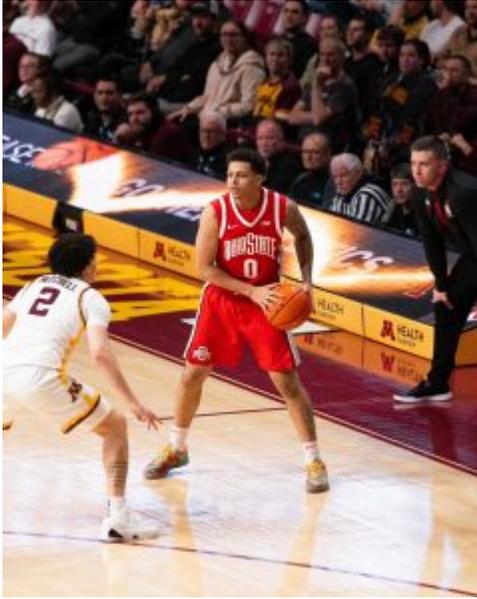


# John Mobley Jr.'s Two Clutch Free Throws Lift Ohio State To Stunning 89-88 Double-Overtime Victory At Minnesota



Ohio State (10-5, 2-2 Big Ten) escaped Minneapolis, Minn., with a miraculous double-overtime win over Minnesota (8-7, 0-4) Monday night at Williams Arena, coming back from multiple score deficits in both regulation and overtime to hand the Gophers a demoralizing 89-88 loss.

It seemed on multiple occasions that the Buckeyes were in line for a second-straight defeat and third Big Ten loss in four attempts when it trailed the underdog Gophers by seven, 59-52, with just over six minutes left in the second half and then by four, 72-68 with just 59 seconds left in overtime.

But each time Jake Diebler's team preserved, first using a game-changing 7-2 run to get back in the game and eventually send the game to overtime, and then scoring five of the final six points of the first overtime to put the game into a second extra frame and eventually pull out the hard-earned victory.

This classic of a game featured 24 lead changes, and that back-and-forth nature was evident early when the two teams exchanged baskets to play to a 18-18 tie with 8:31 left following a second-chance layup by Minnesota redshirt senior forward Parker Fox.

It appeared Ohio State was building some momentum when it used strong team defense and some improved shooting to go up by four twice in the ensuing minutes, first a 22-18 lead with 6:37 left and then — after five straight Gopher points — a 27-23 advantage with 2:18 remaining. But the Buckeyes' efficiency stalled on both ends, allowing Minnesota to close the half on a 5-0 run to lead 27-26 at the break.

Ohio State did not score and committed two turnovers in the final 2:18 of the first period, one which saw Jake Diebler's team shoot just 33.3 percent from the floor (10 of 30) and 20.0 percent from three (3 of 15) but score nine points off six Gopher turnovers.

The second half started similarly to the first, with the lead changing a whopping 11 times in the first 7:59 of the period, the final switch of that stretch giving Ohio State a 45-44 lead with 12:01 left after a Ques Glover three. Glover's three was part of a chaotic sequence in which both teams traded on seven straight possessions.

The Buckeyes extended their lead to three, 47-44, on their next possession, but things turned in Minnesota's favor when it exploded on a 7-0 run to go up 51-47 with 9:31 left after a jumper from freshman guard Isaac Asuma.

Ohio State then found success from the free-throw line, but its inability to make a field goal allowed Minnesota to increase upon its lead. The Buckeyes went 4:04 without a basket, allowing the Gophers to gradually extend their advantage to 59-52 with 5:59 left after a stepback three from Asuma.

The Buckeyes switched things into a different gear in crunch time, though. Bookended by two Micah Parrish baskets, they exploded on a 10-3 run to tie the game at 62 with just 2:04 remaining.

After Minnesota took back the lead on a fast-break layup from Dawson Garcia at 1:24, Royal tied the game at 64 with just five seconds left with a ferocious dunk that drew a foul. He missed the free throw, and then the Buckeyes missed two consecutive second-chance layups from Glover and Evan Mahaffey that would have won the game, sending the contest into overtime.

Ohio State found itself in an early hole in the extra period when Minnesota scored six of the period's first eight points to go up 70-66 with 1:42 left after a driving layup from senior guard Lu'cye Patterson.

The Buckeyes cut that lead in half on consecutive possessions with a pair of free throws from Thornton and Parrish, and they miraculously tied the game at 73 with another two free throws by Mobley after he was inexplicably intentionally fouled by Kadyn Betts with just four seconds left, sending the game into the second overtime.

Ohio State then used that momentum to score the first eight points of the next period to go up 81-73 with 3:08 left after a driving layup by Glover. Minnesota certainly did not go away, making three three-pointers in the final 16 seconds to find itself trailing by as low as one point, but the Buckeyes sealed the game with eight straight free throws in as many attempts to hang onto the razor thin one-point double-overtime win.

Ohio State, which made an impressive 29 of its 33 free throws on the night compared to Minnesota's 12 of 27, was led in the comeback win by Royal, who scored a team-high 19 points on just 5-of-14 shooting but went 9 for 11 from the charity strike. Thornton added 18 points on 4-of-10 shooting (8 of 9 free throws), while Glover (13) and Parrish (11) also reached double figures.

Minnesota, which shot 45.7 percent from the field (32 of 70) and 41.4 percent from three (12 of 29) was led by Patterson with 20 points, while Asuma and senior guard Mike Mitchell Jr. had 18 points each on a combined 13-of-25 shooting. Leading scorer Dawson Garcia had just five points on 2-of-9 shooting while dealing with foul trouble and eventually fouling out towards the end of regulation.

Ohio State will be back in action on Thursday when it hosts No. 15 Oregon (13-2, 2-2 Big Ten) in what will be the two teams first duel as Big Ten foes.