

A Look Back At Ohio State Women's Basketball's Upset Road Win Over No. 20 Indiana



On the night on Jan. 30, following a 20-point loss to Maryland, Ohio State women's basketball stood at 11-9 and, at best, on the bubble of earning a spot in the NCAA tournament.

Flash forward to a matchup against Indiana on Feb. 16, and the Buckeyes had effectively started to gain momentum, winning four straight games, though each of which were against teams in the bottom half of the Big Ten. The Hoosiers were not one of those teams, as they sat at 20-6 with a 10-4 in-conference record.

This was also a road game for Ohio State, but the Buckeyes actually finished the year with equal home and away records (8-5), while Indiana held a better record on the road (10-2 on the road, 11-4 at home), so that might have not been as big a deal as usual.

For three quarters and some change, the signs seemed to point to the Buckeyes having their momentum lost to the hands of the Hoosiers. But then, a remarkable hot streak from the field and remarkable play from the starting freshman duo of Madison Greene and Jacy Sheldon helped propel Ohio State to a stunning upset victory against a ranked Big Ten opponent.

The Buckeyes started this game immediately playing catchup following a 9-3 Indiana start, but kept the deficit close throughout the frame, helped out by big shots like this Dorka Juhasz contested three in the corner, ultimately heading into the second quarter down just one, 20-19, despite holding a lead for just four seconds in the quarter.

Juhasz finished the first quarter with eight points, hitting both of her three-point attempts.

Ali Patberg, Indiana's star junior guard, was the biggest thorn in Ohio State's side all game, finishing with a team-high 22 points, eight of which came in the second quarter and two of which came with this beautiful finish to give the Hoosiers the lead back.

The second quarter was about as close as a quarter can get, with no lead for either team growing larger than two points before Patberg scored to put the Hoosiers up four with 29 seconds to go in the half. But

Greene would have the last word, scoring her first basket of the game with two seconds remaining in the second to make it a 36-34 game in favor of Indiana.

Indiana looked ready to take over in the third quarter. The Hoosiers never trailed, forced five Ohio State turnovers and held the Buckeyes to 4-of-12 shooting from the field.

A pair of free throws by Grace Berger gave the Hoosiers a nine-point lead, their largest of the game, with 25 seconds to go in the frame. But again, Ohio State came up big right at the end of the quarter to stop the momentum.

This time, the momentum killer was Kierstan Bell, who took a Braxtin Miller pass and took on a tough three-point shot straight on and buried it to make it a six-point game heading into the final 10 minutes.

Indiana quickly brought the pressure once again, ballooning the lead to 10 points and then getting the ball back after a miss by Sheldon with 8:10 to play. That would be the last missed field goal by Ohio State for the rest of the game.

Back-to-back makes by Greene and Sheldon were followed by a Patberg three to make it a nine-point game, but another make by Greene, this time from deep, meant that the comeback was truly on.

The Hoosiers made some more free throws to bring the lead back up to eight, but another three by Greene brought it back down to five. Then Rebeka Mikulasikova hit the next shot taken, then Sheldon made a layup on a fast break to cut the deficit to one.

Finally, Janai Crooms drove to the hole for Ohio State's seventh straight make, and two points that gave the Buckeyes their first lead of the second half.

Some free throws on both sides brought the Ohio State lead to two, then Sheldon went ahead and made it eight straight makes with a three in the corner.

Miller and, again, Sheldon, put home the ninth and 10th makes without a miss for Ohio State, but the Hoosiers continued to battle through the hot performance.

After four straight free throws down the stretch from Indiana, the Buckeyes got the ball back up two with a chance to ice the game. Greene took that chance and made a tough runner as the shot clock expired to seal the fifth straight win for Ohio State.

Ohio State won the game 80-76 behind 22 points from Greene and 16 from Sheldon. Fourteen of Greene's points and nine of Sheldon's points came in the fourth quarter. The Buckeyes made their last 11 shots from the field and outscored the Hoosiers 31-21 in the fourth quarter after getting outscored in each of the first three frames.

"It's a really big win. We beat a great team today in a tough environment," Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said following the win. "Really proud of our kids, but this is certainly a big one."

Greene and Sheldon consistently showed poise and confidence far past their freshman status, and this was the game that proved it more than any in their first seasons.

“She and (Bell) and Jacy and our freshmen, they’ve played in so many big minutes this year it’s like I don’t even look at them as freshmen anymore,” McGuff said.

This comeback win was one of the most impressive in Ohio State’s season, and was a key victory to ultimately secure the team’s standing as a surefire tournament team, if a tournament were to have happened.

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