

Buckeyes Outpace Dayton To Win 78-70 In Charity Exhibition Game



In their first live game action since the 2022 Big Ten Tournament, the Ohio State men's basketball team put forth a strong performance in their charity exhibition game against Dayton on Sunday night, using a balanced offensive attack and some sparkling shooting to power past the Flyers 78-70 at a sold out UD Arena.

After missing their first four field goals of the game to go down 8-2 early, the Buckeyes would show off their shooting prowess throughout the game to keep them ahead for most of the contest, connecting on 27 of their 49 shots from the field (55.1 percent) and eight of their 18 attempts from three (44.4)

Most of Ohio State's offensive production came from the trio of sophomore guards Roddy Gayle Jr., and Bruce Thornton and Minnesota transfer Jamison Battle, each of whom head coach Chris Holtmann said would need to make a significant impact this season if they want to have sustained success. Thornton, who is expected to be one of the Buckeyes' leading scorers this season, led the charge with 21 points on an efficient 7-of-9 shooting, including 3-of-4 from three and 4-of-5 from the free throw line. He also dished out and collected two rebounds.

Battle was even more efficient from the field, shooting an impressive 6-of-7 from two and 3-of-4 from three, while also collecting a team-high five rebounds and another two assists. He was followed in the scoring sheets by Gayle, who added another 12 points, two rebounds and an assist.

Besides the three top scorers, the Buckeyes' offense featured a balanced attack through the game with Holtmann frequently rotating players. Nine players recorded at least one point, with only sophomore forward and guard Kalen Etzler and Bowen Hardman who logged just four combined minutes, failing to reach the stat sheet.

The Buckeyes held a 42-39 lead at half, and they would immediately come out of the gates swinging with a quick 10-4 run to inflate the score to 52-43. But after the Flyers responded with a 7-0 run of their own, Ohio State needed another answer, and that came on a Roddy Gayle three-pointer at the 12:09 mark that would push the lead back to six. This sparked an 8-0 that would turn the momentum back into their favor, this time for good.

After the Buckeyes held a 60-52 lead midway through the second half, the Flyers would attempt to mount a comeback, trimming the Buckeyes lead down to as little as four points with 7:42 remaining, but Holtmann's squad would have enough offense to hold on, increasing their lead to as many as 13 with 2:44 left.

Ohio State was able to stave off a late Flyers comeback due to their defense, which held the Flyers to just 12 points in the final 10 minutes of the game. The team would limit Dayton to just 31.0 percent shooting from the field in the entire second half, while also forcing 10 turnovers that led to 13 Buckeye points.

The Buckeyes' preseason exhibition against the Flyers was part of a four-day charity event coined "The Spotlight" that aimed to raise awareness and education for mental health and wellness in adolescents and young adults. The event was organized by Dayton head coach Anthony Grant and his wife Christina, who lost their daughter, Jayda, on May 30, 2022, at the age of 20 following a two-year battle with a mental illness.

All proceeds for the exhibition game were donated to Jay's Light Fund, a fund that honors Jayda Grant and will be used to champion adolescent and young adult mental health and suicide prevention.