

Bucks Buck Bucknell 71-48 In Season-Opener



Junior guard Jacy Sheldon and senior guard Taylor Mikesell, in her Ohio State debut, helped lead the Ohio State women's basketball team to a 71-48 win over Bucknell to kick off the 2021-22 campaign.

With junior guard Madison Greene out for the season due to a knee injury, the Buckeyes switched from a projected starting lineup of Greene, junior guard Jacy Sheldon, senior guard Braxtin Miller, sophomore forward Gabby Hutcherson and graduate forward Tanaya Beacham, instead opting to employ Sheldon, Miller, Mikesell, junior forward Rebeka Mikulasikova and junior guard Hevynne Bristow to help offset the loss of Greene.

The lineup looked promising early as Ohio State jumped out to a 20-7 lead with 1:30 remaining in the first quarter, boosted by five early points from Mikesell.

The Buckeyes then hit a wall in their season opener on both ends of the court, giving up easy points in transition off turnovers and struggling to score themselves as the first quarter ended.

Energized by the positive finish to the first quarter, the Bison kept the pressure on Ohio State, utilizing a 15-point run that stretched over five minutes into the second quarter to take a 22-20 lead. During this run, Bucknell was 5-of-7 from the field in addition to three trips to the free throw line.

On the other end, the Buckeyes were held scoreless for nearly seven minutes, during which they were 0-for-12 and had three turnovers.

A break was mercifully provided to Ohio State via a media timeout with 4:49 remaining, and out of that timeout, Sheldon broke Bucknell's scoring streak with a jumper to tie things up at 22.

Sophomore guard Kateri Poole, who was first off the bench for Ohio State, added another basket on the Buckeyes' next possession to regain the lead, and Ohio State proceeded to end the first half with a 28-24 lead. Other than a pair of three throws from Sheldon, both teams suffered a scoring drought of over three minutes to end the half.

Speaking of Poole, while she won't be able to fully emulate what Greene brought to Ohio State, she did a good enough impression against the Bison, creating multiple opportunities for her teammates with a team-high four assists in addition to being a scoring threat herself.

While she did not start, she played 24 minutes, fourth most on the team, so it would not be surprising to see her start some games this season if she continues to create offense the way she did against Bucknell.

Mikesell began the third quarter for Ohio State with a three-pointer to make it 31-24, and Sheldon went on to score the next seven points for the Buckeyes, helping to maintain a 38-30 lead.

From there, the Buckeyes were able to maintain a comfortable 51-38 lead heading into the fourth, as a number of contributors began to get involved, including Poole, Bristow, Miller and graduate forward Tanaya Beacham, who all scored in the third quarter, in addition to freshman guard/forward Taylor Thierry, who scored her first points in Scarlet and Gray.

In the fourth, Mikesell led the Buckeyes with six points as Ohio State increased its lead to as many as 25 in the 71-48 win.

Despite a poor shooting start, Ohio State finished 23-of-56 from the field, good for 41.1 percent, while holding Bucknell to 34.6 percent and just 24 second-half points. The Buckeyes were led in scoring by Sheldon, who finished with 20 points on 6-of-13 shooting. Mikesell was second with 14 points, while Poole and Beachum each finished with eight points.

Defensively, the Buckeyes scored 18 points off turnovers, with 14 of them coming on the fastbreak where McGuff and players said that would be a focus this season.

Ohio State will return to the court on Sunday to host Norfolk State, with tip set for 2 p.m.