No. 9 Ohio State Survives Second-Half Slump To Beat Purdue 87-78 In Overtime To Advance To Big Ten Tournament Semifinals

The No. 9 Ohio State men's basketball team defeated Purdue 87-78 in overtime in the quarterfinals of the 2021 Big Ten Tournament at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on March 12.

"Players win games, and our players won this game. They made great plays down the stretch, stayed with it," Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann said. "We had great execution in overtime. Purdue's a phenomenal team. They're tough, they're really good, really well-coached, physical. And to do this under some unique circumstances and unique lineups is a great testament to our players."

The Buckeyes were led by 20 points from junior guard Duane Washington, with senior forward Kyle Young scoring 18 points in 19 minutes before exiting with an apparent head injury presumed to be a concussion.

"In overtime offensively, guys made plays and Duane made some phenomenal reads. We ran a similar action most of overtime, and Duane made some phenomenal reads," Holtmann said. "So, it was a tough one without Kyle, because he was unbelievable in the first half."

Sophomore forward E.J. Liddell scored 17 points, while graduate forward Seth Towns added 12 critical points off the bench, and fifth-year senior guard C.J. Walker scored 10 points, dished seven assists, and posted four steals.

Freshman forward Zed Key split a pair of foul shots to open overtime for Ohio State before Walker used a euro step for a layup to put his team up 75-72 with 3:41 to play.

Purdue standout junior forward Trevion Williams made a hook shot in the lane to cut the deficit to 75-74 with 3:18 left before Ohio State graduate forward Seth Towns drilled a three-pointer to push the lead to 78-74 with 2:54 on the clock.

Williams drew Liddell's fifth foul on the ensuing possession, and the 51.0-percent free-throw shooter hit both of his foul shots to cut the deficit to 78-76 with 2:25 left.

Towns rose to the occasion again, catching the ball beyond the arc, using a shot fake to trick the

defense and connecting on a pull-up midrange bank shot to push the edge to 80-76 with 2:07 on the clock.

“Seth is always under control and calm, honestly,” Liddell said. “I feel like Seth is always the level-headed one. He doesn’t ever get too high or too low, and he came out there and made some big plays, big shots, and it shows what Seth can really do.”

Key shut the door on Purdue 7-foot-4 freshman center Zach Edey for a big defensive stop before setting up Washington for a three-pointer on a dribble handoff to make it 83-76 with 1:16 left.

After Purdue split a pair of foul shots, Washington knocked down a pair of free throws to push the lead to 85-77 with 39 seconds left. The Boilermakers split another pair of foul shots before Walker grabbed the miss and took it coast to coast for a layup with 27 seconds left, securing the 87-78 victory.

The Buckeyes started hot against the Boilermakers, with Young leading the way to a 15-10 start through the opening 8:28 by scoring 11 of their first 13 points.

Purdue cut the first-half lead to 18-15 with 10:14 until the break, but Ohio State scored six straight to push its lead to 24-15 on a Young layup via a beautiful bounce pass from Liddell with 8:39 until the midway point.

Purdue freshman guard Jaden Ivey, who hit a game-winning three to beat the Buckeyes on Jan. 19, cut the lead to 24-18 with a deep triple with 8:23 until halftime.

The Buckeyes bounced back with a 13-4 run to lead 37-22 with 4:05 until intermission on four points apiece from Walker and Washington, two from Young, and a converted three-point play by Liddell.

The Boilermakers responded with five straight points, cutting the lead to 37-27 with 3:08 until halftime, but the Buckeyes finished the half strong with three three-pointers by Washington and one from Young to close the frame on a 12-4 run and lead 49-31 at the break.

Young led both teams with a career-high 18 points in the first half, while Washington scored 13 and Walker and Liddell added five assists apiece. Edey led Purdue with eight points at halftime.

The Boilermakers opened the second half with a 6-0 spurt to cut the Buckeye lead to 49-37 with 17:43 left, but Ohio State answered with a floater from Washington and an emphatic two-handed slam by Liddell on a nice feed by Young to extend its lead to 53-37 with 16:30 to play.

Ivey responded with a trio of triples for the Boilermakers in three possessions, cutting the lead to 56-46 with 14:55 remaining with a 9-3 solo streak. Ohio State weathered Ivey’s rally, but another 6-0 spurt by Purdue cut its lead to 61-54 with 10:04 left.

Overall, the Buckeyes weathered a second-half slump where they did not make a field goal for an 8:20 stretch from 15:20-7:00, extending their lead to 66-58 on a bucket by junior wing Musa Jallow with seven minutes to play.

“Purdue’s a good team, give them credit,” Holtmann said. “We had trouble guarding Trevion, we were in foul trouble. There was no shell shock. They were on to the next play. They’ve done this, they’ve been around this, this group’s an experienced group.”

After Liddell pushed the lead to 70-61 with a hook shot on a find by Walker with 5:23 left, Purdue scored three straight points on foul shots by redshirt freshman forward Mason Gillis following offensive rebounds on consecutive possessions to trim the deficit to 70-64 with 4:07 on the clock.

Then, Edey went off the glass for a bucket, and Williams scored on a smooth right-handed hook after a shimmy fake to cut the lead to 70-68 with 1:48 left.

Following a stop by the Boilermakers, they went back to Williams on the block, who scored on another hook with his right hand to tie the game at 70 with 47 seconds left.

“They made some very tough shots,” Washington said. “Trevion Williams had a great game, played really well today, very good low-post scorer. He got going late. (Ivey) got going late as well later in the second half, bringing them back.”

The Buckeyes’ offense went ice cold down the stretch, failing to score for a five-minute stretch from 5:23-0:23, but junior wing Justice Sueing came up big with a pair of foul shots to take a 72-70 lead with 23 seconds left.

“Justice getting to the free-throw line, I thought was critical,” Holtmann said.

Williams answered the bell for the Boilermakers, scoring in the paint again to tie the game at 72 with nine seconds to play. Ohio State failed to get up a game-winning shot attempt to end regulation when Walker turned the ball over in the final seconds.

Williams led Purdue with 26 points, 14 rebounds, and five assists in an excellent effort, while Ivey added 19 along with 11 from Edey.

Ohio State will take on Michigan in the semifinals of the Big Ten tourney on March 13 at 1 p.m. ET on CBS.

“They’re a very good team. I told you guys in another interview that we were going to see them again, and here it is,” Washington said of the rematch with Michigan. “We’re super excited. I’m about to get off this interview with you guys, go recover, and tip-off is at 1 p.m. tomorrow. Going over game plan stuff, staying locked in, doing what we need to do to come out with a dub, and survive and advance. So, the guys are locked and loaded.”

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