

Strong Performances From Jacy Sheldon, Taylor Thierry Lead No. 17 Ohio State To 70-65 Win Over Michigan State



No. 17 Ohio State (13-3, 4-1) picked up a 70-65 win on Sunday against Michigan State (12-4, 2-3) behind team-high 18 points from Jacy Sheldon and a double-double from junior guard Taylor Thierry.

Ohio State shot 47.3 percent from the field and limited Michigan State to just 37.9 percent shooting, as well as a 23.8 percent clip from beyond the arc. The Buckeyes also held a 41-36 advantage in rebounding.

Both teams struggled from the floor early on, combining to shoot just 3 of 10 to begin the contest as the Spartans jumped out to a 6-2 lead. But the slow start gave way to a 9-4 run by Ohio State to take an 11-10 lead with 3:28 left in the first quarter.

The teams then exploded for 17 combined points to close the frame – a stretch during which junior guard Taylor Thierry picked up her second foul – with the Buckeyes holding a 20-18 lead after a late layup from fifth-year guard Jacy Sheldon.

Sophomore forward Cotie McMahon began the scoring in the second quarter with a jumper to put Ohio State up 22-18, but the Spartans responded with a three-pointer and later free throw from guard Julia Ayrault to tie the game at 22 with 6:35 left in the half. Thierry reentered the contest at that point and scored on a layup, but was forced to the bench again after committing her third foul with 5:23 left.

With Thierry back on the bench, Michigan State was able to increase its lead to 31-26, leading to a timeout by head coach Kevin McGuff with 3:22 left. Out of the break, fifth-year guard Celeste Taylor hit from beyond the arc, and a pair of free throws from Sheldon then tied the game back up. The Spartans then scored on their final three possessions of the half to lead 37-34 going into the locker room after outscoring the Buckeyes 19-14 in the second quarter.

Thierry was back on the floor for the Buckeyes out of the half and hit a three-pointer to tie the game back up, and kickstarted an 11-4 run to give Ohio State a 45-41 lead with 4:40 left in the quarter. The Buckeyes were then held scoreless over the next 2:57, though the Spartans were unable to capitalize as Ohio State still held a 48-45 lead with 1:29 left in the third quarter after a triple from fifth-year guard Rikki Harris.

Sheldon then added to Ohio State's total with back-to-back baskets, but five late points from Michigan State wing Tory Ozment sent the game to the fourth quarter tied at 50.

Taylor connected on a pair of free throws to break the tie with 8:29 left in the game, and after back-to-back baskets by Sheldon and fifth-year forward Rebeka Mikulášiková, a steal by Taylor and ensuing basket by Thierry pushed Ohio State's lead to 58-50 with 6:33 left.

But the Spartans responded with back-to-back baskets - including a triple from guard Abbey Kimball - cutting the deficit to 58-55 and forcing a timeout by McGuff. Michigan State cut the deficit to 60-58, and Thierry had a chance to increase the lead by missed on a pair of free throws, but she made up for it a couple of possessions later with a second-chance basket to put Ohio State up 62-58 with 2:34 left.

The Buckeyes then forced misses on the next two possessions for the Spartans and increased the lead to 65-58 with 1:10 remaining. Michigan State began fouling facing a 65-60 deficit with 47 seconds remaining, and the Buckeyes struggled to hit from the line, connecting on just one of their next six attempts, but were able to close things out after a pair of late makes by Sheldon.

Sheldon led the Buckeyes with 18 points while Thierry had a 13-point, 11-rebound double-double. Harris, McMahon and Mikulášiková also finished in double figures. Ozment led the Spartans with 18 points.

Ohio State will return to the floor on Wednesday, set to visit Maryland for a 7 p.m. tip on Peacock.