

Ohio State Blown Out By Cincinnati 80-62 In Charity Exhibition Game



With just 17 days left until the start of the 2024-25 regular season, the Ohio State men's basketball team faced its first real challenge of the year Friday night when it traveled down I-71 to take on in-state rival Cincinnati at Fifth Third Arena in a charity exhibition matchup, a game in which it ended up squarely on the losing side of, falling to the Bearcats 80-62

The charity exhibition game, which had all proceeds go to mental health awareness in Cincinnati, Columbus and surrounding areas, saw the Buckeyes struggle to get things going on the offensive side, shooting just 35.8 percent from the field and 33.3 percent from three, while also committing 17 turnovers.

With touted 7-1 transfer Aaron Bradshaw out of the game due to a concussion, Ohio State was also outclassed on the glass, with the Bearcats holding a 38-21 rebounding advantage, 9-6 in favor of the home team on the offensive glass.

Ohio State's team-wide struggles began early. Starting with a new-look small lineup of guards Bruce Thornton, Meechie Johnson, Micah Parrish and Evan Mahaffey and forward Sean Stewart, Ohio misfired on three of its first 11 shots and committed four turnovers to allow the Bearcats to jump out to a 18-6 lead after a Dillon Mitchell one-hand slam at the 13:04 mark.

True freshman John Mobley ended an over four-minute Buckeye scoring drought with a mid range jumper to trail 18-8, but the Bearcats would assume back control after that, scoring eight of the game's next 12 points to lead 26-12 at the midway point of the half.

Ohio State did find its rhythm soon after with four straight points — two free throws from Stewart and a jumper from Thornton — before cutting the deficit to 10, 29-19, off a Johnson three-pointer with 6:02 left in the half.

But Cincinnati bounced right back, going on a 7-0 run to take a commanding 36-19 lead after another Mitchell dunk with 3:39 left. Ohio State responded with five straight points — all from Parrish — to trail 36-23 with 2:36 left.

After a Bearcats three made it 39-23, the Buckeyes continued to storm back with an 8-2 run to close the half and trail 41-31 heading into the locker room. Ohio State's end of half surge was propelled by Parrish, who had seven points on 3-of-5 shooting in the final 3:12.

Still, the Buckeyes found themselves in a 10-point hole due to their interior play, where Jake Diebler's team was outrebounded 18-13 and 6-4 on the offensive glass. They also shot just 40 percent from the field on 12-of-30 shooting and 2-of-8 from three (25 percent).

Cincinnati built back on its lead to begin the second half, hitting two of its first four shots and a pair of three throws to go up 47-34 at the first media timeout. The Bearcats extended its lead further out of the timeout with a 6-0 run, which, after a Thornton basket, was followed by consecutive three-pointers from Jizzle James and Josh Reed and a basket by Simas Lukosius to bring the lead to a convincing 61-36 with 10:18 left.

The Bearcats' run extended to 10-0 after an impressive steal, dish and dunk between Thomas and Griffin to give the home team a 63-26 lead, their largest of the night.

Ohio State broke the run with a Johnson three, his second of the game, which seemed to give the Buckeyes a bit of momentum and propel a bit of a Buckeye comeback. They went from down 63-39 to trailing 67-50 with 5:15 remaining after another three from Johnson.

But the Bearcats would bring the lead back up to 23 with just 3:53 left after a 6-1 run, allowing them to cruise to the 22-point victory.

The Buckeyes were led in the blowout loss by Johnson and Parrish, who both notched 11 points on a combined 6-of-23 shooting. Thornton added nine on 4-of-6 shooting, while Mobley added eight and Royal led with six rebounds.

Cincinnati was led by Mitchell and Lukosius, who both scored 12 points on a combined 10-of-13 shooting, while Thomas was in double figures with 11 points. Mitchell also had a game-high seven rebounds.

Ohio State will not play another official exhibition game, although it is likely to play another Power Four school in a closed-door scrimmage before the season starts. The Buckeyes will open the season in Las Vegas against No. 19 Texas on Nov. 4 as part of the Hall of Fame Series.