

Cotie McMahon's Double-Double Leads Ohio State Past Michigan, 81-79, In Big Ten Tournament



Freshman forward Cotie McMahon led No. 14 Ohio State to a 81-79 win over No. 17 Michigan on Friday, moving the Buckeyes on to the semifinals of the Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament.

McMahon finished with a game-high 28 points on 62.5 percent shooting (10 of 16) while adding 12 rebounds and four assists. Guard Jacy Sheldon also returned for the Buckeyes, the No. 4 seed in the tournament, hitting a late triple that helped push Ohio State past the Wolverines, seeded No. 5 in the Big Ten.

The game got off to a poor start for Ohio State, as Michigan guard Jordan Hobbs was fouled on a made three-pointer on the Wolverines' first possession and hit from the charity stripe. The Buckeyes got a response from guard Taylor Mikesell with a triple, though, and Ohio State eventually led 10-9 with 6:45 left in the first.

Sheldon then checked in for the first time in nearly a month, coming off the bench and immediately assisting on a three-pointer from McMahon. Sheldon then poked the ball away from Michigan forward Leigha Brown, and it was corralled by guard Taylor Thierry for a fast break score to put Ohio State up 14-10.

Michigan responded with back-to-back baskets to go up 15-14, but a pair of free throws from Thierry put Ohio State back on top, and the Buckeyes remained with a 24-22 advantage entering the second frame.

Ohio State continued moving fast on the offensive end, hitting back-to-back triples to start the quarter and, after a later three-pointer from Mikesell, went up 39-33 with 4:23 left in the half. It was one of four made three-pointers during the second quarter (on four attempts) compared to 1-of-4 shooting from deep for Michigan during the frame.

The Buckeyes maintained that slim lead for the remainder of the half before Thierry, after helping force a shot clock violation by the Wolverines, scored a layup to close the half with a 47-39 advantage. Ohio

State shot a blistering 58.6 percent from the field in the first half and was 6 of 8 from deep

Michigan opened the third quarter on a 12-5 to cut the deficit to just 52-51 with 6:02 left in the frame. Sheldon was brought back into the contest following an Ohio State timeout, and after dueling layups from the Buckeyes and Wolverines, Sheldon scored her first basket of the game on a midrange jumper to put Ohio State up 56-53.

After Michigan tied things up at 56, Ohio State scored seven unanswered - five courtesy of McMahon, who connected on a pair of circus shots - before leading 65-61 at the end of the frame.

The Buckeyes were held scoreless through the first 2:34 of the fourth, and after a triple from Mikesell to keep Ohio State up 68-65, the Wolverines responded with back-to-back baskets to go up 70-68 with 6:26 remaining, their first lead since midway through the first quarter.

The lead traded hands three more times before a free throw from Brown tied the contest at 74, and McMahon responded with a trip to the free-throw line to put Ohio State up 76-74 with 1:58 remaining.

Sheldon then made her presence known, connecting on her first triple of the game, and Mikesell hit a layup on the next possession to give the Buckeyes an 81-76 advantage with one minute left. The Wolverines had a chance to tie or take the lead, down 81-79 with just 23 seconds remaining, but the Buckeyes forced a pair of misses on the final possession - one via a block from McMahon - as Ohio State secured the win.

Beyond McMahon's impressive outing, Ohio State saw Thierry (20 points) and Mikesell (16 points) finish in double digits, while Brown led the Wolverines with 19 points. It was the third win this season for Ohio State over Michigan.

Ohio State moves on to play No. 2 Indiana, the top-seeded team in the tournament, with the game set to tip off at 2:30 p.m. The Buckeyes dropped both games against the Hoosiers this season.