

Best Teams In Ohio State Men's Basketball History: 2010-11



There have been 121 teams in Ohio State men's basketball history, including one national champion squad in 1960.

Ohio State basketball experts Lee Caryer and Tony White, who was a captain of the 1988-89 Buckeyes and works as the basketball analyst for WTVN, helped BSB break down some of the best squads in school history.

When discussing the best teams ever, we emphasized an importance on consistency, tournament success, future NBA players and the competition they faced.

2010-11: 34-3, 16-2 Big Ten. Sweet 16.

The 2010-11 Buckeyes began the season 24-0 and appeared to be destined for greatness, but a loaded bracket led to their demise in the NCAA Tournament.

Ohio State led the nation in offensive rating (120.0) under Matta that season, despite only featuring one future NBA player in true freshman Jared Sullinger.

"They were just brilliant all season long," Caryer said. "Now we're talking about Jared Sullinger, Aaron Craft and DeShaun Thomas as freshmen. And we're talking about Will Buford as a junior, and David Lighty and Jon Diebler as seniors, along with Dallas Lauderdale as a senior. That was a beautifully constructed team once Craft turned out to be a tremendous point guard. He was not expected to be tremendous. He was thought to be holding a spot until Shannon Scott got there, but he was far, far better than people realized."

Dominating the Big Ten with a 16-2 record and a Big Ten Tournament ring, the Scarlet and Gray spent most of the season as the No. 1 team in the country.

"They went into the NCAA Tournament as the No. 1-ranked team for the seedings, but they got just a dreadful bracket," Caryer said. "I don't know how they could have been in the same bracket with North Carolina, Kentucky and Syracuse in their regional. They played Kentucky in the Sweet 16. And Kentucky had one of those early Calipari teams, which was all freshmen, and people didn't realize the kind of talent that Callipari was bringing in."

Calipari's Wildcats boasted seven NBA players, including freshman standouts Terrence Jones, Brandon Knight and Doron Lamb, while the Buckeyes only had one. Despite Sullinger representing the only NBA player on the roster, Ohio State excelled by playing team basketball.

"They were good players and they played together so very well. It was like, four fingers and a thumb on your hand that when you put it together in the form of a fist, it's really powerful. Well those guys were five different people working together, and that was a beautiful thing to watch. They were very successful and almost beat Kentucky. I mean, Buford had like a 2-for-16 night and missed the last shot, a lot of things went wrong that don't normally go wrong. But Kentucky was talented, it was far better than the 16th-best team in the country by the end of the season. So, Ohio State lost that game, but it's a mistake to forget that team."

As an alum of the program, the 2010-11 team caused White some heartache. The disappointment did not come because of a lack of ability, though, but rather because of just how good that squad had played all year.

"There are a few teams that break your heart - they're high on the list of the break-your-heart factor," White said. "They had everything they needed on that team to win the national championship - every player, every position - they had what it took. For that team to not win the national championship, man, that was rough. It was rough. Because we talk about timing - timing wasn't right for that team. They did not play at the NCAA tournament at the level that they could have, but they had the talent overall to do it."

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