

Hoosiers' 19-2 Run Turns Close Game Into 27-Point Rout

Second-Half Lapse Costs Bucks At Indiana

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State had just whittled second-ranked Indiana's lead down to a manageable eight-point margin when it happened.

"It was a lapse in concentration the Buckeyes had dreaded making and the Hoosiers capitalized on it big-time. They turned up the heat at both ends of the floor and put together a 19-2 second-half run that helped send OSU to a 96-69 defeat in Big Ten men's basketball action Jan. 24 at Assembly Hall.

"I thought we took some quick shots," Ohio State head coach Randy Ayers said. "We took some very quick shots the other four guys weren't expecting that guy to take, and again, that's why we need patience on offense and just need to stay tough."

The loss, Ohio State's third in a row and the worst in Ayers' four years as head coach, dropped the Buckeyes to 9-5 overall and 2-3 in Big Ten play.

"We've got a lot of work to do," Ayers said. "We're going to go back and see if we can put this thing together before the year is out."

Indiana's Calbert Cheaney had no problem putting it all together. The IU senior had game highs of 27 points and 11 rebounds as the Hoosiers improved to 17-2 overall and 6-0 in Big Ten play.

"I think we've been playing pretty well considering the lackluster start we had today," Cheaney said. "Everybody's been coming ready to play and everybody's playing well."

Indiana also got 14 apiece from Brian Evans and Alan Henderson and 11 from Greg Graham.

Indiana head coach Bob Knight, who did not come to the postgame press conference, told CBS-TV analyst Al McGuire he was happy with his team's play.

"We played well in parts," Knight told McGuire. "I thought we did a good job in the second half getting things to



Ohio State freshman guard Greg Simpson (3) tries to drive past Indiana forward Calbert Cheaney (40) during Big Ten action in Assembly Hall Jan. 24. Simpson had 15 points to lead the Buckeyes, but Cheaney scored 27 to help IU to a 96-69 victory.

go our way."

The Hoosiers held only a 40-32 halftime lead but quickly extended it to 49-34 with a 9-2 run to start the second half. Henderson capped that spurt with a three-point play with 17:21 left.

Ohio State, which was led by 15 points from freshman Greg Simpson and 10 from Jamie Skelton, then made a concerted effort to get back in the game.

The Buckeyes scored seven unanswered points as Skelton made two free throws and Simpson converted a steal into a layup and was fouled. His free throw missed, but Tom Brandewie rebounded and dished back to Simpson, who drilled a three-pointer to cut the gap to 49-41 with 15:58 left.

Knight inserted defensive specialist Chris Reynolds at that point and watched as his Hoosiers shut down OSU's young team at the offensive end and broke the Buckeyes down at the other.

"I thought Reynolds almost single-handedly turned the thing around," Knight told McGuire. "He made a couple of really good defensive plays and he seemed to get everybody else to play to his level."

Cheaney hit two free throws, buried a baseline jumper and got a layup off a long pass to start the run. Derek Anderson, who had six points for OSU, then

scored to cut the lead to 55-43.

But IU reeled off 13 unanswered points, including slams by Henderson and Cheaney, a three-pointer by Evans and a driving layup by Graham, to give the Hoosiers a 68-43 lead with 9:22 left.

"There were two minutes where we really broke down," Ayers said. "They pushed us and took advantage of it. We didn't do a very good job of supporting our half-court defense."

Indiana, which had all nine of its roster players score in the game, twice held leads of 32 points in the closing minutes before settling for the 27-point win.

"We broke down defensively," Buckeye forward Lawrence Funderburke said. "It was a lot of screening and back picks and things like that. Sometimes you concentrate on your man and another guy gets by and he scores. They had a lot of second-half opportunities."

Funderburke, who entered the game with team-high averages of 18.3 points and 6.8 rebounds per game, was held to eight points and four rebounds in 23 minutes of action.

Ohio State (69)

Player	mn	fg	ft	fta	rb	a	pf	tp
Funderburke	23	2	6	4	6	4	2	2
Skelton	25	4	10	2	2	1	1	2
Dudley	9	2	2	0	0	3	1	5
Etzler	8	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Davis	25	4	6	0	0	0	1	4
Watson	23	3	5	0	0	4	0	3
Simpson	32	6	15	2	3	3	2	15
Anderson	25	1	7	4	4	2	3	1
Brandewie	9	1	2	1	4	2	0	1
Macon	13	3	3	0	0	4	0	3
Wilbourne	5	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
Ratliff	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	200	27	58	13	19	30	10	25

3-point FGs: Davis (1-1), Simpson (1-4), Etzler (0-1), Skelton (0-3), Anderson (0-3). Total FGs: 1st half, 46.4 (13-28); 2nd half, 46.7 (14-30); Game 46.8. Three-point FG: 1st half, 16.7 (1-6); 2nd half, 16.7 (1-6); Game, 16.7 (2-12). FTs: 1st half, 83.3 (5-6); 2nd half, 81.5 (8-13); Game, 84.4. Team rebounds—3. Deadball rebounds—2.

Indiana (96)

Player	mn	fg	ft	fta	rb	a	pf	tp
Henderson	24	5	9	4	5	9	0	3
Cheaney	31	10	22	6	11	2	2	27
Nover	25	3	6	2	4	6	0	3
Graham	29	4	7	3	3	1	3	11
Bailey	25	2	7	4	4	3	2	9
Reynolds	20	1	2	0	0	1	2	2
Evans	24	4	4	5	7	6	1	14
Leary	16	2	3	4	4	2	1	9
Knight	6	1	3	0	0	0	1	2
Totals	200	32	63	28	33	40	12	16

3-point FGs: Evans (1-1), Leary (1-1), Bailey (1-3), Cheaney (1-4), Graham (0-2). Total FGs: 1st half, 37.5 (12-32); 2nd half, 64.5 (20-31); Game 50.8. Three-point FG: 1st half, 40.0 (2-5); 2nd half, 33.3 (2-6); Game, 36.4 (4-11). FTs: 1st half, 73.7 (14-19); 2nd half, 100.0 (14-14); Game, 84.8. Team rebounds—1. Deadball rebounds—1.

Halftime—Indiana 40-32.
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Ayers Finds Something Good Despite Defeat

By JEFF RAPP
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It's not easy to find artistry in a 27-point loss, but nobody said it was going to be easy for the two-time defending Big Ten champion this year.

Ohio State laid an egg during the second half of its annual appearance in Bloomington Jan. 24, and was drubbed by Indiana 96-69. A horrendous second-half stretch that turned a respectable 49-41 deficit into a 20-plus point margin was the undoing. But after suffering his worst defeat in four years as OSU's coach, Randy Ayers discovered some hope for the future.

"I thought our freshmen went out and stayed aggressive," he said in an upbeat tone. "(Greg) Simpson, (Killer) Macon and (Derek) Anderson all gave us some positive minutes on the floor and we're just going to try and build on that."

"We've got a lot of work to do. We said if we can be a better team at the end of the year, that would be a positive for this young ballclub. So we're going to go back to work and see if we can put this thing together before the year's out."

Ayers' game-day actions and words were those of a man looking for the sugar in his oatmeal lumps. He started Simpson and first-year sophomore Antonio Watson in the second half in place of sophomores Doug Etzler and Rickey Dudley and the two newcomers had their moments.

Simpson led the team in minutes (32) and points (15) and added a pair of steals. Watson played 23 minutes, by far his most ever for the Bucks, and was generally effective with six points and four rebounds.

Macon, a freshman from Michigan City, Ind., made the most of his 13 minutes of playing time by dropping in all three of his shot attempts. He finished with six points, four rebounds, one blocked shot and a steal.

Anderson continued to struggle with his shot since mending a fracture in his right hand — he was just one for seven from the field — but the 6-6 frosh still earned 25 minutes and turned in six points and three assists.

"I think Coach wanted to get some younger guys some experience," said OSU starting forward Lawrence Funderburke, who played a season-low 23 minutes and scored a season-low eight points. "He took out some older veterans and guys that we started to get some younger guys the chance to get their games intact for the next few ball games."

Certainly, not many people expected the Buckeyes to contend with the number two Hoosiers on national television. But despite a third straight loss in the conference, Ohio State seems intent on proving that its 2-3 start does not necessarily wreck a Big Ten season.

"Every time a young player gets some experience in a game like this, it's a key factor for down the road," said senior forward Tom Brandewie, who played just nine minutes against the rival Hoosiers and scored two points.

"This team is very capable. We just have to put a complete game together."

Breakdowns in offensive execution were the main culprits in losses to Michigan State and Wisconsin prior to the Indiana trip.

INSIDE THE GAME

But OSU looked like a team healing its wounds early in the game. The Buckeyes worked the ball freely at the outset and created open shots.

Dudley canned an open 17-footer on OSU's first possession. Jamie Skelton, who later struggled badly, got free on the baseline to pop in OSU's second hoop. Senior guard Alex Davis added two fluid shots in the lane, and Watson came off the bench and scored twice off solid post maneuvering.

A Funderburke dunk off a Simpson steal left the Buckeyes still tied with the mighty Hoosiers halfway through the first half at 19.

Indiana used some friendly whistles by the officials — the Hoosiers had 19 free-throw attempts in the first half to OSU's six — to score nine points on the free-throw line in the remainder of the half, but it still had not shaken off the Bucks at halftime, leading 40-32.

Brandewie said the team felt good about itself despite the uphill battle that awaited.

"We felt pretty confident because we were down eight and there were a couple plays that could have gone either way," Brandewie said. "We felt if we came out strong in the second half we could take the lead down and slowly take it off chunk by chunk."

"I don't think there was any point in this game — until we got down by 25 — that we were out of it because I remember in years past coming back from 20-point deficits in this game."

"This game was positive for us for about the first 27 minutes; then after that, things fell apart all over the place. From that point on, we didn't convert a lot of things that we should have and our shot selection got real bad."

And when it went bad, it went real bad. After Simpson hit a three-pointer to cut the lead to 49-41, Indiana turned up the defense, forced the Buckeyes out of any kind of offense, and rattled off a stunning 19-2 run in the next six minutes.

On top of committing five turnovers in the blitz, OSU shot in total desperation.

"There was about a two-minute period there in the second half where we lost our patience and our poise, and of course they took advantage of that," Ayers said.

Simpson, playing for the first time in Assembly Hall, said Indiana's defense brought out the worst in the OSU offense.

"We knew they were going to come out with their defensive pressure on us and try to turn the game," he said. "I think we got out of our execution at that point (after his three cut the lead to eight) and they took advantage of that by going to the other end and hitting their shots."

AYERS IS hoping Simpson will be part of the answer to OSU's offensive woes. Etzler, a fundamentally sound player who prefers play-making over shooting, has started every game at the point so far this year.

"He's coming," Ayers said of Simpson. "Greg has made as much progress as any first-year player in our program."

When asked how he plans to mend OSU's inept half-court offense, Simpson responded like a wily veteran, or at least a young player who listens to his coach.

"I've got to get the ball down and in good spots and we've got to execute it," he said. "We've got to have patience and can't be rushing our shots. If we have patience, I think we'll be all right."

ALTHOUGH IT inexplicably dropped from two to three in the national rankings the day after the game, Indiana looks like it has the tools for a run at another national championship.

The Hoosiers have loads of patience along with possibly the country's most demanding coach and a handful of players who know what it takes to win.

"I think the key for them is they have good leadership," said Funderburke, who played six games as a freshman for the Hoosiers in 1989 before transferring. "They're all veterans and they've been there before. Since the time we came in as a freshman class, they've matured and grown since then. I think they're hungry and they want it. They're definitely contenders for down the road."

Ohio State is also hoping to be a contender down the road, but that road appears to be a longer one than the one Indiana is traveling.

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1992-93 OSU Men's Basketball Statistics - Record: 9-5, Big Ten 2-3

Player	G-GS	Min	Avg	FG-FGA	Pct	3P-3PA	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off-Def	Tot	Avg	PF-FD	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts - Avg
34 Funderburke, L	14-14	428	30.6	99-183	.541	1-1	1.000	47-73	.644	28-64	92	6.6	25-0	22	29	32	14	246 -17.6
15 Skelton, J	14-8	381	27.2	72-173	.416	24-73	.329	36-46	.783	11-30	41	2.9	32-0	35	21	3	10	204 -14.6
20 Davis, A	14-14	397	28.4	50-117	.427	12-37	.324	21-26	.808	11-33	44	3.1	37-1	40	25	2	16	133 -9.5
03 Simpson, G	14-0	269	19.2	42-92	.457	15-35	.429	31-40	.775	6-23	29	2.1	25-0	28	29	3	14	130 -9.3
23 Anderson, D	8-0	177	22.1	16-52	.308	0-11	.000	22-30	.733	8-13	21	2.6	16-0	17	16	0	15	54 -6.8
40 Dudley, R	14-8	328	23.4	31-57	.544	0-0	.000	20-31	.645	30-52	82	5.9	45-2	15	24	6	9	82 -5.9
31 Brandewie, T	14-6	234	16.7	24-42	.571	0-0	.000	7-16	.438	19-37	56	4.0	29-2	12	21	3	10	55 -3.9
04 Etzler, D	14-14	247	17.6	18-43	.419	11-23	.478	4-4	1.000	3-13	16	1.1	16-0	32	26	0	2	51 -3.6
33 Macon, C	14-0	100	7.1	14-26	.538	0-1	.000	3-7	.429	9-15	24	1.7	18-1	6	5	3	1	31 -2.2
42 Ratliff, J	13-6	140	10.8	10-28	.357	0-3	.000	8-14	.571	14-13	27	2.1	15-0	7	16	1	2	28 -2.2
41 Watson, A	12-0	81	6.8	8-22	.364	0-0	.000	4-6	.667	14-8	22	1.8	19-0	1	6	2	1	20 -1.7
44 Wilbourne, N	7-0	16	2.3	3-4	.750	0-0	.000	1-2	.500	2-3	5	0.7	4-0	0	1	0	0	7 -1.0
30 Winston, O	2-0	2	1.0	0-1	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-1	1	0.5	2-0	0	0	0	0	0 -0.0
Team											49				2			
Ohio State	14	2800		387-840	.461	63-184	.342	204-295	.692	155-305	509	36.4	283	215	221	55	94	1041 -74.4
Opponents	14	2800		360-831	.433	67-193	.347	206-302	.682	186-316	502	35.9	266	203	248	35	100	993 -70.9

Finley, Badgers Have Too Much For Buckeyes

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State got a glimpse of one of the Big Ten's up-and-coming programs and a detailed look at one of the conference's budding superstars Jan. 20 in Madison, Wis.

Wisconsin sophomore Michael Finley poured in a career-high 34 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as the Badgers accelerated past the 24th-ranked Buckeyes down the stretch and took a 76-67 win at UW Field House.

Playing under first-year head coach Stu Jackson, Wisconsin notched its first win over OSU in seven tries dating back to March 1989. The Badgers improved to 9-4 overall and 2-2 in Big Ten play.

Ohio State dropped its second straight Big Ten game to fall to an identical 9-4, 2-2 record.

Wisconsin opened the game with a 21-6 lead, keyed by 11 points from Finley. The Badgers still held a 28-15 lead after Finley scored with 6:17 left in the first half.

But Ohio State responded behind sharpshooters Greg Simpson and Jamie Skelton by outscoring Wisconsin 35-17 over the game's next 13½ minutes to take a 50-45 lead.

The Badgers had the final word, though, outscoring OSU 31-17 in the final 12½ minutes. Finley led the game-finishing charge with 13 more points. He finished the contest 12 of 23 from the field and eight of 11 from the foul line.

"Finley was just outstanding tonight, and especially during that final run," OSU head coach Randy Ayers told WBNS Radio. "He took over the game at that point, making some off-balance shots and hitting some good shots when we had good pressure on him."

"The thing that impressed me was his physical strength. When he got the ball in the paint, he was able to go up strong. He's made improvements you wouldn't expect in a second-year player."

The Buckeyes had had a week off after losing by 16 points at home to Michigan State, but Ayers did not blame the layoff for his team's poor start.

"I thought we were ready to play," the OSU head coach said. "The kids were focused during our practices and our film session. We were just a half-step behind."

Simpson finished with a team-high 19 points for the Buckeyes. He scored

16 of those in the first half as OSU closed the deficit to 35-31 at intermission.

"Greg got a lot off our half-court defense in the first half. He got out in the passing lanes and did a nice job defensively," Ayers told WBNS. "They came out and closed down Greg a good deal in the second half."

Lawrence Funderburke and Alex Davis each finished with 14 points for the Buckeyes. Funderburke added a team-high nine rebounds.

Wisconsin got two three-pointers apiece from Finley and guard Andy Kilbride, who finished with nine points, in building that early 21-6 lead. The Buckeyes, averaging just over seven turnovers per game in Big Ten play, had eight turnovers in this game's first eight minutes.

Simpson went on his own mission as part of a 16-4 OSU run that cut the Badgers' lead to 32-31 late in the half. He had two steals for easy scores, dishd to Jimmy Ratliff for a layup after blocking a Wisconsin shot, and capped the run with a three-pointer.

But Badgers guard Tracy Webster stole the ball from Simpson just before the halftime buzzer and completed a three-point play with three-tenths of a second left in the half to put Wisconsin up 35-31 at halftime.

OSU opened the second half on a 15-6 spurt, keyed by five points from Jamie Skelton and four from Davis, to take a 46-41 lead with 15:11 left in the game. OSU still led 50-45 after Davis made a layup in transition two minutes later.

Wisconsin regrouped behind Finley, though, to reel off 11 unanswered points and take a 56-50 lead. The Badgers never trailed again. They eventually built a 66-54 advantage with 5:06 left.

The Buckeyes got that lead down to six points twice but could come no closer.

"It was good to get the second in a row at home and protect our turf," Jackson said. "This game gives us some confidence going into three road games. We

want to get better. We're capable of doing battle, but we need to show this kind of mental toughness."

Game Notes

The outcome of the game gave the two teams identical 2-2 conference records through their first four games.

Last year, Wisconsin did not win its second Big Ten game until Feb. 2. The Badgers finished the season 4-14 in the conference.

Meanwhile, the Buckeyes didn't lose their second league game last year until Feb. 18. They were en route to a 15-3 finish in the conference and their second straight Big Ten championship.

Ohio State (67)

Player	mn	fgfga	ftfta	rb	a	pf	tp
Funderburke	28	7-16	0-0	9	1	1	14
Skelton	28	3-12	0-0	3	3	3	7
Dudley	15	0-2	0-0	0	0	0	3
Etzler	12	0-0	2-2	2	0	2	0
Davis	26	6-10	2-2	2	2	0	14
Anderson	16	0-4	3-4	3	0	2	3
Simpson	25	6-8	5-6	3	4	2	19
Brandewie	13	0-3	0-0	2	0	2	0
Watson	12	1-4	0-0	6	0	2	2
Ratliff	12	2-3	0-0	4	0	2	4
Macon	13	1-2	0-0	4	0	4	2
Totals	200	26-64	12-14	41	10	23	67

3-point FG's: Simpson (2-2), Skelton (1-6), Davis (0-1), Anderson (0-2). Total FG's: 1st half, 550 (11-20); 2nd half, 341 (15-44); Game 406. Three-point FG: 1st half, 333 (1-3); 2nd half, 250 (2-8); Game, 273 (3-11). FT's: 1st half, 800 (8-10); 2nd half, 1,000 (4-4); Game, 857. Team rebounds—8. Dead-ball rebounds—3.

Wisconsin (76)

Player	mn	fgfga	ftfta	rb	a	pf	tp
Kelley	24	2-6	4-5	1	0	1	8
Finley	37	12-23	8-11	11	1	1	34
Harrell	33	2-5	0-0	4	1	2	4
Webster	32	2-7	3-3	2	6	4	8
Kilbride	28	3-6	0-0	0	1	3	9
Petersen	10	3-4	2-2	2	0	0	8
Ely	10	0-1	0-2	1	0	2	0
Johnsen	18	2-3	0-0	1	0	0	4
McDuffie	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Conger	3	0-0	0-0	0	1	2	0
Johnson	2	0-0	1-2	0	0	0	1
Moore	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Carl	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Totals	200	26-55	18-25	26	10	15	76

3-point FG's: Kilbride (3-5), Finley (2-5), Webster (1-3). Total FG's: 1st half, 500 (12-24); 2nd half, 452 (14-31); Game 473. Three-point FG: 1st half, 556 (5-9); 2nd half, 250 (1-4); Game, 462 (6-13). FT's: 1st half, 600 (6-10); 2nd half, 800 (12-15); Game, 720. Team rebounds—4. Dead-ball rebounds—6. Halftime—Wisconsin 35-31. Att.—11,158.

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Ayers Hopes Team Can Benefit From Hard Lessons Learned

Buckeyes Falling Victim To Brutal Road Trip

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It's not the Yellow Brick Road and it sure isn't looking like the road to recovery so far.

The fact is the Ohio State men's basketball team is in the midst of the most brutal road trip imaginable by Big Ten law.

The unenviable task began Jan. 20 at Wisconsin, an up-and-coming team that features a new coach (Stu Jackson), two of the most underrated players in the conference (Tracy Webster and Michael Finley) and an antiquated arena (UW Field House).

That scary combination proved to be too much as Ohio State fell 76-67. OSU head coach Randy Ayers was doubly concerned since his Buckeyes entered the game coming off an uninspired 16-point home loss to Michigan State.

But the Wisconsin trip only served as an appetizer for Ayers' young squad. The Buckeyes then had to worry about traveling further up the hill — to Indiana Jan. 24 and to Michigan two days after that.

OSU remained within striking distance of Indiana for most of the first half, but finally succumbed to an onslaught in the second half and eventually dropped a 96-69 decision to the Hoosiers in Assembly Hall.

When asked how the Buckeyes would handle facing two teams that advanced all the way to the Final Four last year in three days, Ayers said, "We're just going to try and go out and compete and get better. We have hopes of going to each place and putting 40 minutes together, and our ability to win is going to be based on that."

"We're still trying to develop and hopefully, by the second go-round of the Big Ten, we'll be able to compete for 40 minutes."

After a series of questions, Ayers replies became more and more realistic.

"If you can learn from a January loss in the conference, then I think down the road it can be beneficial to you," he said.

"I think Jamaal's (Brown) class really learned from going on the road and playing at Indiana, at Purdue, at Iowa. They learned from those situations. So hopefully these games will be learning experiences for us, ones we can take and use down the road."

Of course, pulling something positive out of what appears to be a dreary situation on the surface is a supreme challenge for a competitive athlete. Alex Davis, who is one of just two Buckeyes to play on the 1989-90 team that dropped four straight Big Ten games before recovering to finish 10-8, doesn't want to take those kinds of lumps again.

"Any time you lose a basketball game, you want to come right back and win, but you've got to be solid and stay tough to do it," said the senior co-captain.

"We don't want to go 0-3 (on this trip), I know that. I just want these

younger guys to know how good it feels to win a game in a tough road environment. The last couple years, we've done a good job in these types of games, but it's so tough to win in those arenas."

"You can tell younger guys how much they need to concentrate, but once they get in the game, they're really on their own and they have to deal with it."

Hence, Ohio State's inability to remain focused and intense for an entire game.

"We've been able to stay competitive for 15, 20, 25 minutes in games, but we've got to put 40 minutes together," Ayers said. "Once you're competitive for 40 minutes, I think the winning starts to take care of itself."

"Hopefully, our young guys will still be able to respond. They've always had a lot of enthusiasm. We think they'll respond and come out and play hard."

The biggest problem in the recent swoon has been a lack of aggression on offense. Guards Jamie Skelton and Greg Simpson certainly have not been shy, but after that, no one has been quite the offensive force in league play.

The team's lack of movement down low was most evident in the loss to Wisconsin, when nary an inside player managed to shoot a free throw.

"That's a big concern right there," Ayers said. "And it means we weren't playing very aggressive with the basketball."

A big chunk of aggression will no doubt have to come from 6-9 forward Lawrence Funderburke, Ohio State's top threat in the post. And Funderburke knows stepping up his game means improving his effectiveness against some of the best forwards in the country.

Unfortunately, against the Hoosiers Funderburke was not effective. He was saddled with two quick fouls at the outset of the game and never really got into the flow of the game, settling for eight points and just four rebounds.

"I think it's going to be very tough for us and it's going to be the biggest challenge of the season for us to see what

direction we're headed in," Funderburke said of playing on the road. "We feel like we can stay in the ball game with anybody. So we've got to go to those places and play hard and not worry about their rankings."

OSU senior forward and co-captain Tom Brandewie took that thought a step further and said the Buckeyes should block out their rivals altogether.

"I think right now we're looking to play against ourselves," he said. "We're in the situation where we're not playing opponents anymore. We're trying to compete with ourselves and get the bugs out of this program, I guess you could say."

"Things aren't going too well for us right now, but I think it's a situation where we've got to sit down and look at what we can do better."

One area that could become encouraging before the Buckeyes finally return home Jan. 30 is bench play. With the bulk of the league season still ahead, OSU will need more quality minutes off the pine. Ayers said help is around the corner.

Tony Watson and Greg Simpson, those two have really impressed me lately," said the OSU coach. "As Derek (Anderson) gets stronger, he's going to continue to develop, and even (Killer) Macon and (Jimmy) Ratliff have had some positive minutes lately."

"If they can continue to do that off the bench, it's only going to be a positive for our situation."

Simpson has had three shining moments in particular. The 6-1 freshman guard scored 23 points in 22 minutes in Ohio State's win over conference foe Iowa Jan. 9. He did so with seven-for-eight shooting, four-for-four from three-point range. Against Wisconsin, Simpson turned in another 19 points in 25 minutes, again in relief of starting point guard Doug Etzler, and then tossed in a team-high 15 against the Hoosiers.

"Greg is making tremendous progress for us and to the point where you've got to consider starting him,"

Ayers said. "But the positive is he's getting his minutes and doing something with those minutes. He's getting other people involved, and that's something he had to learn."

And while the Buckeyes have received a spark from Simpson off the bench, they may look to others for even more offensive punch.

"If it does happen that we catch stride offensively, it's a situation where it could help our confidence tremendously for the rest of the season," Brandewie said. "I think we've proved we can play with the best teams in the country. The key is we have to get ourselves together."

'92-'93 Schedule

Dec. 1	Ohio University, W 77-61
Dec. 5	Southern Cal, W 73-56
Dec. 12	Bowling Green, W 80-54
Dec. 16	Wright State, W 76-55
Dec. 19	West Virginia, L 78-69
Dec. 22	North Carolina, L 84-64
Dec. 28	Oregon State, W 85-77
Dec. 29	Oregon, W 79-75
Jan. 2	Illinois-Chicago, W 79-55
Jan. 5	Penn State, W 71-68
Jan. 9	Iowa, W 92-81
Jan. 13	Michigan State, L 77-60
Jan. 20	Wisconsin, L 76-67
Jan. 24	Indiana, L 96-69
Jan. 26	at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 30	ILLINOIS, 1 p.m.
Feb. 3	PURDUE, 8 p.m.
Feb. 6	PENN STATE, 3 p.m.
Feb. 10	at Northwestern, 8 p.m.
Feb. 13	at Michigan St., 12 noon
Feb. 16	at Iowa, 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 20	WISCONSIN, 8 p.m.
Feb. 23	INDIANA, 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 28	MICHIGAN, 2 p.m.
Mar. 6	at Illinois, 8 p.m.
Mar. 10	MINNESOTA, 8 p.m.
Mar. 13/14	at Purdue, TBA



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TODAY TO BSB

Senior Co-Captain Has Had An Up-And-Down College Career

Davis Easing Into Role As OSU Team Leader

By JEFF RAPP
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The numbers may not be quite up to par and the losses are hard to get used to. But despite what appears like an anticlimactic ending to a college career, Ohio State senior guard Alex Davis remains positive and happy to be a key performer for the Buckeyes.

Davis, a cat-quick 6-1 guard, has had a rather unusual career for the Scarlet and Gray. He made an unlikely impact as a freshman from Cincinnati in 1990, starting 15 games and averaging 10.7 points. His great inaugural year climaxed with a career-high 24 points against Providence in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. OSU won that game in overtime, thanks to a clutch three-pointer by Davis at the end of regulation.

The following year could quickly be described as a sophomore jinx. Davis fought a knee injury all season and was just a shadow of himself, averaging only 2.3 points per game. The Buckeyes tied for the conference crown, but Davis was not the factor he could have been.

Last year, he had his moments off the bench as OSU won the Big Ten title outright. But by then his time was limited because of the steady play of starting guards Mark Baker and Jamaal Brown. He averaged 3.1 points per game and made 31 of 67 field goal attempts.

Now, suddenly, Davis' fourth and final year is flying by. He has been pressed into starting service again, but this Buckeye team is not expected to contend for the Big Ten championship.

"I guess you could say I've had a strange stay here," he said. "My four years have gone kind of quick. They just kind of came and went. But I haven't looked at things that way too much."

"My only goals coming into this year were to be solid and to lead, sometimes with my play and sometimes by speaking. It's been a tough year so far."

With the departure of guards Baker, Brown and Jim Jackson, Davis immediately became a player to be counted on in the OSU backcourt. So far, he has responded by playing 28.4 minutes per game and averaging 9.5 points and 2.9 assists, tops on the team.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, Davis is barely shooting over 42 percent from the field and had already missed five free throws this year after missing only six of 77 in his three previous seasons. While his scoring is still respectable, Davis looked like he might score more in the 12-14 points-per-game range in the early part of the season.

"I think Alex is sacrificing some of his scoring to do other things for us," explained Ohio State head coach Randy Ayers. "I really thought he played hard up at Madison (Wisconsin) for the entire game and gave us a great effort on (Tracy) Webster. Webster had been averaging great numbers, and Alex held him to eight points in the game; so I thought he did a great job."

"That's what we're talking about when we talk about being a leader. Not only scoring and leading verbally, but just going out and playing hard, and I thought Alex did that up in Madison."

Indeed, the transformation from quiet, spot-up shooter to finger-pointing co-captain has worn on Davis somewhat. But the senior is trying to take it all in stride.

"As the captain, you've got to take responsibility to teach some of these different players and tell them what's going on," he said. "You've got to get a feel for how to win and also how to lose because you have to take some losses."

"Probably the biggest thing you have to remind the younger guys is to stay tough. We've got to keep busting our butts to survive out here."

Had Jackson decided to stay for his senior season, Davis probably wouldn't have to be talking like the captain of a ship right now. Jackson, after all, was used to playing 30-plus minutes a game,



Ohio State senior co-captain Alex Davis (20) has been one of the Buckeyes' most reliable outside shooting threats for nearly four years. One of only three players to start all 14 games through Jan. 24, Davis was averaging 9.5 points per game.



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was a two-time All-American and would have been a much more natural leader.

But now that Jackson is gone, Davis, who averaged less than 10 minutes per game the last two seasons, must learn on the job.

"In a sense, you're always learning when you're playing, but now you also have to pull together the five people on the court and learn how to play with each other, and that takes a lot of effort," Davis said. "Everybody has to be in tune with what's going on and I think, as you get older, you have to be even tougher mentally."

Jamie Skelton, who often entered games along with Davis last year and now starts alongside his friend, can relate to Davis' added responsibilities.

"I think he's had to deal with being the guy who has to set the tone for the game instead of coming off the bench when the tone is already set," Skelton said. "I think he's adjusted well. He hasn't scored that many points, but anybody who knows Alex knows that he can score any time."

"Once Alex realizes that he's in the starting lineup for good, he'll be fine. He's doing well this year. I don't know what his shooting percentages are, but when we watch the film, you realize how well he can shoot the ball at times."

Ayers said he is happy with the effort of his senior guard.

"He's a guy that has to do a lot of the little things for us to be successful," said the OSU head coach. "He'll take the top perimeter scorer and he's the guy in our pressure set that we look to get involved a lot more. So he's doing a lot of the little things that you expect from one of your older players."

"You have to put that responsibility on somebody, and he seems to be the guy who has accepted that role this year."

Davis also seems to have inherited Baker's role of team barometer. Oftentimes, as Davis goes, so go the Buckeyes.

During Ohio State's 4-0 start to the season, he scored in double figures in each game. As the team dropped its next two decisions to West Virginia and North Carolina, it was no coincidence that Davis didn't play well. He totaled only nine points in those two games, shooting only four of 15 from the floor.

Then, in a 16-point, humbling loss to Michigan State earlier this month, he managed only seven points.

"I don't look at it as a type of thing where you have to blame any one thing or anybody. So I don't really believe that too much," Davis said, disagreeing with the notion he is a gauge for the team. "I just try to go out and play as hard as I can and help the team any way I can. I'm a team player. That's how I play."

Still some of the onus has remained. Since Ohio State went to a three-guard starting alignment of Doug Etzler, Davis and Skelton in late December, more emphasis has been placed on the defense and rebounding of the guards, especially because of occasional mismatches in size.

"It does put a little more pressure on

you when you have a tough assignment, but you've just got to be tough mentally," said Davis, who has drawn North Carolina's Derrick Phelps and Michigan State's Shawn Respert among others this season.

"I've played against great players before. My freshman year, I played against Rumeal Robinson (of Michigan), which was a great experience for me because he's a great player. But once you get out there on the court and have to defend somebody, you try your best because that's all you can do."

"I try not to get caught up in having to hold down a great player or this and that. You just try your best and hope it's enough."

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As Playing Time Increases, So Does Production From OSU Frosh

Simpson Appears Ready For Starting Role

By RICH LEONARDO
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Throughout most of the world, death and taxes are the only certainties afforded to man.

At Ohio State, a third constant has arrived — Greg Simpson will be a fixture in the starting lineup. The only question that remains is when.

Simpson, a 6-1, 170-pound freshman guard, was averaging 9.3 points and 2.0 assists per game through Jan. 24 while cutting his teeth on the stiff competition of the Big Ten. But he is constantly improving his game, so much so that he is on the brink of breaking into the starting lineup for the Buckeyes.

"We've been extremely pleased with Greg," said Ohio State assistant coach Dave Cecutti. "He's come in here, not cocky, but with a lot of confidence in himself and in his game."

"We're hoping his confidence will lead to leadership, not only for the remainder of this season, but for the next three seasons as well."

The confidence Simpson now exudes seemed dormant during the non-conference portion of the season, but his performance in the Iowa game Jan. 9 (23 points, including four for four from three-point territory) not only led the Buckeyes to a 92-81 victory, but also netted him the Big Ten's player of the week award.

"Things have been coming along pretty quick for me," Simpson said. "But I've learned the system well and I feel good and comfortable with what I'm doing."

Simpson's comfort warms the heart of his coach as well.

"Greg has made tremendous progress for us to the point where we have to consider starting him," OSU head coach Randy Ayers said. "Having Greg on the floor has been very positive and it shows in his minutes played."

"He's getting his playing time and more important, he's doing something

good with his time on the court."

Through the Buckeyes' first 14 games this season, Simpson was averaging 19.2 minutes of playing time per contest. That has steadily risen since the Big Ten campaign began. In the Michigan State, Wisconsin and Indiana games, for example, he averaged 27.7 minutes per contest.

While much of that increased floor time can be traced to Simpson's ability to give the Buckeyes some instant offense, it is his defensive improvement of late that has really caught the attention of the OSU coaching staff.

"Every day, every game, Greg's adjustment to this level of play has improved," Cecutti said. "He has especially turned it up a notch at the defensive end and his ability to do so is the main reason for his increased playing time."

"Actually, quality minutes would be a good way to describe Greg's performance so far. When he enters the game, he plays all out, whether it's driving the lane for a tough basket or guarding our opposition's quickest player."

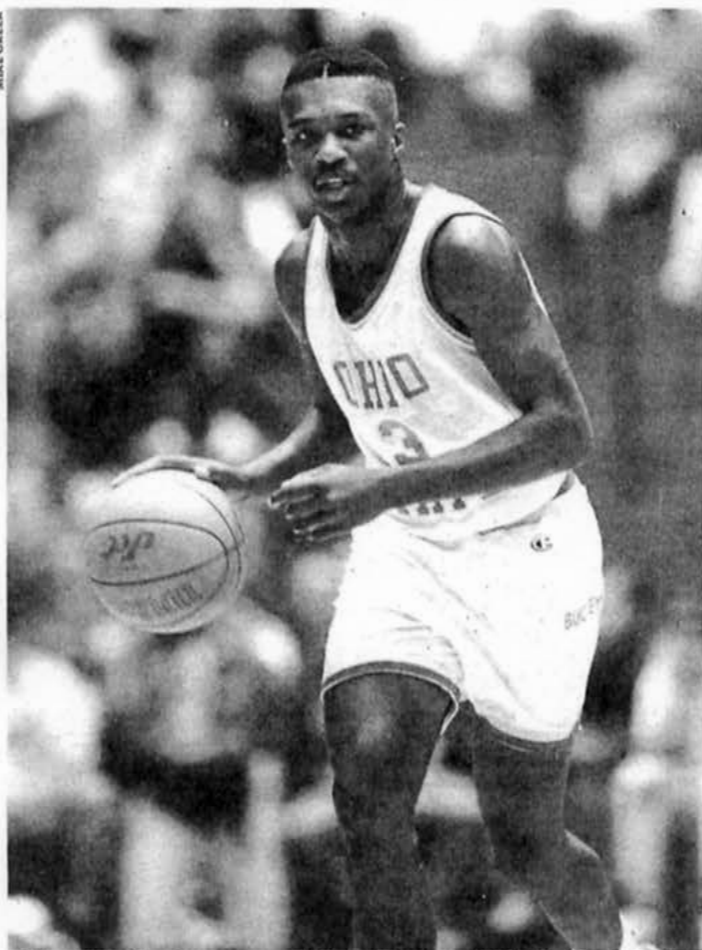
While Simpson's defensive prowess might leave some fans dumbfounded, it's simply old hat to the Buckeye frosh.

"I played defense in high school," Simpson said. "It just went unnoticed because of all the other things I had to contribute to the team. But even at this level, I feel I can guard anybody in the Big Ten as long as I work hard and never let up."

Defense was not the only thing Simpson played in high school.

While at Lima Senior High School, Simpson was named Ohio's "Mr. Basketball" in both 1991 and 1992 as well as being honored as the Division I player of the year as a junior and senior.

It was as a senior that his 35 points, 6.9 assists, 6.1 steals and 7.1 rebounds per game led Simpson to be named to both the *Parade* magazine and McDonald's All-America teams. The pride of Lima had 10 games in which he



Ohio State freshman guard Greg Simpson (3) is slowly but surely working his way into position for a starting role with the Buckeyes. Simpson's playing time has increased steadily all season and he was fourth on the team in scoring through Jan. 24.



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Buckeye Sports Bulletin

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scored 40 or more points last season while shooting 53 percent from the field and 77 percent from the foul line.

"Greg is a very skilled player and obviously he came to us already having many, many skills," Cecutti said. "But in addition to those skills, he's really improved his play at both ends of the floor. Greg has been real impressive thus far."

Many Buckeye basketball junkies expected Simpson to be a starter from day one, but the young Buckeye guard never believed that.

"I felt I'd have to come in and work hard for any playing time at all and I never felt like I would come here and start right away," Simpson said. "Coach Ayers told me it would take hard work and dedication to play at this level and he left it up to me on just how dedicated I'd let myself become."

Simpson's hard work and dedication are obviously paying off.

"Greg's come a long way and he's kept everybody involved as well," Ayers said. "While having to keep his teammates involved in the flow of the game, he himself has stayed active, which has been vital to our offense."

For any freshman's performance to be vital to the Buckeye attack is quite a compliment.

"Watching Greg, you can just see his improvement and his confidence growing with each passing week," Cecutti said. "It's exciting and satisfying to witness his maturing. I think you'll see more and more of Greg in the lineup."

"But we really don't get hung up on who's starting as much as we do about who's performing under pressure. As Greg continues to prove himself, the time may come when he gets the start, but that would be the result of his improvement and not the demotion of another player."

While Simpson's improvement on defense has the coaching staff pleased, his ability to handle the point guard position has been equally impressive.

"To play the point guard position, you have to have more of a decision-making mentality, and Greg has developed that mind-set," Cecutti said. "He is now delivering the ball on the fast break and in transition as well as ex-

ecuting well in our half-court offense."

How did this high-scoring, natural shooting guard develop into a prime time floor leader?

"During the summer, I played a lot of point guard. So the demands of the position aren't really new to me," Simpson said. "It's just that during high school, I was looked upon to do the scoring instead of the distributing. But I can do both equally well. Whatever my role is, I'll gladly accept it because I truly love the game."

Simpson was one of the few bright spots for the Buckeyes in their 96-69 loss to Indiana, scoring a team-high 15 points. He also led the team in minutes played against the Hoosiers, logging 32, eight more than anyone else on the squad.

Still, Simpson was not satisfied with his performance, saying that the Buckeyes have to learn how to remain focused throughout an entire game.

"I think if we play hard for 40

minutes, we can be competitive on the road as well as at home," Simpson said. "If we can manage to play some full games on a consistent basis, I'm sure you'll see some victories out of this team."

If big victories are in store for these Buckeyes, it seems certain that Simp-

son will have something to do with them.

"All I wanted to do was to come here and be a part of this winning tradition and hopefully contribute to the team as quickly and as much as possible," he said. "If I work hard and never let up, I'm certain good things will happen."

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Ohio State Cruises To Easy Conference Win

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The eighth-ranked Ohio State women's basketball team cruised to a 78-57 win over Michigan State Jan. 24 before a season-high crowd of 9,551 in St. John Arena.

The Lady Buckeyes got a big lift from their bench, especially during an eight-minute stretch in the second half, in securing the victory.

"We can certainly say this was a team win," said OSU head coach Nancy Darsch. "There was definitely a good team effort. It's nice to see the effort like this from our subs and to have such balanced scoring."

Senior Nikki Keyton led the way with 20 points and freshman Katie Smith added 12. Freshman Lisa Negri added nine points and 10 rebounds off the bench, while junior Stacie Howard and freshman Adrienne Johnson each netted eight points.

It looked as if Ohio State (13-1, 5-0) would run away with things early, blowing out to a 20-9 lead, including three-pointers from Keyton, Smith and senior Averill Roberts.

But MSU (6-7, 2-2) used a 15-9 burst in the next five minutes to pull to within 29-24 with three minutes left courtesy of a pair of treys from point guard Christine Powers and one from forward Tanya Place.

The Buckeyes scored seven of the last 10 points to lead 36-27 at intermission despite shooting just 41.2 percent from the floor to MSU's 50 percent.

Although the starters pushed the lead to 11 points at the outset of the second half, Darsch was not pleased with the defensive intensity and made wholesale changes, lifting all five starters.

The reserves hustled, made good decisions and basically saved the game, prompting a standing ovation from the crowd when they went back to the bench.

"That group gave us a very big lift," Darsch said. "They were all playing very active. They were on their toes, they were in defensive stances, and they played the way we're supposed to play. I really give them a lot of credit."

Michigan State head coach Karen Langeland knew her Spartans were outclassed.

"Ohio State beat us pretty much in every aspect of the game," Langeland said. "They had more rebounds and they got a lot of steals that created easy baskets for them. Because of their pressure, the same thing that happens to a lot of teams happened to us: They took us out of our offense."

With about nine minutes to go in the game, the Spartans were still within shouting distance of the Buckeyes at 55-40, but an 11-4 OSU run buried them, putting the Buckeyes up 66-44 with 5:20 remaining.

It was the second straight 20-point output for Keyton, and Darsch believes the six-footer may be putting it all together.

"This is the third game in a row where she's really played well," Darsch said. "I hope it means she's back on track and that she'll play like this the rest of the season."

The Spartans were led by sophomore Kisha Kelley's 15 points, with Powers at 13 and Columbus native Prudence Evans adding 10.

OSU won the battle of the boards for the fourth straight game, grabbing 43 to MSU's 29. In the last four games, the Buckeyes are outrebounding opponents by an average of almost 11 per contest, something Darsch hopes will continue.

"The rebounding has definitely looked better the last four games," she said. "I see our players boxing out more consistently and more physically and I see us really wanting the ball. I think we want it because we want to run and maybe because we have realized it's a very important part of the game."

The Buckeyes held MSU to 33.3 percent shooting in the second half and forced 28 turnovers for the contest. Most of the turnovers, according to Langeland, were OSU's doing.

"There's no question they created the turnovers," she said. "A couple of our players were playing pretty tentative, but again, that's a credit to Ohio State's defense. We had 16 turnovers in the first half, and it's real difficult to get any scoring when you can't get a shot off."

Free Throws

The 5-0 conference start is the best for Ohio State since the 1987 season, when the Lady Bucks won their first 13 before dropping a 66-54 contest at Iowa.

OSU was 1-4 after five league games last year and 2-3 a year earlier.

KEYTON WON this week's *Big Bear Buckeye of the Week* award for her stellar play against Michigan State and Michigan.

For the two games played Jan. 22 and Jan. 24, Keyton averaged 20 points and eight rebounds in the two wins, hitting 17 of 29 shots from the field, a 58.6 percent clip.

Michigan State (57)

Player	mn	fg	ft	fta	rb	a	pf	tp
Kelley	36	5	9	5	5	4	1	4
Place	36	3	8	0	0	5	4	2
Hall	30	3	5	0	0	9	0	2
Powers	40	5	12	0	0	3	2	4
Evans	24	4	7	1	2	2	4	3
McMaster	18	1	4	1	2	1	2	0
Peterson	8	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Smith	5	1	2	0	0	1	0	1
Gray	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stevens	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	200	22	48	7	9	29	14	17

3-point FG's: Powers (3-6), Place (2-5), Evans (1-1), McMaster (0-1). Total FG's: 1st half, .500 (10-20); 2nd half, .333 (12-28); Game .458. Three-point FG: 1st half, .667 (4-6); 2nd half, .286 (2-7); Game, .462 (6-13). FT's: 1st half, .750 (3-4); 2nd half, .800 (4-5); Game: .778. Team rebounds—3. Deadball rebounds—1.

Ohio State (78)

Player	mn	fg	ft	fta	rb	a	pf	tp
Keyton	20	8	13	3	9	2	2	20
Smith	27	5	13	1	2	3	1	12
Howard	21	4	5	0	3	5	1	8
Burcy	17	2	4	2	3	0	1	0
Roberts	26	3	9	0	0	6	5	1
Sebastian	15	0	3	0	0	1	4	1
Negri	20	3	5	3	4	10	1	0
Johnson	15	4	9	0	0	2	2	8
Ingwersen	18	1	5	1	2	3	2	1
Bond	8	0	1	0	1	1	2	0
Fergus	10	2	4	0	0	1	0	2
Jackson	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	200	32	71	10	18	43	22	13

3-point FG's: Keyton (1-1), Roberts (1-3), Smith (1-3), Ingwersen (1-3), Burcy (0-1), Sebastian (0-1). Total FG's: 1st half, .412 (14-34); 2nd half, .486 (18-37); Game .451. Three-point FG: 1st half, .429 (3-7); 2nd half, .200 (1-5); Game, .333 (4-12). FT's: 1st half, .417 (5-12); 2nd half, .833 (5-6); Game: .556. Team rebounds—4. Deadball rebounds—2. Halftime—Ohio State 36-27. Att.—9,551.



Ohio State junior forward Stacie Howard (43) has been giving the Lady Buckeyes solid performances in the middle. During a 78-57 victory over Michigan State Jan. 24, Howard collected eight points and grabbed five rebounds for OSU.

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OSU's Subs Help To Torpedo Michigan State

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Coaches always say it's not whether you start a game that matters, but how well you perform when you're in there.

Never was that more evident than in Ohio State's win over Michigan State, a game in which the Buckeyes' bench out-scored MSU's second-line players 25-5 and exhibited tremendous defensive pressure and enthusiasm when the starters were lagging.

OSU led 40-29 with 17:11 left to play when head coach Nancy Darsch made a full substitution, pulling all five regulars in favor of Lisa Sebastian, Lisa Negri, Adrienne Johnson, Kelly Fergus and Erin Ingwersen.

In the next eight minutes, the Lady Buckeye reserves not only maintained the cushion, but actually added a couple of points to it, pushing the lead to 55-40, sparked by six consecutive points from Johnson on jumpers in the lane.

The play of the reserves, who also caused eight turnovers during the time they were in the game, was the subject of much praise after the game.

"Our subs really did good things off the bench," Darsch said. "They did a lot of good things out there and just played with a lot of energy and defensive intensity."

"I didn't see that a lot in the first half, and it wasn't to my satisfaction with the starters at the beginning of the second half. Our subs did a great job playing the way we want to see our defense played."

Senior Nikki Keyton felt something needed to be done to light a fire under the Lady Buckeyes, who until that point had played well enough to lead, but hardly inspired basketball.

"We really needed that," Keyton said. "We needed someone to come off the bench and get us sparked. The bench really got us going. When the bench was out there, it let us take a look at what we needed to be doing."

"While we were sitting on the bench we said, 'We need to go out there and do exactly what they're doing.'"

And they did, never allowing Michigan State to pull closer than 16 points the rest of the way.

As is often the case, the reserves seized the moment and attempted to show they're pretty decent players in their own right. They also listened when Darsch drove home the point about defensive intensity.

"Nancy mentioned in the locker room at halftime that the defense hadn't done what it was capable of doing," Johnson said. "We wanted to go out there and show everyone that we don't lose anything. We've been struggling a bit, but this will give us a more positive outlook."

Michigan State head coach Karen Langeland believed the play of the reserves definitely gave the Buckeyes the needed boost to jet away from the Spartans.

"The reserves really brought them some emotion and enthusiasm in the second half and really lifted the team," said the 17-year MSU head coach. "They really made a difference for them."

THE LADY Buckeyes' post game was strong for the second straight game, with Keyton, Negri, Fergus and Stacie Howard accounting for 41 points

INSIDE THE GAME

and 25 rebounds, more than half the team's total in both categories.

The Spartans were at a definite disadvantage due to the loss of their two best inside players, Annette Babers and Sheronda Mayo-Powell. Babers left the team after becoming pregnant, while Mayo-Powell blew out her knee in a 60-56 win over Purdue Jan. 7.

Babers was averaging 9.3 points and 8.4 boards and Mayo-Powell was at 10.9 points and 7.3 rebounds.

The loss of the two MSU inside mainstays definitely was telling.

"I'm a little disappointed with our defense inside," Langeland said. "With our circumstances, we know that's a problem. It's going to be a concern the rest of the year, really. Ohio State did a nice job taking advantage of our weak inside game."

Without Babers and Mayo-Powell, the Buckeyes were not sure what looks the Spartans might unveil.

"We weren't sure what to expect in the post only because they lost both their post players," Keyton said. "We figured as long as we stayed within our defense, we could handle whatever changes they made at the post."

Those words turned out to be prophetic. The Lady Buckeyes held Michigan State's inside players to only 23 points and 14 rebounds. The rebound total was less than Babers and Mayo-Powell had been averaging by themselves.

THE MICHIGAN and Michigan State games are always big ones for Lansing, Mich., native Keyton.

She said she works harder against those two teams since she chose the Buckeyes over either of her home state universities, and that desire to do well against them has shown up in her statistics.

With 20 points and nine rebounds against the Spartans, Keyton moved her career averages as a starter to 15.0 points and 8.0 rebounds per game.

The numbers are even better against the Wolverines, with Keyton hitting for an average of 16.6 points and 8.8 boards.

"The last four years, that's how it always is," the OSU senior said. "I always play well against Michigan and Michigan State. That's mainly because I'm from Michigan and I want to show them what they missed out on."



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1992-93 OSU Women's Basketball Statistics - Record: 13-1, Big Ten 5-0

	Player	G-GS	Min	Avg	FG-FGA	Pct	3P-3PA	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off-Def	Tot	Avg	PF-FD	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	- Avg	
30	Smith, K	14-14	372	26.6	92- 176	.523	17- 31	.548	73- 89	.820	46- 34	80-	5.7	30- 1	38	29	1	33	274	-19.6	
22	Roberts, A	14-14	399	28.5	83- 186	.446	11- 40	.275	37- 58	.638	33- 33	66-	4.7	27- 0	55	38	1	48	214	-15.3	
50	Keyton, N	13-13	323	24.8	74- 126	.587	4- 11	.364	38- 49	.776	22- 50	72-	5.5	35- 1	14	27	3	19	190	-14.6	
15	Burcy, A	14-14	298	21.3	37- 72	.514	4- 17	.235	42- 63	.667	14- 17	31-	2.2	27- 0	54	46	0	53	120	- 8.6	
43	Howard, S	14-14	300	21.4	49- 92	.533	0- 0	.000	16- 30	.533	21- 32	53-	3.8	34- 1	7	16	13	12	114	- 8.1	
44	Negri, L	14- 1	291	20.8	22- 56	.393	1- 8	.125	27- 34	.794	28- 42	70-	5.0	23- 1	9	16	11	4	72	- 5.1	
31	Johnson, A	14- 0	204	14.6	32- 79	.405	1- 8	.125	7- 14	.500	16- 6	22-	1.6	20- 0	17	8	1	8	72	- 5.1	
10	Bond, A	14- 0	136	9.7	16- 39	.410	5- 16	.313	8- 12	.667	7- 9	16-	1.1	11- 0	22	21	0	11	45	- 3.2	
55	Fergus, K	13- 0	128	9.8	11- 28	.393	0- 0	.000	10- 18	.556	10- 20	30-	2.3	13- 0	2	9	4	3	32	- 2.5	
25	Ingwersen, E	14- 0	161	11.5	10- 36	.278	6- 24	.250	7- 11	.636	12- 11	23-	1.6	9- 0	7	9	0	3	33	- 2.4	
24	Sebastian, L	14- 0	136	9.7	12- 32	.375	0- 4	.000	2- 3	.667	4- 8	12-	0.9	7- 0	21	10	0	15	26	- 1.9	
23	Jackson, G	10- 0	52	5.2	3- 7	.429	0- 0	.000	2- 4	.500	2- 8	10-	1.0	7- 0	2	3	1	4	8	- 0.8	
	Team											47				1					
	Ohio State	14	2800		441- 929	.475	49-159	.308	269-385	.699	215-270	532-	38.0	243		248	233	35	213	1200	-85.7
	Opponents	14	2800		366- 830	.441	48-129	.372	156-225	.693	192-312	504-	36.0	325		197	382	23	102	936	-66.9

Far From A Masterpiece, But OSU Takes Win

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It was closer to one of those pictures your kid makes for your refrigerator than it was to a Picasso, but the Ohio State women's basketball team will take it.

The Lady Buckeyes remained undefeated in Big Ten play with a 90-73 win over Michigan Jan. 22 in St. John Arena before an estimated 6,873 fans.

"It's a win," said Ohio State head coach Nancy Darsch. "It wasn't pretty all the way. We made progress and looked good at times, but at times our offense was pretty horrible."

The Lady Buckeyes (12-1, 4-0) defeated the Wolverines (1-13, 0-5) despite shooting just 44.2 percent and off nights from top scorers Katie Smith and Averill Roberts. Smith had 16 points but shot just four for 11 from the field, while Roberts ended the evening with 12 points and a game-high and

career-high-matching seven assists. She made only four of 12 field goal attempts.

However, senior forward Nikki Keyton and junior center Stacie Howard took up the slack, scoring 20 and 16 points, respectively, and helped the Buckeyes' post game immensely. Howard's point total represented a career best.

OSU never trailed in the contest and had a 44-23 lead with 3:23 to play in the first half before Michigan, behind Columbus native Stacie McCall and center Trish Andrew, closed with an inspired 10-2 spurt.

"In the first half, I thought we did a nice job defensively really establishing the tempo," Darsch said. "I was a little disappointed the first five minutes of the second half that we didn't just come out and retake control of the game after Michigan made their run at the end of the first half."

The Buckeyes led 46-33 at intermission, but Michigan kept it a game, getting to within 50-41 on a layup by

Andrew with four and a half minutes gone.

OSU pushed the lead back to double figures, but the Wolverines would not fold, paring a 55-43 lead to 57-51 on two treys from guard Jen Nuanes and a put-back by forward Carrie Stewart.

But Ohio State flexed its muscles again, going on a 12-5 run to grab a 69-56 advantage with 9:28 to play. It never got closer than nine points the remainder of the game.

Michigan first-year coach Trish Roberts, who played at Tennessee at the same time Darsch was an assistant to head coach Pat Summitt, felt encouraged by much of her team's play.

"I thought we played extremely well," Roberts said. "Our 2-3 zone really withstood a lot and brought us back some. What really hurt us was rebounding, though. Ohio State got too many second chances."

The Buckeyes did indeed win the rebounding battle by a comfortable 42-33 margin. They were especially tena-

cious on the offensive glass, pulling down 18. Keyton paced OSU with seven and Smith added six.

That post advantage, especially against the sometimes dominating Andrew, was encouraging to Darsch.

"It's nice to see our post players contributing in double figures and working hard on the blocks," the OSU coach said. "We also did a nice job rebounding again."

Roberts, who will likely face more defeats in her inaugural season, believes she can turn things around for the moribund Wolverine program, maybe sooner than later.

"I'm not looking so much at the win-loss record," she said. "I'm looking at the improvement of the players. Since Christmas, we've gotten a lot better. We're going to take it one game at a time and really build toward next year."

Michigan (73)

Player	mn	fgfga	ftfta	rb	a	pf	tp
Stewart	40	3	8	0	7	4	3
Gray	38	5	11	1	7	3	2
Andrew	33	9	18	5	7	10	1
McCall	37	3	8	7	8	2	3
Nuanes	30	5	9	0	0	1	3
Heikkinen	13	0	1	0	0	1	4
Stanley	7	2	2	1	1	0	0
Turner	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	200	27	57	14	17	33	18

3-point FG's: Nuanes (4-6), Andrew (1-1), Stewart (0-1). Total FG's: 1st half, 382 (13-34); 2nd half, 609 (14-23); Game, 474. Three-point FG: 1st half, 000 (0-2); 2nd half, 833 (5-6); Game, 625 (5-8). FT's: 1st half, 778 (7-9); 2nd half, 875 (7-8); Game, 824. Team rebounds—6. Deadball rebounds—3.

Ohio State (90)

Player	mn	fgfga	ftfta	rb	a	pf	tp
Keyton	27	9	16	2	4	7	1
Smith	28	4	11	7	8	6	3
Howard	24	7	13	2	3	3	0
Burcy	19	3	4	0	0	2	4
Roberts	30	4	12	2	2	4	1
Sebastian	10	2	3	0	0	1	1
Negri	14	0	2	1	2	3	2
Johnson	9	3	6	0	0	1	0
Fergus	9	1	3	0	0	1	0
Ingwersen	13	0	3	0	0	4	0
Bond	11	1	4	2	2	3	0
Jackson	6	0	0	2	2	3	0
Totals	200	34	77	18	23	42	22

3-point FG's: Roberts (2-4), Burcy (1-1), Smith (1-2), Keyton (0-1), Bond (0-1), Ingwersen (0-2). Total FG's: 1st half, 436 (17-39); 2nd half, 447 (17-38); Game, 442. Three-point FG: 1st half, 143 (1-7); 2nd half, 750 (3-4); Game, 364 (4-11). FT's: 1st half, 917 (11-12); 2nd half, 636 (7-11); Game, 783. Team rebounds—5. Deadball rebounds—3. Halftime—Ohio State 46-33. Att.—6,873.



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Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Keyton Figures Lady Buckeyes' Best Basketball Is Still Ahead Of Them

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In a season of heading north in the polls and national limelight, Ohio State senior forward Nikki Keyton wants to head south.

The 1993 women's Final Four is held in Atlanta during the first week in April, and Keyton holds the firm belief the Lady Buckeyes will be there.

"We're definitely a Final Four team," Keyton said. "I say that mainly because we haven't peaked yet."

She also admits she has another motive for wanting to visit Atlanta. Keyton is interested in pursuing a postgraduate degree after graduating next year in criminology and wants to go to grad school at an institution that could give her a chance to be a graduate assistant coach.

"I'd love to live in the South," she said. "I wouldn't mind going to a place like Atlanta to do my postgraduate work, especially if I could go to the school of my choice and be a graduate assistant."

However, if her plan to further her education at somewhere in the South such as Georgia Tech fails, she said she'll probably go back home to Michigan and go for a master's degree from Michigan State.

That is all in the future, though. In the present, Keyton is charged with keeping the Lady Buckeyes focused on the excellence they have shown so far in the 1992-93 basketball season.

She has pursued excellence on the court since her rookie season and, even with some inconsistencies, it seems to be paying off.

Keyton was tabbed a second-team All-Big Ten selection last year after notching averages of 13.7 points and 8.3 rebounds. Even with the outstanding numbers and all-conference recognition, she has something of a tough time getting her due respect.

In fact, one preseason publication featured a photograph of Keyton driving to the hoop, but the accompanying cap-

tion identified her as teammate Averrill Roberts.

Ohio State head coach Nancy Darsch feels Keyton may be lacking in recognition but wouldn't be if she were a little more consistent.

"It's possible she deserves more respect," Darsch said, "but most people don't expect someone only six feet tall to put up the kind of stats she has. Consistency will go a long way toward getting her the recognition she deserves."

The unassuming Keyton is not bothered by the lack of recognition.

"I don't really focus on personal aspects of the game," she said. "Last year, I made second-team All-Big Ten; so people know who I am. It seems like I've taken a back seat this year, but that's fine with me as long as we win."

Keyton may feel she's taken a back seat, but she's definitely been a driving force in the Buckeyes' 13-1 start.

Aside from freshman Katie Smith, Keyton is the only Buckeye to score in double figures in every game she's played in this season, including a career-best 20 points three times, most recently against Michigan State.

Keyton was at 14.6 points and 5.5 rebounds through Jan. 24, but she was not discouraged about her lower board numbers because of the team's winning ways.

It might have been more discouraging in other seasons. Internal problems racked the team during her first three years, in addition to the fact the Buckeyes have gone to just one NCAA Tournament in that time.

But the tough seasons have made Keyton a tougher person.

"I've learned more in the losing years than I have this year," she said. "When you're winning, everything's going great. You don't have any problems."

"I knew in high school I was a strong person and that I had a strong personality, but since I've been here I've learned I can withstand any kind of struggle or anything that's thrown my way."

That's why Keyton and the other seniors made a concerted effort to close

ranks and focus on team unity for this season.

"We knew, to have a successful year, we had to put everything aside and pull together," she said. "Our teams have always been close, but in a different, cliquish sort of way. With this group, everyone is pretty much friends with everyone. It's a different kind of closeness. You know you can rely on anybody on the team to help you out."

The Lady Buckeyes' resurrection has been nothing short of remarkable, especially based on the 11-17 and 15-13 records of the last two seasons.

There is a new air of confidence within the team, but that's not the most amazing thing.

Now the OSU students, never ones to religiously attend Lady Buckeyes games, are coming out of the woodwork to let the team know they're behind it 100 percent.

"People are talking about us now around campus," Keyton laughed. "People come up to us and say, 'We listened to you on the radio.' When do people listen to women's basketball on the radio?"

"They've been listening to our games and everyone's really excited for us. It's good because when it's recognized among the students, that's great. We don't really get a lot of students at the



Nikki Keyton

games, but this year there's been a lot of them. It's always nice to see that support."

And the top 10 ranking and undefeated Big Ten start is something Keyton has longed for since coming to Columbus.

"Averrill and I have really been talking about that a lot lately," she said. "We're like, 'Can you believe it? We're eighth in the country and at the top of the Big Ten.' We've never had this feeling before. We had a winning season my freshman year, but it's nothing compared to this."

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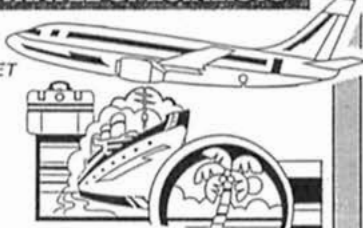


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Lady Buckeyes' Senior Point Guard Specializes In Burglary This Season

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Opposing players going up against Ohio State point guard Audrey Burcy should be forewarned: Take out theft insurance.

The 5-5 senior led the team in steals with almost four per game through Jan. 24 and was among the nation's top 20 in that category.

The pinnacle came in the Buckeye Classic when Burcy robbed wide-eyed Georgia guards 10 times, one off the school record. As evidence of her increased rate of crime, Burcy had just 40 steals last year, a total she eclipsed in the 13th game of this season.

Maybe the gift of thievery runs in Burcy's family because her older brother, Reggie, was second in the nation in steals last season for Chicago State, averaging 3.3 per game.

Whether genetic or not, Burcy says there's no real secret other than intense pregame scrutiny.

"You can definitely sense when someone is timid bringing the ball up," she said. "Part of the reason is probably our preparation for the person. I watch a lot of film and study the player I'll be going up against. I kind of get a feel for what they like to do and what moves they use. I try to concentrate on my player and put a lot of pressure on her."

Pressure is something Burcy is used to facing.

There was pressure on her to recover from a knee injury her freshman season that caused her to miss the final 13 contests of the season. The injury continued to hamper her to some degree as a sophomore and she finally consented to reconstructive surgery following that season.

She returned last year, but her mobility was restricted by a cumber-

some brace. Now, playing without the brace this year, she appears on her way to becoming one of the Big Ten's best at the point.

OSU head coach Nancy Darsch believes Burcy should probably be listed among the league's elite when naming point guards.

"We'll know more after we complete the first round of the Big Ten," Darsch said. "Iowa's Laurie Aaron and Wisconsin's Sharon Johnson will certainly be tests."

"But as far as steals and conversions and decision making, I believe Audrey deserves to be in the top group."

Even though Darsch has great confidence in her floor leader, Burcy is not quite ready to assume the title of the best.

"I haven't thought about whether I'm the best point guard in the Big Ten," she said. "I'm just trying to go out and play and keep confidence from my teammates in me to go out and play the way I can."

The way she can play is pretty darn good, too.

The journalism major has written some fine pieces this year, such as the one against UCLA, when she netted a career-best 18 points, eight rebounds and nine assists. And there was a performance against Indiana, when she again scored 18 points and led the Bucks to a big second half.

Burcy's numbers are at an all-time high with averages of 8.6 points, 2.2 rebounds and just under four assists per game through Jan. 24.

Couple those numbers with the only ones that really matter — wins and losses — and one can see why Burcy is bursting at the seams with enthusiasm.

"This has been the biggest year for me in terms of contributing since I've been here," she said. "We're winning and that's nice, but it's great to really be a part of it and not miss any games."

"We're in contention right now for the Big Ten title. This is the kind of season I would think everyone would hope for."

Burcy's teammates thought enough of her to elect her a co-captain, an honor she is attempting to carry out to the best of her abilities.



Audrey Burcy

"Coming into the year, I felt real confident about myself," Burcy said. "I believe I have good leadership qualities and can be a good leader for the team and get us going in the right direction. My teammates obviously felt the same way I do about my leadership abilities."

Burcy prepped at Proviso West High School in suburban Chicago and faced many talented players, including former Northwestern star Michele Savage.

Chicago is one of the country's hotbeds of girls basketball, but Burcy was not recruited with much fervor by the power brokers, as Illinois-Chicago and Chicago State were her other prime suitors. That was despite averaging 17.7 points, six rebounds, five assists and five steals her senior campaign.

Darsch viewed Burcy in a summer league game prior to her senior season and came away impressed.

"She showed a lot of ability to put on defensive pressure," the OSU head coach said. "She could run the ball and was aggressive on offense, and that fit the mold of point guard we were looking for."

Burcy was the classic diamond in the rough, one that has turned into a gem for OSU.

"I was kind of waiting around because I wasn't sure if Ohio State was going to offer me a scholarship or not," she admitted. "I put answering other schools on hold, and finally things came through and I got the scholarship."

"The other schools have to take who they feel will fit in and Ohio State, really not knowing much about me because I didn't have a lot of exposure, probably did take a chance on me."

Without the high profile coming out of high school, it may have been a little easier for Burcy to excel.

"It's a little easier not having all that hype," she said. "It made me work harder knowing I had to prove myself and I didn't have anything to lose at all."

If not for a last-second three-point shot against number one Vanderbilt, the Buckeyes would not have lost at all this season.

Even though the Buckeyes are still a relatively young squad, there was no moral victory in falling 70-67 to the top-rated Commodores. The team treated the game as one it should have won and that's the mind-set that will follow all season.

"Everyone felt like in the Vanderbilt game we should have won, but things just didn't happen that way," Burcy said. "We could very easily have won it."

"But that's the way we're thinking right now. The attitude throughout the whole team is one of feeling we should not lose at all."

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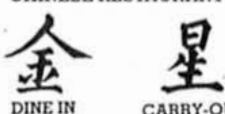
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The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, Publisher

Tough Road Trip Serves As Quick Reminder To Buckeye Fans

By the time most of you read this, the Ohio State basketball team will have completed its grueling three-game road trip to Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan.

While most preseason prognosticators picked the Buckeyes for the lower depths of the Big Ten standings, many fans may have been lulled into a false sense of security about the team following OSU's decent non-league performance and big upset of Iowa.

The recent sojourn seems to have reminded us of the things that we have perhaps forgotten. The Bucks are young and still have some holes that players need to step up and fill.

How well the Buckeyes perform coming off the demanding road trip will say a lot about the team, concerning both talent and the team's mental makeup.

How well they play the rest of the way will also tell us a lot about how good a coach Randy Ayers is.

That he did an outstanding job the last two years is unquestioned. But good, experienced players make for good coaches. Ayers may have good players this year, but experience is lacking.

This is clearly Ayers' toughest test to date. If he is able to right the struggling Buckeyes, he will continue to add to his coaching reputation. And I don't think you can rate the Buckeyes' performance this year purely on wins and losses. Fans need to watch for progress, also.

I AM concerned about match-up problems that the three-guard offense leaves the Buckeyes.

When they face the bigger, more physical teams in the Big Ten, the Bucks are at too big a disadvantage

defensively, especially when you consider that Rickey Dudley, one of their key inside players, is only 6-7.

Lawrence Funderburke's production, or lack of it lately, also has to be an area of concern. The Buckeyes need to address their inability to get the ball to Funderburke down low. This failure forces him to take the 12 or 15-footers, often fading away. While he can make these shots, they are not his best shots and they leave him out of position to rebound. And with three guards on the floor, the Buckeyes need Funderburke's rebounding.

Though he is OSU's top talent, I'm not sure Funderburke is quite ready to shoulder the load of being OSU's go-to player yet. That will come in time.

You have to remember that Funderburke hasn't played nearly as much basketball in the last five years as most players in their junior year of college. He also benefited last year from the presence of Jim Jackson and several other veterans of the Big Ten wars. This year, he's pretty much on his own.

There had been speculation early in the season that Funderburke might consider jumping to the NBA after this year. While Jackson may have been ready, Funderburke would probably benefit, both on the court and at the bank, by sticking around for his senior season. The Buckeyes would certainly benefit as well.

GREG SIMPSON'S offensive output of late has been encouraging. For a moment against Indiana, however, he forgot he was in Assembly Hall, not the gym at Lima Senior. He tried a behind-the-back move and was called for traveling. The floodgates really opened for the Hoosiers after that on their way to a 27-point victory.

The Buckeyes paid for that bit of hot-dogging and I'm sure Ayers will remind his star freshman of that.

WHILE THE Buckeyes lost at Wisconsin, they did get some encouraging play in the first half from the forgotten Jimmy Ratliff.

The former starter from Middletown, Ohio, hit a couple of key buckets and played some aggressive defense as the Bucks dug themselves out of a deep early hole.

OSU got similar solid play off the bench in the second half from Antonio Watson. Ayers must have been impressed, because he went to Watson even more in the following game against Indiana.

THAT'S THE first time I've seen the Badgers play this season; so I don't know if Michael Finley plays the way he did against the Bucks every game. But I certainly came away impressed.

You don't often think of top players in the conference coming from Wisconsin, but Finley looks like he might take his place among the conference elite.

I couldn't remember the last time the Badgers had an All-Big Ten performer; so I checked. Interestingly, it was as recent as the 1990-91 season, when big, beefy center Patrick Tompkins was so honored by *The Associated Press*.

Before that, however, you have to go back to 1968, when Joe Franklin was all-conference. Before that, you have to go all the way back to 1951 and 1952, when Albert Nicholas took home the honors for the Badgers.

Since 1948, Wisconsin has fewer players who have been first-team all-conference than even Northwestern. The Wildcats have six different players with that distinction, with Billy McKinney being the most recent, winning his award in 1977. The Badgers have only four.

Since the Big Ten started giving out all-conference honors in 1948, Indiana leads the way with 27 different first-teamers, followed by Purdue with 23 and Ohio State and Illinois with 22 each.

IF YOU think the Michigan men's basketball team looks goofy with those long shorts the guys wear, you have to see the Michigan women. Their shorts are even longer and the Lady Wolves really look ridiculous.

Try to visualize Mary Lou Retton with Jalen Rose's shorts on and you get the general idea.

Maybe the women figure if they dress like the Michigan men, they'll play like them. If their 1-13 record after losing to the Lady Bucks is any indication, though, the plan isn't working.

AFTER MANY years in this business, I've seen all sorts of ways for Buckeye fans to show their support for OSU, right down to the infamous scarlet and gray toilet seat.

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THERE IS still time left, and scholarships available, but it sure seems like the Buckeyes did really well in football recruiting between the Michigan game and the Citrus Bowl and have struggled a bit since losing to Georgia.

They had received 10 verbal commitments before the bowl game, but up through Jan. 25, had received only a half-dozen more in the three and a half weeks that followed.

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