

# No. 2 Ohio State Secures Share Of Big Ten Regular-Season Championship With 79-66 Senior Day Win Over Maryland



No. 2 Ohio State (24-3, 15-1 Big Ten) celebrated its seniors in style on Sunday, securing a 79-66 win over Maryland (16-11, 8-8) at Value City Arena that also gave the Buckeyes a share of the Big Ten regular-season championship, as well as their 14th consecutive win.

This is the 17th Big Ten regular-season championship in program history, and with a win in either of Ohio State's last two games, it would secure the outright regular-season title for the 10th time. Additionally, the Senior Day win secured the No. 1 seed in the Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament.

After a brief confetti delay as the teams took the floor - perhaps a sign of things to come - the teams battled to a 12-11 lead for the Buckeyes with 4:51 left in the quarter. Guards Jacy Sheldon and Celeste Taylor - two of Ohio State's seven senior honorees, along with Rikki Harris, Rebeka Mikulášiková, Taiyier Parks, Eboni Walker and Karla Vreš - connected on a pair of three-pointers before Harris hit a triple to take a 21-13 lead after the first.

Maryland guard Brinae Alexander and Harris hit dueling threes to begin the second quarter, and Alexander added another just two possessions later to cut the deficit to 26-19 with 8:54 left in the frame. Ohio State then took off on a 7-0 run, during which it held Maryland scoreless for 3:31.

Alexander broke the run with a free throw, beginning an 8-2 run for Maryland that made it 35-27 with 2:54 left in the half, but Ohio State closed the frame out on a 9-4 run - with the final four points coming from sophomore forward Cotie McMahon - to lead 44-31 at the break.

Maryland shot well in the first half, including connecting on four of seven three-point attempts, but committed 10 turnovers and saw three starters - Alexander and guards Jakia Brown-Turner and Shyanne Sellers - get into foul trouble with two calls each. Ohio State, meanwhile, shot 53.6 percent from the field and 50.0 percent (7 of 14) from three-point range.

Ohio State came out of the break with baskets by Taylor and McMahon, but Maryland responded with a 9-0 run to cut the deficit to 48-42. But Mikulášiková responded with a triple, and the Buckeyes forced a turnover on the next possession that Taylor Thierry converted into a fast-break basket.

McMahon was then hit with a shooting foul and assessed a technical after running in disbelief to the other end of the floor, and she was sent to the bench with four fouls, leading to three free throws by Sellers to make it 53-45 with 5:27 left in the third. Sheldon later put the Buckeye up 57-47 after a pair of free throws, but the Terrapins closed the frame on an 8-3 run to trail just 60-55 entering the fourth, having outscored Ohio State 24-16 in the third.

Ohio State scored the first two baskets of the fourth and made it to the line to take a 66-55 lead with 7:55 left, but Maryland answered with back-to-back scores in just 25 seconds to make it 66-60. McMahon checked back in during a Maryland timeout with 6:13 remaining and the Buckeyes holding a 70-60 lead. Ohio State then got a trio baskets from McMahon, Sheldon and Mikulášiková to lead 77-64 with 3:27 left.

Maryland got a pair of free throws, but an ensuing score by McMahon helped to ice the contest before the outgoing seniors got their chance to check out of the game. Taylor led the Buckeyes with 20 points, while Sheldon (17), McMahon (15), Mikulášiková (11) and Thierry (10) all reached double digits. McDaniel led the Terrapins with 21 points.

Ohio State will return to the floor Wednesday for the team's final home game of the season, set to host Michigan - the only team the Buckeyes have lost to in conference play - at 7 p.m. on Peacock.