

No. 2 Ohio State Blows 16-Point Lead In 75-63 Loss To No. 7 Duke, Comes Up One Game Short Of Sweet 16



The season for No. 2 Ohio State (26-6, 16-2) came to a disappointing end on Sunday as it blew a 16-point lead in a 75-63 loss against No. 7 Duke (22-11, 11-7), coming up one game short of the Sweet 16.

The Buckeyes led 30-14 with 5:07 left in the second quarter but were outscored 57-30 the rest of the way, and allowed Duke to shoot 61.9 percent from the field in the second half. Additionally, Ohio State connected on just one three-pointer in 10 attempts, with the lone make coming with just 14 seconds left in the contest.

The Buckeyes came out with energy, with sophomore forward Cotie McMahon getting an old-fashioned three-point play and fifth-year guard Celeste Taylor - going up against her former team - forcing two early turnovers to allow Ohio State to take a 12-4 lead with 5:54 left in the first. Duke answered with four makes at the free-throw line, but the Buckeyes closed the frame on an 8-2 run to lead 20-10 at the end of the first.

Ohio State held Duke without points for the first 3:03 of the second quarter, going up 25-10 before a make by Blue Devils sophomore guard Ashlon Jackson, the first made field goal by Duke since it was 8:05 in the first. Jackson's score opening things up for Duke, which later connected on back-to-back three-pointers to cut the deficit to 30-20 with 4:07 left in the half.

The Buckeyes halted the Blue Devils' momentum with back-to-back scores by fifth-year guard Jacy Sheldon and McMahon, but Duke responded with an 8-2 run to cut it to 36-38 with 1:49 left, forcing Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff to call a timeout. The Buckeyes were still unsettled out of the break, missing the a shot and turning the ball over as the Blue Devils made it 36-32 at the break.

After holding Duke to just 18.2 percent shooting in the first quarter, it shot 61.5 percent in the second

as it outscored Ohio State 22-16 in the frame, and closed the first half on a 9-0 run. McMahon led all scorers with 14 points over the first two quarters.

Duke scored first out of the locker room to make it a one-possession game, down just 36-34, but a made basket by McMahon with 7:43 left in the quarter - Ohio State's first field goal in 4:42 - helped settle things down, and the Buckeyes eventually went up 42-36. But another triple from the Blue Devils began a 7-2 run to make it just 44-43 with 5:06 left in the frame.

Ohio State maintained 46-43 lead with 3:50 left in the third, at which point Taylor went to the bench with her fourth foul. With the Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year on the bench, Duke then took its first lead of the game with 1:26 left in the quarter, going up 49-47 after a layup from freshman forward Delaney Thomas. After a timeout by the Buckeyes, they were able to hit a trio of free throws in the final minute of the quarter to trail just 51-50 entering the fourth.

Ohio State and Duke traded scores throughout the early minutes of the fourth quarter, and with the game tied at 54, Taylor fouled out of the contest with 6:38 remaining. The Buckeyes were able to retake a 57-56 lead after a free throw from fifth-year guard Rikki Harris, who subbed in for Taylor, but a personal 7-0 run by Duke guard Reigan Richardson pushed the Blue Devils' lead to 63-57 with 3:43 left, leading to a timeout by the Buckeyes.

Junior guard Taylor Thierry scored out of the break, but Duke was able to close on a 11-1 run and hold Ohio State with just one basket in the final 3:13 of the contest. McMahon led the Buckeyes with 27 points on 9-of-17 shooting, while Sheldon had 13 points in her final game at Ohio State. Richardson led the Blue Devils with 28 points on 11-of-18 shooting.

Duke advances to play the winner of No. 3 UConn and No. 6 Syracuse, which will tip off on Monday at 6 p.m. on ESPN.