

No. 14 Ohio State Upsets No. 5 Tennessee 87-75 Behind Dominant Defensive Performance



No. 14 Ohio State (1-0) knocked off No. 5 Tennessee (0-1) 87-75 on Tuesday, opening the season with a nonconference win boosted by a strong defensive performance despite a distinct height advantage against the Volunteers.

The Buckeyes forced 29 turnovers that resulted in 37 points, and held Tennessee to 48.3 shooting from the field while outscoring the Volunteers 54-34 in the final two quarters despite being out rebounded 40-30 for the game.

The Volunteers got off to a hot start, jumping out to an 11-4 lead by connecting on four of their first seven shots and knocking down three free throws. Ohio State's first triple of the game, courtesy of guard Jacy Sheldon, and a basket from guard Taylor Thierry cut the deficit to 11-9, but Tennessee embarked on an 8-0 run to take a 19-9 lead, forcing Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff to call a timeout.

While Ohio State struggled to defend against Tennessee's height in the early going, the Buckeyes stayed in it by forcing the Volunteers into several turnovers. In just the first quarter, Tennessee turned the ball over seven times, leading to nine points off turnovers for Ohio State and just a 22-16 deficit after the first frame.

The Volunteers came out swinging in the second quarter, however, hitting their first three attempts out of the break to take a 28-16 lead. The Buckeyes continued treading water in front of the home crowd until freshman forward Cotie McMahan, playing in her first career game and earning her first career start, helped kickstart a run for Ohio State.

She scored the Buckeyes' next three baskets, including one on the fast break after stealing the ball from

Tennessee guard Jasmine Powell, and guard Madison Greene then scored her first points of the season, returning to the court after missing last season with a knee injury, to make it 33-28 with 4:04 remaining in the half.

Tennessee ultimately went into the locker room up 41-33 after a shot at the buzzer from Greene was waved off. The Buckeyes faced just an 8-point deficit after shooting just 38.7 percent from the field and 50 percent from the charity stripe (8 of 16) in the first half.

The second half was a complete reversal of fortune, however. The Buckeyes came out of the locker room and found a groove, as guard Taylor Mikesell hit her first triple of the game to make it 47-42, and forward Rebeka Mikulášiková later scored on back-to-back possessions to tie the game up at 49.

Boosted by a raucous crowd, the Buckeyes were able to take a 56-54 lead, their first of the game and one that they wouldn't relinquish. Ohio State eventually ended the third quarter up 63-54, ultimately outscoring the Volunteers 30-13 in the frame while forcing 11 turnovers.

Ohio State continued piling on in the fourth, going on a 9-2 run to begin the final frame. The Volunteers kept the game close and at points attempted to make a run, but the deficit never reached fewer than eight points as the Buckeyes scored 24 fourth-quarter points in the 87-75 win.

Mikesell led the Buckeyes with 25 points on 9-of-18 shooting, including a 4 of 10 clip from deep. Mikulášiková added 17 points and nine rebounds, while Sheldon finished with 14 points. Tennessee guard Jordan Hortson, a Columbus native, led the Volunteers with 20 points.

This was just the second win ever by Ohio State against Tennessee, and the first since Dec. 17, 1981.

Ohio State will head on the road next to take on Boston College on Nov. 13 at 4 p.m. The game will be broadcast on the ACC Network.