

No. 16 Ohio State's Final Shot Comes Late In 76-74 Loss To No. 7 Maryland



No. 16 Ohio State closed out the regular season with a loss on Friday, falling to No. 7 Maryland 76-74 after a last-second tip in from forward Cotie McMahon came after the final buzzer sounded.

After a miss from guard Taylor Thierry with just one second remaining, McMahon was able to corral the ball but the putback came off her hand just moments after the buzzer sounded, rendering the final shot no good.

The loss for the Buckeyes (23-6, 13-5 Big Ten) came despite 18 points from guard Taylor Mikesell, who was honored as part of Senior Night. Beyond the late would-be game-winner, the main culprit in the two-point loss was at the free-throw line, where Ohio State finished 8 of 20 compared to 11-of-14 shooting for the Terrapins (24-5, 15-3).

Ohio State fell behind 12-6 midway through the first quarter, but McMahon scored the next six points for the Buckeyes to tie the game with 2:26 left in the frame. After a three-pointer from Maryland forward Brinae Alexander and ensuing layup from Ohio State forward Rebeka Mikulášiková, guard Taylor Mikesell connected on a jumper at the buzzer to give the Buckeyes a 16-15 lead after 10 minutes.

After a strong performance in the first quarter - at least relative to Ohio State's last outing against Maryland, which saw the Buckeyes down 17-9 after the first frame - it was the battle at the free-throw line that told the story of the second quarter.

The teams were called for six personal fouls apiece during the frame, resulting in seven trips to the free-throw line. Maryland hit on 5 of 6 attempts, while the Buckeyes were just 2 of 8, and that disparity led to Ohio State trailing by as many as seven before heading into the locker room down 38-33.

The Terrapins had three scorers - Alexander and guards Diamond Miller and Abby Meyers - hit double digits in the first half, while McMahon paced the Buckeyes with 11 points.

Ohio State continued to trail early in the third before scoring triples on consecutive possessions - one the old-fashioned way from guard Taylor Thierry and a deep shot from Mikesell - to tie the game at 46 with 6:45 left in the quarter, but the Buckeyes turned the ball over on their next three possessions as Maryland scored five unanswered.

The Buckeyes then took off on a 17-7 run over the remainder of the quarter, with Mikesell knocking down another pair of triples and McMahon and Thierry combining for the remainder of the run. During that same stretch, the Terrapins were just 2 of 7 from the field as they suddenly trailed 63-58 entering the final quarter.

It took Maryland less than a minute into the fourth to erase the deficit, forcing Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff to call a timeout. The Buckeyes responded with some trips to the free-throw line (and a layup from Thierry) to lead 69-65 with 6:36 left, but the Terrapins took off on an 8-0 run to go up 73-69 with 4:23 remaining.

Ohio State cut the deficit to 75-74 with 2:38 to go after a free throw from McMahon, and after a couple minutes of scoreless basketball, Thierry stole the ball away from Maryland with just 13 seconds left but the officials ruled a turnover after she stepped out of bounds.

The Buckeyes then had several chances to tie or take the lead but were unable to close the contest out, either at the free-throw line on a pair of misses by guard Rikki Harris or on Thierry or McMahon's final gasps.

McMahon led the Buckeyes with 20 points, with Mikesell (18 points), Thierry (16 points) and Mikulášiková (13 points) all finishing in double digits. Harris added eight rebounds and eight assists, while the Terrapins were led by Meyer's 24 points on 11-of-15 shooting.