

Ohio State Cruises Past Cincinnati 81-53 To Earn First Win In Maui



Ohio State bounced back from its first loss of the season to secure an 81-53 win over Cincinnati in the Maui Invitational on Tuesday.

The Bearcats (3-3) jumped out to an 8-2 lead, but Ohio State's veterans didn't allow Cincinnati to remain in the lead for long. Forwards Zed Key and Justice Sueing combined to score the Buckeyes' next 13 points, sparking an 11-2 run in the process, and pushing the Buckeyes (4-1) to a 13-10 lead entering the first media timeout.

Cincinnati battled the Buckeyes for much of the first half, trailing 26-24 with 6:07 to go in the frame. However, Ohio State caught fire from there, as the Buckeyes used a 9-0 run to lift their lead to 35-24 — with five of those points coming from freshman forward Brice Sensabaugh. The Florida native also drilled a three-pointer at the first-half buzzer to give Ohio State a 38-27 lead heading into the locker room. Key, Sueing and Sensabaugh combined to score 29 of Ohio State's 38 first-half points.

Key kept up his offensive intensity through the early stages of the second half, scoring Ohio State's first four points of the frame — including an emphatic slam to put the Buckeyes up 42-28 with 18:48 remaining in regulation. Key finished the evening with a game-high 19 points, on 8-of-11 shooting, and eight rebounds.

Ohio State controlled the second half, outscoring the Bearcats 43-26 in the frame. The Buckeyes' lead ballooned to as much as 28 during the game's final 20 minutes, coming on forward Kalen Etzler's turnaround jumper with seven seconds remaining in regulation.

Sueing led Ohio State's dominance on the glass, securing four of OSU's 19 offensive boards. In total, the Buckeyes out-rebounded the Bearcats 42-29. Sueing added 11 points to go along with his strong night on the boards.

The freshman duo of guard Bruce Thornton and Sensabaugh continued their strong play in Maui, as Sensabaugh once again reached double-figures with 17 points on 3-of-5 shooting from beyond the arc. Thornton also added 17 points while shooting 6 of 9 from the field, including several circus shots.

Alongside their rebounding prowess, the Buckeyes showed a stark improvement defensively against the Bearcats. After allowing San Diego State to shoot 50.8 percent from the field and 47.6 percent from 3 on Monday, OSU locked down Cincinnati — holding the Bearcats to 38.5 percent shooting from the field and forcing them into 14 turnovers, which the Buckeyes used to score 24 points.

Although Ohio State locked in defensively for much of the contest, Cincinnati forward Viktor Lakhin was impressive for the Bearcats — dropping 12 points on 6-of-7 shooting while adding four rebounds.

Ohio State entered the game averaging 13.2 turnovers per game, however, the Buckeyes turned the ball over just six times against the Bearcats.

Ohio State will take on No. 21 Texas Tech in the fifth-place game on Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. The game will be televised on ESPN2.