

# Jaloni Cambridge's 31 Points Leads Ohio State To 104-69 Win Over Cleveland State In Season Opener



It didn't take long for No. 14 Ohio State to find its next superstar point guard. In Ohio State's 104-69 win over Cleveland State, true freshman point guard Jaloni Cambridge had just about the best college debut imaginable.

In 31 minutes played as the Buckeyes' starting point guard, Cambridge connected on 12-of-14 field goals to score a team-high 31 points.

Cambridge wasted no time in introducing herself to Buckeye faithful. The Nashville, Tenn. native led the Buckeyes on a 9-0 scoring run with back-to-back mid-range jump shots.

Cambridge led the charge with a disruptive full-court press on the defensive end that forced eight turnovers in the game's first five minutes. Cambridge herself forced four steals in the first period to go along with eight points, two blocks and two rebounds.

"I didn't really have any nerves," Cambridge said of her spectacular collegiate debut. "I was just excited to be here, blessed to be in a big environment, be here with amazing people."

The blistering Buckeyes pressure and some added offensive production from junior forward Cotie McMahon and senior guard Taylor Thierry allowed the lead to balloon to 24-7 at the 2:13 mark.

Still flawless from the field, Cambridge showed off her capabilities as a three-point shooter, making back-to-back three-point field goals to give the Buckeyes their biggest lead of the game to that point at 30-11.

The Buckeyes cooled off some midway through the second quarter as Cambridge missed her first shot of the game after hitting her first six, but McMahon got the team back in the right direction with a 3-point jumper to grow the lead to 20.

Madison Greene picked up where Cambridge left off while the former No. 2 overall recruit got some rest and hit a 3-point jumper.

Although the game was all but decided as the Buckeyes led 42-24 at halftime, the team wasn't the most efficient from the field only connecting on 16-of-38 field goals, against the Vikings' zone defense.

McMahon and another new face in graduate senior forward, and LSU transfer Ajae Petty got the Buckeyes back on a more efficient track early in the second half.

Petty made a layup on the Buckeyes' opening possession before McMahon followed her lead with a midrange jumper one play later. McMahon, only a 23 percent shooter from three-point range in 2023-24, looked like a sharpshooter against the Vikings, as she drained another three-point shot in the third quarter to put the Buckeyes up 49-29.

The Buckeyes' field goal percentage was much better than it was at halftime by the end of the game, as the team made 39-of-72 field goals, including 10-of-21 from three-point range.

Despite losing by 35, the Vikings had some positives to take away from the game. Senior guard Mickayla Perdue led the team with 29 points, making 9-of-20 field goals. As a team, Cleveland State went 23-of-62 from the field for the game.

McMahon finished the game making 4-of-5 attempts from three-point range, to be the Buckeyes' second-leading scorer with 17 points.

According to head coach Kevin McGuff, McMahon's sharpshooting stemmed from her shot selection.

"She's worked hard on it in the off-season and the key is the shots she took were really good shots," McGuff said. "She was open, she had her feet set and all that and she was in rhythm, so hopefully she can be efficient from the three-point line, because if she can do that and people have to come guard her there, and that actually opens up room for her to drive the ball."

Cambridge somehow improved her level of play in the second half, as she converted two three-point plays in the third quarter. Cambridge subsequently added a pair of free throws, a mid-range jumper, and a layup to increase the Buckeyes' lead to 25.

As an encore in the fourth quarter, she had another two field goals, including a three-point play to push her total for the game to 31 points. To go along with her 31 points, Cambridge either tied for the team lead or led in every statistical category except for blocks. The 5-7 guard had six rebounds, which tied a team-high, six assists and five steals, both of which were a team-high.

"It's reflective of her ability, but probably more importantly, she plays so hard and competes on every possession, she doesn't take a play off and that's rare for a freshman to be able to do that," McGuff said. "She's obviously a special kid and a special player."