

Recap: Ohio State Picks Up 90-69 Win Over Illinois



Ohio State (10-3, 2-2 Big Ten) survived an early scare from the visiting Illinois Fighting Illini (5-8, 0-2 Big Ten) as the Buckeyes earned their 10th win of the season in a 90-69 victory Thursday behind a 3-point shooting clinic.

Senior guard Braxtin Miller returned for the Buckeyes after being out due to COVID-19, but junior guard Hevynne Bristow remained out for the contest after missing Ohio State's New Year's Eve matchup with Michigan.

Illinois has had a challenging season, entering the game 5-7 with conference matchups with Maryland and Iowa postponed, but the Fighting Illini found themselves up early as Ohio State could not get things going on the offensive end.

Senior guard Taylor Mikesell had the team's only points on a pair of 3-pointers through the first five minutes as the Buckeyes started 2 of 10 from the field and trailed 10-6.

Mikesell tied it up at 16 with another three with under a minute remaining in the quarter and sophomore guard Rikki Harris added a free throw to give the Buckeyes the lead, but Illinois gained a 18-17 advantage going into the second frame.

The teams went back-and-forth early in the second, but after the Illini tied things up at 22, Ohio State took off on a 9-2 run courtesy of six points from graduate forward Tanaya Beacham to take a 31-24 lead with just over five minutes remaining in the first half.

Illinois fought back to make it 35-31, but five straight points from Harris made it a nine-point game, 40-31, and the Buckeyes eventually closed the first half with a 44-33 lead.

In the first half, Harris was 3 of 3 from beyond the arc and had 12 points, which tied a career-high in

just 14 minutes on the court.

Junior guard Jacy Sheldon increased Ohio State's lead with a pair of baskets to start the third to make it 48-33. The Buckeyes would later extend their lead to 21 points, 61-40, off the shot of Mikesell, who finished 11 of 22 from the field and 8 of 14 from beyond the arc, and entered the fourth with a 75-48 lead.

Ohio State capped the game off with a 15-point final frame, finishing the game with a 90-69 lead and earning its second conference win of the season.

Mikesell finished as Ohio State's leading scorer with a career-high 32 points, while Sheldon led the Buckeyes with six assists. Junior forward Rebeka Mikulasikova had a team-high six rebounds, while De'Myla Brown led the Illini with 13 points on 3-of-17 shooting.

As a whole, the Buckeyes were 34 of 70 from the field and shot the lights out from deep, connecting on 46.4 percent of their 3-point attempts. Illinois, meanwhile, shot just 38.5 percent from the field.

Ohio State will travel next to take on Northwestern on Sunday, with tip set for 3 p.m.