

No. 3 Ohio State Takes Down No. 14 Michigan 66-57, Moves To 15-0



In the battle between the Big Ten's best offense in No. 3 Ohio State and the best defense in No. 14 Michigan, the Buckeyes (15-0, 4-0 Big Ten) came out on top, knocking off the Wolverines (12-2, 2-1) 66-57 on Saturday at the Covelli Center.

With the win, the Buckeyes are now tied for the best start in program history, matching the 15-0 effort put up by the 2011-12 team under then-head coach Jim Foster.

The Wolverines' defense won the battle early, forcing misses on the first five shots of the game for the Buckeyes as Michigan jumped out to an 8-0 lead and forced Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff to call a timeout.

His message clearly resonated, as sophomore guard Taylor Thierry and freshman forward Cotie McMahon scored on back-to-back baskets to make it 8-4, and Ohio State's defense began to lock down Michigan. The Wolverine's only other points in the quarter came at the free-throw line, as it closed the frame by missing on their last eight shots as the Buckeyes trailed just 10-9.

Offense remained hard to come by for both teams in the second quarter, combining to shoot 3 of 13 through the first five minutes of the frame as the Wolverines led 17-14. Points were generated from the free-throw line, however, with the Buckeyes going 6 of 9 and the Wolverines finishing 6 of 10 in the quarter.

Ohio State later tied the game 19-19 with 3:51 remaining in the frame after a triple from guard Rikki Harris - the first three-pointer of the game for either team - and the scoring opened up for both squads, with triples following on the next two possessions.

After later tying the game 27-27 off a free throw from Harris with under a minute remaining, Ohio State got the rebound off a miss from the Wolverines. With the clock approaches all zeroes, guard Taylor

Mikesell found guard Emma Shumate on the perimeter, where she knocked down a three-pointer at the buzzer to give the Buckeyes a 30-27 lead going into the half.

Looking to regain momentum, the Wolverines instead went cold from the field, shooting just 2 of 7 to begin the quarter as the Buckeyes extended the lead to 16 points, 48-32, with 2:32 remaining in the frame. Conversely, Ohio State was 7 of 14 from the field during that same stretch.

Michigan then found a rhythm, closing the quarter on a 9-2 run that was capped by a layup from guard Maddie Nolan at the buzzer, leaving the Buckeyes with just a 50-41 lead entering the fourth.

Ohio State's lead continued to evaporate early in the fourth, with Michigan opening the frame on another 9-2 run to cut the Buckeyes' lead to just 52-50 with 6:47 remaining in the game.

Harris then took over for Ohio State, scoring five of the next nine points - all at the free-throw line - before forward Rebeka Mikulášiková hit her first three-pointer of the game to push the lead to 64-52 with 3:01 left. The Wolverines cut the deficit to just seven points the remainder of the way as Ohio State held on for the 66-57 win.

Mikesell led the Buckeyes with 16 points on 4-of-16 shooting, while Harris added 14 points, with a mark of 7 of 12 from the charity stripe. Guard Taylor Thierry added a team-high 10 rebounds, while Michigan forward Cameron Williams led the Wolverines with 18 points and 10 rebounds.

Ohio State will return to the court next on Thursday, hitting the road to face Minnesota on Thursday with tip set for 8 p.m.