

Buckeyes Take Valuable Lessons From Loss At Duke



After battling a tough slate at the Maui Invitational, picking up a 2-1 record and fifth-place finish, No. 25 Ohio State was thrown into the fire again on Wednesday. Making the trip to Cameron Indoor Stadium in Durham, N.C., widely regarded as one of the toughest places to play in the country, the Buckeyes could not topple No. 17 Duke, falling 81-72 to the Blue Devils.

While the Buckeyes' makeshift roster continues to jell through the first few weeks of the season, Ohio State has already faced several distinct challenges, playing three ranked teams through its first seven games, however, nothing could have prepared them for the atmosphere at Cameron Indoor Stadium. As the Cameron crazies gave OSU all they could handle forward Zed Key said it was a solid learning experience for the young Buckeyes.

"The fans were crazy, I'll give it to them, the Cameron crazies. As soon as I came out to shoot, they were on me," Key said. "It's tough but a great environment to play in."

For Ohio State's five freshmen, the trip to Duke served as their first experience in a true road environment during their young careers. Point guard Bruce Thornton handled the emotions well, drilling his first four shots and dropping 11 points to go along with two assists and a steal. Ohio State's other emerging freshman, forward Brice Sensabaugh, did not showcase the same poise by Thornton as he fouled out after just 14 minutes of action. Sensabaugh shot just 2 of 6 while scoring four points and turning the ball over three times.

Although Ohio State's freshmen were a mixed bag, Key noted he felt the young guys handled the adverse environment at Cameron Indoor as best as they could.

"They handled it fine," Key said. "I talked to Brice a little bit, I said to him, 'relax, just settle in and stop moving and let the game come to you.' Even with all the freshmen, everybody, I just told them to relax and they handled it well."

While the environment at Cameron Indoor Stadium is enough to rattle any opponent, the Buckeyes also had their hands full with Duke's near-constant double-big lineup. The Blue Devils opted to start freshmen centers Kyle Filipowski (7-0) and Dereck Lively II (7-1) while mixing in 6-10 center Ryan Young. Duke also entered the game as one of the most feared teams on the offensive glass, boasting the top-ranked offensive rebounding percentage — 42.3 percent — according to KenPom.

However, the Buckeyes handled Duke's size well. Outside of Filipowski's 16-point outing, Ohio State was only outrebounded by three (34-31) and nearly matched Duke in offensive rebounding — which ended up being 13-12 in favor of the Blue Devils. Despite keeping the rebounding battle relatively close, forward Justice Sueing noted that the Buckeyes still could have done a better job dealing with Duke's size.

"Their size was a problem for us tonight," Sueing said. "They killed us on the boards, tonight, I mean everyone saw it. That's something we definitely have to look at on tape, how to become a better rebounding team."

Although the Buckeyes took their second loss of the season, dropping to 5-2, Sueing noted that his team needed a game like the one at Duke to continue their growth as a unit.

"We needed this game more than anything to find out the things we need to continue to work on," Sueing said. "We're going to get after it when we get back."