

Backcourt, Second-Half Surge Leads Ohio State To 102-69 Win Over Green Bay



Ohio State used a second-half explosion and some efficient backcourt play to improve to 5-1 on the season Monday night, downing Green Bay (2-5) 102-69 in front of 10,123 fans inside Value City Arena.

The Buckeyes, still playing without sophomore forward Aaron Bradshaw due to a university investigation into an incident that occurred in his off-campus house, led just 53-47 with 15:10 left in the game in large because of the brilliance of the NCAA's leading scorer and Green Bay senior guard Anthony Roy — who scored 30 points on 10 of 16 shooting to outpace his 28.0 points per game average.

But Roy's play making did not deter Ohio State, which went on a resounding 42-14 run in 12:06 on longtime FOX Sports radio host Doug Gottlieb's team to run away with an eventual 33-point victory and eclipse the 100-point mark in consecutive games for the first time since Dec. 15 and 17, 1990.

"We knew going into this game that Green Bay had some offensive firepower. ...Roy is a gifted, gifted player, and I thought for the most part, we made things tough on him," Ohio State head coach Jake Diebler said after the game. "I'm most proud of how we responded when they cut the lead to six.

"Our response in that moment was really impressive. And I think it was led — maybe after a pointed conversation — led by our players. The leadership of our upperclassmen kind of took over at that point."

Ohio State's veteran leaders were involved from the start of this contest, beginning with senior guard Meechie Johnson Jr. hitting on back-to-back threes after missing his first two attempts from long range to give OSU an early 8-2 lead with 16:13 left.

Green Bay clawed back in the ensuing minutes to trail 12-11 with 14:32 left after Roy's second three in 1:25, but the Buckeyes answered 1:02 later with a three from their team leader, junior guard Bruce Thornton, sparking a 16-8 sequence for Ohio State that put it up 31-19 with 7:01 remaining after another Johnson three, his fourth of the half.

Roy scored five straight to make it 31-24, but the Buckeyes were able to bring the lead back into double-digits, leading by 14, 39-25, after another Thornton triple at 2:47.

Roy continued to marvel to keep his team in the game. He hit his fifth three of the half and then found a cutting Roee Oselka for a layup on consecutive possessions, all before Oselka stole the ball away from Thornton and laid in another layup to cut OSU's lead to just 39-32 with 42 seconds left.

Ohio State scored the final points of the half off a Johnson three, giving the South Carolina transfer his 15th point of the first half on 5 of 8 shooting from long range. Roy had 14 first-half points on 5 of 9 shooting, 4 of 7 from three.

"He's a great player, great scorer on all three levels," Thornton said of Roy. "But we could've done a better job defensively on him."

The start of the second half had a similar feel to the first, with the Buckeyes opening with a 7-2 run but Green Bay answering back with three triples — two of those from Roy — and four free throws to trail just 53-47 with 15:10 left.

Ohio State punched right back with a Johnson layup and Thornton three — which gave the All-Big Ten guard his 1,000th career point — to go back up 58-47, but Gotlieb's team continued to hang around, trailing 61-53 with 11:56 left after a Ben Tweedy layup.

But that was the closest Green Bay got the rest of the game due to the efforts of Thornton, who went on a personal 8-0 run to put OSU up 69-53 with 10:26 left. Ohio State's lead stayed between 14 to 16 points until true freshman John Mobley Jr. hit on consecutive threes to give his team a commanding 80-59 lead with 7:30 left.

Mobley's triples were a key part of a 21-2 stretch for Ohio State — which began with a Thornton free throw at 8:23 and ended with a Sean Stewart jumper at 3:27 to go up 91-60- that had it shoot 6 of 8 from the field and limit Green Bay to 0 of 5 shooting in that same span

Despite two more threes from Roy, Ohio State continued to suffocate Green Bay on both ends, eventually eclipsing 100 points on a layup from redshirt junior forward Kalen Etzler before cruising to the 33-point win.

"They don't have any weaknesses defensively," Gotlieb said after the game. "That's a really well-coached team. If you watch on tape, and you look at the analytics, they're defense is outstanding."

Ohio State was led in the win by Thornton, who had 16 of his season-high 25 points in the second half and also tallied a team-high nine assists. Johnson (17) and Stewart (11) had season-highs of their own, while Mobley (14), Evan Mahaffey (10) and Micah Parrish (10) all finished in double figures.

The Phoenix did not get much production outside of Roy's 30 points on 10 of 16 shooting. The next-best scorer was redshirt freshman guard Mac Wrecke with eight on 2 of 4 shooting along with a team-high five rebounds.

Ohio State will look to improve to 6-1 and possibly return to the AP top 25 on Friday night when it hosts Pittsburgh at 2:30 p.m. The game will stream exclusively on Peacock.