

Ohio State Takes Off In Second Half For 96-77 Win Over Louisville



No. 4 Ohio State (7-0) was able to overcome a 14-point deficit to knock off No. 18 Louisville (5-3), 96-77, to remain undefeated on the season on Wednesday.

The Buckeyes faced a 37-23 deficit in the second quarter and trailed 45-37 at the half, largely due to 12 turnovers and eight personal fouls in the first half, but outscored the Cardinals 59-32 across the final two quarters to secure the win.

And while turnovers were a problem for Ohio State, it equally impacted Louisville, and it became clear early on that both teams would have trouble holding on to the ball. Ohio State guard Jacy Sheldon - who returned to the starting lineup after missing the past two games with an injury - struggled the most early on, turning the ball over three times in the first 3:31 of play as the Cardinals got off to a 6-1 lead.

The teams began trading blows through the first quarter, with Louisville taking a 12-3 lead before Ohio State ripped off a 9-0 run to tie things up with 3:42 remaining in the opening frame.

The Cardinals were able to close on a 13-6 run, one of the first teams this season to find success breaking Ohio State's full-court press, and benefited from two trips to the free-throw line for guard Hailey Van Lith, who finished the first quarter with 9 points as Louisville held a 25-18 lead.

Entering the contest, Van Lith was averaging 21.2 points per game on 42.6 percent shooting from the field, and was hitting at an 84.4 percent clip from the line.

The Cardinals extended their lead to begin the second quarter, opening on a 12-5 run for a 37-23 advantage. Ohio State was mostly kept at an arm's length, trailing by at least six points for the quarter, and entered the locker room down 45-37.

After biding their time in the first half, the Buckeyes opened the third quarter on a 10-5 run and later

tied it up, 52-52, midway through the frame. The Cardinals had six turnovers in the first five minutes of the second half after just nine total turnovers in the second half.

The Buckeyes remained close and chipped away at the lead before a layup from Mikesell (off an offensive rebound from guard Rikki Harris) gave Ohio State a 61-59 lead, the first for the Buckeyes since it was 1-0, and eventually led 65-63 going into the final quarter. Mikesell led the Buckeyes with 7 points in the third while Ohio State shot 61.1 percent (11 of 18) from the field.

Ohio State continued to build a lead in the fourth as Harris made her presence known for the Buckeyes. She forced several turnovers in the quarter and stole the ball twice, both times resulting in an immediate score, delivered a pinpoint pass down the court to Sheldon that resulted in a basket, and was also fouled on a three-point attempt and connected on two of her foul shots as Ohio State took a 79-65 lead with 6:20 remaining after a 14-0 run.

The Cardinals attempted a comeback in the fourth but never cut the deficit to fewer than 85-75 as the Buckeyes ended with the 96-77 win. The loss for Louisville snapped a 21-game home winning streak and a 48-game home non-conference winning streak.

The Buckeyes were led by Mikesell, who finished with 26 points on 10-of-16 shooting, as well as Mikulášiková's 21 points and Sheldon's 22 points. Harris pulled down a team-high 10 rebounds, and the Buckeyes shot 59.7 percent from the field and 53.3 percent (8 of 15) from deep in the win.

Louisville was led by Van Lith, who finished with 20 points on 7-of-18 shooting.

Ohio State will stay on the road Sunday to take on Rutgers at 12 p.m.