaker only played six first-half minutes due to picking up two fouls.

Efficiency from beyond the arc and an 8-3 advantage in the turnover battle led the Buckeyes to a 37-31 lead at intermission, shooting 40.9 percent (9 of 22) from deep compared to 16.7 percent (2 of 12) by the Boilermakers. Purdue outrebounded Ohio State 22-13 in the first half and posted a 46.2 percent mark from the floor (12 of 26) to the Buckeyes' 37.9 field-goal percentage (11 of 29).

Overall, Ohio State shot 37.7 from the field (20 of 53) and 40.0 percent from deep (14 of 35), while Purdue connected on 48.1 percent of its field goals (26 of 54) and 25.0 percent of its treys (5 of 20). The Buckeyes gave the ball away eight times in the second half, compared to two Boilermaker turnovers in

the frame.

"We were just getting good, open looks the majority of the time," Young said of the high number of three-point attempts. "They were playing off, multiple different guys. But we were getting good looks for the most part, so we want to take those shots. Because we have confidence in everybody that can shoot them."

Ahrens scored 12 for the Buckeyes, and Liddell added 11 points and a team-high seven rebounds in the two-point loss.

Williams paced Purdue with 16 points and seven boards, while Ivey and Stefanovic pitched in 15 points apiece. The trio did most of their work in the second half, scoring 11, 10, and 13 across the game's final 20 minutes, respectively.

"The ball is not always going to go in the rim, good shot or bad shot," Washington Jr. said. "And defense is something that we always have to be consistent. Effort and toughness have always got to be consistent with us.

"We're going to get back in the lab. We can't do anything about it now. Just learn from it. Analyze it, learn about it, forget about it and move on to the next one. We've got a big one coming up on the road."

The Buckeyes travel to Madison, Wis., to take on the No. 10 Badgers on Saturday, Jan. 23 at 4 p.m.

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