

Taylor Mikesell Leaves Mark In Final Game At Ohio State



During several stretches of Ohio State's 84-74 loss in the Elite Eight to Virginia Tech, the Buckeyes looked outmatched, outworked and outplayed as the Hokies maintained a consistent double-digit lead across the second half.

But even as Ohio State's season approached an unceremonious end with the Buckeyes cold from the field in the second half — just 27.6 percent — it was Mikesell who continued to put up shots, unwilling to go away quietly in what was becoming the final game of her collegiate career.

In fact, it was her shooting stroke that allowed the Buckeyes to be in position to keep the game close early on, trailing just 48-45 entering the locker room. She scored 19 points in the first half on 6-of-7 shooting, with five of those makes coming from beyond the arc.

While Mikesell was just 2 of 5 from deep in the second half, it was a testament to her competitive spirit to try and will the Buckeyes on, even when the game appeared out of hand. She hit a three-pointer with just 44 seconds left to make it 80-74, the closest deficit in nearly a quarter of action, but it was too late as Virginia Tech was able to close the game out at the line. The result was not what Mikesell, her teammates or coaches wanted, but she was still proud of the team's ability to get to that point and compete for a berth in the Final Four.

"I think it's meant a lot (to me)," she said after the game. "(From) being in the position we were last year, kind of driving the reason why I wanted to come back and just being able to put ourselves in that position to get to the Final Four, we had the opportunity. I think (it) has meant everything to me."

That final buzzer wrapped Mikesell's collegiate career. Over five seasons between Maryland, Oregon and Ohio State, Mikesell averaged 14.3 points per game 43.4 percent shooting, including 42.0 percent shooting from beyond the arc.

In her two seasons at Ohio State, Mikesell appeared in and started 68 games, scoring 17.9 points and adding 3.1 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game on 45.4 percent shooting, including a blistering 44.2 percent clip from deep, which ranks second in program history, and her 230 triples rank fourth all-time. Furthermore, she surpassed the 1,000-point barrier this season — eventually finishing with 1,215 points

at Ohio State — to become the 36th player in program history to surpass 1,000 points.

“She’s been such a great kid in our program,” McGuff said. “She’s a wonderful young person. She’s leaving the way you should leave, knowing that you poured every ounce of heart and soul, effort, energy into a program. That’s just who she is, and it says so much about her.”

And as the WNBA now awaits for Mikesell, one year after she opted to return to Ohio State instead of testing the professional waters, what she’ll remember above all else was the bonds she forged in her two seasons as a Buckeye.

“(My teammates are) kind of the best part about this whole thing,” she said. “Honestly, (I’m) probably going to miss just being able to hang out with them most, more than anything.