

No. 3 Ohio State Comes Back For 88-86 Overtime Win Over South Florida



No. 3 Ohio State overcame an 18-point first half deficit to remain undefeated on the season, knocking off South Florida 88-86 in an overtime classic in the San Diego Invitational on Tuesday.

The Buckeyes - who lost guard Madison Greene late in the fourth after she suffered an apparent leg injury - pulled off the win despite shooting just 42.9 percent from the field and 4 of 20 (20.0 percent) from deep.

Ohio State's poor shooting night started early, as the Buckeyes began the game just 4 of 16 from the field and trailed 21-11 at the end of the first quarter. On the flip side of things, South Florida was 10 of 14 from the field in the frame, with the majority of those shots coming from forward Dulcy Fankam Mendjiadeu, who was 5 of 6 in the opening quarter.

South Florida opened the second quarter on an 8-0 run to push the lead to 29-11 with 8:17 remaining in the half. Freshman forward Cotie McMahon and sophomore guard Taylor Thierry helped avoid the game getting out of hand for the Buckeyes, combining for 12 points on 5 of 6 shooting in the quarter to trail just 39-30 at the half after trailing by 18 points on two occasions in the half.

South Florida found some early baskets in the third quarter - including a triple from guard Sammie Puisis following a turnover by McMahon - that pushed the Bulls' lead to 45-32 with 6:58 remaining.

Ohio State then embarked on a 12-4 run capped off by a triple from guard Madison Greene to cut the deficit down to 49-44, the fewest since early in the first quarter. Puisis later added another triple near the buzzer to make it 55-46 heading into the fourth.

Another three-pointer by Puisis pushed the lead to 63-50 with 8:16 remaining, but Ohio State fought back and was eventually able to tie the game up at 64-all with just under five minutes remaining, and then took the first lead of the game, 67-65, after a triple from Greene.

On the next offensive possession for the Buckeyes, Greene exited the game after going down with an apparent knee injury, forcing Ohio State to close the game out without their starting point guard who was already filling in for guard Jacy Sheldon, who continues to rehab a lower-leg injury.

South Florida was able to retake the lead, going up 73-69 with 1:37 remaining, but Ohio State fought back to tie the game and send it to overtime, 75-75, after a pair of fire throws from McMahon in the final minute.

In overtime, the teams traded blows before South Florida was able to take advantage at the free throw line, going up 86-80 after several fouls in the game's final minutes, including a technical foul by Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff. But Ohio State continued to push, getting baskets from forward Eboni Walker and McMahon and a triple from guard Taylor Mikesell - her first successful make from deep for the game - to tie it 86-86 with 15 seconds remaining.

After a block by Walker as South Florida looked to take the lead, Ohio State got back on the other end and McMahon found Thierry on the fast break as she put in the game-winning score with just second remaining, and the Bulls turned the ball over on the ensuing possession to secure Ohio State's 88-86 win.

McMahon and Thierry each finished with career highs in the loss, with McMahon going for 30 points on 10-of-18 shooting and Thierry racking up 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting. Outside of those two, Ohio State accounted for just 35 points on 11-of-41 shooting. Fankam Mendjiadeu finished with a game-high 32 points on 10-of-14 shooting.

Ohio State will play again tomorrow, taking on Oregon at 6:30 p.m. in the final game of the San Diego Invitational.