

Ohio State's Losing Streak Extends To Four With 68-64 Overtime Loss To Rutgers



Ohio State's losing streak was extended to four games after the Buckeyes fell to Rutgers 68-64 in overtime at Jersey Mike's Arena on Sunday.

The lead changed hands 22 times between the Buckeyes (10-7, 2-4) and Scarlet Knights (13-5, 5-2), but Rutgers outscored Ohio State 11-7 in overtime to claim victory. Both offenses struggled to produce for much of the contest, as the Buckeyes registered just a 34.3 percent (23 of 67) mark from the field while Rutgers shot 21 of 62 (33.9 percent).

The Buckeyes and Scarlet Knights combined to miss the game's first 12 shots until Rutgers guard Caleb McConnell finished a layup in transition with 16:00 to go in the first half. After McConnell added another layup, Ohio State exploded on a 15-0 run across the next 4:12 to pull ahead 15-4.

Rutgers quickly responded with a 7-0 run of its own, punctuated by an emphatic two-handed slam from center Clifford Omoruyi, to pull within four, 15-11, with 9:19 remaining in the frame. After a three-pointer from Sean McNeil and Zed Key hit a pair of free throws, the Buckeyes extended their lead to 20-11. However, the Buckeyes scored just three points across the final 8:02 of the half, but Rutgers couldn't take full advantage and Ohio State still carried a 23-20 lead into the half.

After McNeil extended Ohio State's lead to five with a pair of free throws to kickstart the scoring in the second half, Rutgers utilized a 7-0 run to take its first lead since the score was 4-2, jumping ahead 27-25 with 17:22 remaining.

After a three-pointer by guard Cam Spencer to give Rutgers a 32-30 lead with 15:21 left in regulation, the Scarlet Knights missed their next six shots, but Omoruyi kept their offense afloat with six makes from the charity stripe to keep them in front 38-35 with 12:49 to play.

While the Scarlet Knights couldn't find much success from the field, the Buckeyes jumped out on a 9-0

run — sparked by five points from forward Brice Sensabaugh — to snatch the lead and pull ahead 44-38 with 10:45 remaining. Rutgers countered with a 7-0 run, capped off by a pair of free throws from Spencer to retake the lead 45-44 with 7:54 left.

Ohio State and Rutgers traded the lead seven times across the next 2:24, until a free throw from Spencer knotted the game at 53 with 5:10 to play in regulation. The Buckeyes and Scarlet Knights carried a 55-all tie for 1:57 until Omoruyi threw down a two-handed slam to lift Rutgers back ahead 57-55 with 1:55 left.

Sensabaugh drilled a mid-range jumper over a pair of Scarlet Knight defenders to knot the game at 57 with 49 seconds to play. But a game-winning attempt from Spencer hit off the back iron as time expired, sending the game to overtime.

Rutgers registered three offensive rebounds in the overtime period, sparking a pair of second-chance points. Forward Mawot Mag drilled a dagger three-pointer from the corner with 38 seconds remaining to lift Rutgers' lead to 65-61 and hand Ohio State its fourth-consecutive loss. The Buckeyes missed five of their last six field goal attempts to close the game.

The Buckeyes were led by Sensabaugh and Key, who both came off the bench and aided Ohio State's 38-2 advantage over Rutgers' reserves. Sensabaugh produced a double-double with 20 points and 11 rebounds while Key added 11 points and nine boards.

Spencer produced a game-high 21 points to go along with seven rebounds and six assists. Omoruyi struggled from the field, hitting just four of his 11 attempts, but finished with 14 points — thanks to a 6-of-8 mark from the free throw line — and 11 rebounds.

Ohio State remains on the road for a bout with Nebraska in Lincoln, Neb., on Wednesday with tip-off set for 7 p.m. on Big Ten Network.