

# Buckeyes Bully Redhawks In Paint, Defeat Miami (Ohio) 84-64 for Seventh-Straight Win



Ohio State's winning streak improved to seven games Wednesday night at Value City Arena, defeating in-state foe Miami (Ohio) 84-64 behind another balanced scoring night and a strong outing in the paint.

The Buckeyes had six players — sophomore guards Roddy Gayle Jr. (15) and Bruce Thornton (14) and Evan Mahaffey (10), fifth-year forward Jamison Battle (13), fifth-year guard Dale Bonner (11) and senior forward Zed Key (13) — reach double figures in scoring, while they also shot a crisp 53.6 percent from the field in the second half. Ohio State also imposed its will in the frontcourt all game, out-rebounding the Redhawks 40-29 while also scoring 34 points in the paint.

Ohio State (8-1, 1-0 in the Big Ten) struggled to get things going early on, missing five of its first eight shots from the field. Conversely, the Redhawks (4-4) connected on three of its first four attempts, allowing them to jump out to an early 9-6 lead after a layup from freshman guard Evan Ipsaro.

The Buckeyes woke up on offense soon after, though, getting four-straight points from Gayle and a basket from Key to take a 12-9 lead. After Miami (Ohio) scored four straight points of its own, the home team took off again, this time in a big way. They went on an extended 9-0 run — with five of those points coming from Thornton — to hold a 21-13 advantage with 9:14 left.

Ohio State's run was broken by a three-point make from senior guard Darweshi Hunter, followed by another Redhawk basket on the very next possession that trimmed the deficit to 24-17 with 8:16 left. But this was the closest the visiting team got the rest of the game. The Buckeyes outscored the Redhawks 15-9 over the final eight minutes of action — with six of those points coming from Gayle — to take a 39-26 lead into the locker room.

The Buckeyes did not shoot particularly well in the first half, connecting on just 13 of its 34 (38.2 percent) attempts from the field and three of its 10 (30.0 percent) attempts from three. But they were able to establish due to its dominance inside, where they scored 15 of its 39 points in the paint and

collected 12 offensive rebounds, Meanwhile, the Redhawks racked up just five extra possessions and had nine turnovers.

Miami (Ohio) opened the second half strong, going on a quick 7-3 run to trim the deficit down to 42-33. But the Buckeyes took momentum back with two-straight makes from Battle and Mahaffey. This helped kickstart a 9-2 run for Ohio State, giving them a convincing 51-35 lead with 15:25 remaining.

The Redhawks did not go away without a fight, though, scoring four-straight points to cut the deficit back down to 51-39. But a three-pointer from Middleton and an alley-oop dunk by Key helped cool things down, allowing the Buckeyes to go on an extended 12-5 run to take a 64-44 lead with 8:49 left

After trading three-point baskets coming out of the under-eight-minute TV timeout, Ohio scored another seven-straight points to extend its lead to 73-47 with 5:15 left, a final sequence that gave the Buckeyes its largest lead of the game and allowed the team to cruise the rest of the way for the 20-point victory.

Ohio State was led in the win by the scoring trio of Gayle, Thornton and Battle, who combined for half of the Buckeyes' points on a combined 46.4 percent shooting. Mahaffey reached his Ohio State career-high in points with 10, while Okpara added a team-high seven rebounds.

The Redhawks were led by Hunter, who had 15 points on 6-of-16 shooting. Sophomore guard and forward Ryan Mabrey and Jaquel Morris also reached double figures with 12 and 11 points a piece.

Ohio State will look to improve its win streak to eight games when it reignites Big Ten play and travels to Penn State on Saturday, with the game set to tip off at 6 p.m. and air on Big Ten Network.