

# No. 10 Ohio State Rides Hot Start To Smash Stetson 86-51, Stays Undefeated

No. 10 Ohio State roared to a 38-6 start against an extremely overmatched Stetson squad and never looked back, winning 86-51 at Value City Arena on Nov. 18.

The Scarlet and Gray were led in the frontcourt by junior big man Kaleb Wesson with 13 points, eight rebounds and three blocks and junior forward Kyle Young with 15 points and 10 boards on a perfect 5-of-5 shooting. Young credited the team's day-in, day-out dedication for the success.

"Our approach, Coach is getting us ready," Young said. "Our preparation everyday in practice — we're coming in, we're making each other better. We're going at each other and we're competing everyday. That's really made a difference for us defensively and offensively."

Leading the backcourt, freshman D.J. Carton scored 10 points and dished five assists. Junior guard C.J. Walker added five points and five dimes, while sophomore guard Duane Washington Jr. scored nine points on three triples and contributed two helpers.

Head coach Chris Holtmann, who is notoriously tough on his point guards, expressed how pleased he was with his point guard tandem.

"They've done a good taking care of the ball, sharing the ball, finding guys and being intentional about finding guys," Holtmann said. "They've really done a good job of looking to find guys, find shooters; I've been pleased with both guys. And when they play together, they've done a good job of that, too."

The Buckeyes thoroughly dominated the Hatters on both ends of the floor, leading 42-14 at halftime. Visiting Stetson only made four field goals in the first frame, including an accidentally banked three-pointer to go with 3 of 8 free throws.

The play of the game came with Ohio State leading 22-3. Walker dribbled the ball on the left wing, surveying the floor until Carton darted toward the rim on the backside. The Florida State transfer lofted a perfect lob to Carton and the freshman standout slammed the ball through the hoop, bringing Buckeye fans to their feet.

"It was a great cut by D.J. and great vision by C.J.," Holtmann said after admitting he didn't draw up the play. "We tried to move some guys around their zone a little bit. We've got to continue to play those guys together and multiple combinations on the perimeter together just to get more comfortable in situations like that."

Although the Buckeyes were barely challenged by the Hatters, the lopsided victory allowed numerous players to see more playing time than usual. The extra minutes helped some of the less-experienced Buckeyes gain confidence and learn from their miscues.

Freshman big man Ibrahima Diallo scored his first collegiate basket on a smooth left-handed hook off the glass in the first half. The freshman from Saly, Senegal added a powerful dunk and an and-1 finish in the second half but missed the foul shot.

“Sitting on the bench, you can see a lot of things like good spacing, all the tendencies,” Diallo said. “I’ve been learning a lot. I stay ready, so when Coach calls my name, I just go in and compete.”

The Ohio State bench erupted when Diallo, a fan and team favorite, made his first basket.

“I feel like they love me; we’re really tight,” Diallo said. “They know I’ve been working hard for them, so that’s why when I scored, everybody got so excited.”

Former walk-on Harrison Hookfin, a Lebanon, Ohio, native, also scored his first collegiate basket, finishing strong on a rebound putback.

Sophomore wing Justin Ahrens scored his first points of the season as well, after having missed time due to an injured back. The left-handed sharpshooter from Versailles, Ohio connected on a trio of triples for nine points.

Ohio State senior wing Andre Wesson made his return after a two-game absence due to a fractured eye socket, checking in off the bench at 15:46 in the first half and finishing with six points, two rebounds and three assists.

Overall, Ohio State held Stetson to just 28.1 percent (16 of 57) from the field, while shooting 45.5 percent (30 of 66) on the other end. The Buckeyes shot well from the perimeter and free-throw line, knocking down 10 of 27 triples (37 percent) and 16 of 19 foul shots (84.2).

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