

Ohio State Women's Basketball Defeated Handedly By South Dakota 68-53



After a back-and-forth game against No. 4 UConn that ended in defeat, Ohio State found itself down eight at halftime to South Dakota, a veteran team that came in with a 5-1 record and five of the six games being decided by single digits.

This time, it was not a close battle for the Coyotes, easily defeating the Buckeyes 68-53 to bring the young group to 3-3.

"They played really well, and they didn't give us anything easy. We didn't react to it, we took quick shots, didn't really execute or show any patience to get a great shot," Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "That's on us, we have to be better, and give credit to them, they were the better team today."

It was a 15-3 run at the end of the third quarter and the start of the fourth that allowed South Dakota to pull away, gaining a lead by as much as 21 points in the final quarter.

On the game, the Buckeyes shot 34 percent from the field, while allowing the Coyotes to shoot 48 percent, hitting 24 of their 50 attempts.

"They looked like a veteran team and we didn't, but that's on us," McGuff said. "We have to be a lot better than what we were today."

Freshman forward Rebeka Mikulasikova was a highlight on offense for Ohio State, scoring 12 of her 19 points in the first half, finishing the game shooting 5 of 9 from the field.

"She really took advantage of her opportunities," McGuff said of Mikulasikova. "She finished around the basket, she made a couple threes, and she was also the one person on our team that was efficient from the free throw line."

The Buckeyes forced 18 South Dakota turnovers, but could not capitalize on them, with free throw shooting being a major concern once again. Coming in tied at No. 325 in the NCAA — and at the bottom of the Big Ten — in free throw percentage, Ohio State hit 55 percent of its attempts from the charity stripe, while the Coyotes hit 11 of 14.

Mikulasikova hit seven of her eight free throw attempts, while the rest of the team shot 4 of 12.

McGuff said that, while he knows his team needs to start converting from the line, the amount the team is getting free throws is at least a positive.

"I know we're not shooting to our capabilities from the free throw line, but hey, it is what it is," he said. "We're getting opportunities, we're not capitalizing."

Jacy Sheldon made her first career collegiate start in place of guard Braxtin Miller, who came off the bench due to a lingering shoulder injury.

In her first start, Sheldon scored 10 points on 3-of-5 shooting, while Miller managed was held scoreless in 30 minutes, clearly favoring her injured right shoulder.

Ciara Duffy was South Dakota's best player all game, finishing with 22 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, all team highs.

Three freshmen led Ohio State in scoring, with Mikulasikova and Sheldon being joined by guard Kierstan Bell as the only three in double figures for the team. Bell finished with 12 points, five rebounds and three steals.

Ohio State finished with only six assists as a team, three of which came from sophomore Janai Crooms, while the Coyotes moved the ball around and finished with 15 assists.

"We took really quick shots, and we did not make the extra pass and they really made us pay on that," McGuff said. "Six assists, that's a real problem for us."

The Buckeyes finish off their pair of games in Las Vegas on Saturday against Northern Iowa.

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