

Ohio State Blown Out By Maryland In Big Ten Opener, Fall 83-59 Due To Poor First Half Performance



Ohio State (5-3, 0-1 Big Ten) began Big Ten play on Wednesday night with its worst loss of the Jake Diebler era, falling to Maryland (8-1, 1-0 Big Ten) 83-59 in front of 13,793 fans at the Xfinity Center due to an abysmal first-half performance.

Five days after a demoralizing buzzer-beating overtime loss to Pittsburgh, the Buckeyes found themselves trailing 50-17 at halftime due to their stagnant offense, which made just six of its first 21 shots, missed each of its first seven threes and committed 12 turnovers that led to 18 Terrapin points.

The 33-point first-half margin was Maryland's largest ever in a Big Ten game and tied the largest first-half lead for a Big Ten team in any conference game since 1996-97, while also allowing the Terrapins to shift into cruise control in the second half to earn the 24-point win.

Maryland's first-half blitz of the Buckeyes began right away. It made 10 of its first 18 shots and used its tenacious pressure defense to force six Buckeye turnovers and take a commanding 25-8 lead with 10:12 left after a pullup jumper from sophomore guard Rodney Rice.

The Buckeyes broke a 4:28 scoring drought with a Micah Parrish free throw at 9:44, and he split another pair from the line two possessions later to cut the deficit to 25-10. But that didn't deter Maryland, which continued to suffocate OSU on offense and went on a 15-2 run to lead 40-12 with 4:03 left after a free throw from freshman center Derik Queen.

Ohio State junior guard Bruce Thornton hit a running jumper with 4:03 left to break the run, but that proved to be the Buckeyes' final field goal of the half, another long drought that allowed Maryland take the historic 50-17 lead into the locker room.

The Buckeyes continued their offensive struggles out of the break, missing three of their first 10 shots to allow Maryland to take its largest lead of the game, going up by 40, 63-23, with 15:28 left after a triple by fifth-year guard Selton Miguel.

Ohio State finally got it going with back-to-back Devin Royal layups and a John Mobley Jr. three — the team's first of the game in 11 attempts — which sparked an extended 15-5 run that allowed it to trail 68-40 with 9:15 left.

The Buckeyes continued to play well in the second half and eventually cut the deficit to as low as 22, 78-56, with 3:03 left after a Meechie Johnson Jr. triple, but it was far too little, too late. Despite being outscored 42-33 in the second half, Maryland was still able to cruise to the 24-point win.

Ohio State was led in the loss by Royal, who scored a team-high 18 points and nine rebounds on 8-of-14 shooting. Mobley was the only other Buckeye in double figures with 15 points — all coming after halftime — while Johnson led with three assists.

Maryland was powered by junior guard Ja'Kobi Gillespie, who tallied a game-high 23 points and four assists on 7-of-11 shooting, while Queen earned a double-double with 17 points and 11 rebounds.