

Ohio State's 13-0 Start Is Program's Best Since 2011-12 Season



At moments during Ohio State's overtime win over South Florida on Tuesday, it appeared that the Buckeyes undefeated start to the season was in jeopardy.

Facing an 18-point deficit in the first half and a later 13-point deficit with just 8:16 remaining in the contest, the Buckeyes - who entered the game with an 11-0 record, including then-ranked wins over Tennessee and Louisville - were looking at a swift defeat for the first time this year, suffering a slow start and poor shooting against the Bulls looking to make a statement of their own against the No. 3 team in the country in Ohio State.

But, the Buckeyes responded. Guard Taylor Thierry went off for 12 points on 5-of-5 shooting in the fourth to force overtime, and she later scored the game-winning basket for Ohio State off a pinpoint assist from forward Cotie McMahon for the 88-86 final.

After all that drama against South Florida, Ohio State did not leave the next game in much doubt, winning the San Diego Invitational with an 84-67 victory over No. 16 Oregon.

With the win over the Ducks, the Buckeyes moved to 13-0 on the season, which is the best start for the program since Ohio State - under then-head coach Jim Foster - started the season 15-0 in 2011-12, including a pair of ranked wins over LSU and Oklahoma.

Foster's squad didn't drop their first game until a 73-62 loss at Michigan on Jan. 7 before finishing the season with a 25-7 record, including a 4-4 stretch to end the regular season before falling to Florida in the opening round of the NCAA tournament.

Ohio State's next contest comes at Northwestern (6-5) on Dec. 28 before a chance on Dec. 31 at home against Michigan to potentially tie the 2011-12 team for wins to begin a season in program history.

If the Buckeyes can survive the Wildcats and Wolverines, a road contest at Minnesota on Jan. 5 could have Ohio State fighting for a 16-0 start to the season, which would set a new program record.

But, Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff has said in the past that he and the team don't concern themselves with the rankings and outside noise, and as fun as discussions about program records might

be, their focus is remaining on winning on the court.

"It's just so early," he said earlier in December. "It's hard to tell what being ranked third even means because I haven't had a chance to watch a lot of the other teams and so forth. It's good publicity for the team. Probably helps recruiting right now.

"But I will say, I'll be more interested where we're ranked when it's all said and done in March or April than right now."