

Ohio State Blown Out In Evanston, Fall To Northwestern 83-58 For 14th-Straight Road Loss



Ohio State extended its road losing streak to 14 games Saturday night at Welsh Ryan Arena, falling to Northwestern 83-58 due to a sluggish performance on offense and a strong shooting night from the Wildcats.

The Buckeyes (13-7, 3-6) — who have yet to win a road game since defeating Northwestern on Jan. 1, 2023 — made just 14 of their 41 shots (34.1 percent) from the field — including just 7 makes in 21 attempts in the second half — their lowest field-goal total in a game in the Chris Holtmann era. Meanwhile, Northwestern (15-5, 6-3) shot an efficient 57.7 percent from the field — 62.5 percent in the second half — and made 10 of its 19 tries from three, while they also held a 34-18 advantage in the paint. Ohio State's team-wide struggles allowed it to be outscored 60-38 in the final 26:48 of the game.

Ohio State's offensive struggles started from the onset, with the team connecting on just one of its first five shot attempts and committing two turnovers to trail Northwestern 8-4 in the early going. After Ohio State made its next two shots and a pair of free throws to cut the deficit to 13-12, the Buckeyes went on another scoring drought, missing its next four attempts in 4:28 to ignite a 7-0 Northwestern run.

The Buckeyes — like they did against Nebraska — received a spark off the bench from sophomore guard Bowen Hardman, who hit his first three-point attempt to cut the deficit to 20-15 with 8:02 remaining. This seemed to kickstart Ohio State on offense, with the Buckeyes hitting on three of its next six shots — including Roddy Gayle Jr's first three-pointer in 17 attempts — but the Wildcats were still able to maintain a 31-25 lead heading into the final media timeout of the half.

After both teams exchanged three-point misses coming out of the break, the Wildcats extended its lead to 36-25 after an and-one by forward Luke Hunger and an acrobatic layup from guard Boo Buie — his first points of the night. Ohio State responded with two Gayle free throws, but Northwestern guard Nick

Martinelli made a corner three-pointer on the other end to put the Wildcats up 39-27 with 1:06 left, allowing the home team to hold a 41-30 lead at the half.

Ohio State was once again victimized by hot three-point shooting in the game's first 20 minutes, with Northwestern making seven of its 13 attempts (53.8 percent) from beyond the arc, with four of those coming from Wildcats guard Ryan Langborg. Northwestern also shot 53.6 percent from the field, while the Buckeyes shot just 7-of-20 (35.0 percent) in the first half and made four of its 11 attempts from three.

Northwestern continued to build upon its double-digit lead coming out of the break, scoring the halves' first five points to go up 46-30. Ohio State responded with three free throws from Gayle and sophomore center Felix Okpara, but that was the only points they would get for the next 2:35, allowing the Wildcats to extend their lead to 52-33 after two consecutive field goals from Buie.

Ohio State earned its first field goal of the half — and its eighth of the entire game — with 14:34 left in the period off a driving layup from Gayle. But it was immediately followed by another three-pointer from Buie on the other end of the floor, allowing the Wildcats to push their advantage back up to 55-36.

Northwestern took a 20-point lead, 59-39, after a Brooks Barnhizer stepback layup with 12:49 left, kickstarting an extended 11-0 run that allowed the Wildcats to hold a commanding 66-39 advantage with 10:12 left. After a Bruce Thornton make from the free throw line, Northwestern went on another 9-0 run — aided by another 2:50 scoring drought from Ohio State — to lead 75-40. The Buckeyes failed to make a field goal in 6:53 during this extended 20-1 run, missing all four of their shot attempts along with three missed free throws.

Ohio State broke the run with an Okpara dunk to make it 75-42, the start of a more promising stretch for the Buckeyes where they made three of their next four field goals and four free throws. But the scoring margin was far-too wide for the Buckeyes to ignite a comeback, as both teams emptied the benches in the game's final minutes before the final buzzer sounded.

The Buckeyes were led in the loss by Thornton, who had 18 points on 3-of-9 shooting, along with three rebounds and two assists. Gayle was the only other Buckeye to reach double figures with 15, while Okpara grabbed a team-high five rebounds. Northwestern was led by Buie, who finished with a game-high 19 points on 6-of-10 shooting and led the team with five boards.

Ohio State will return to action on Tuesday when it returns home to face off against No. 10 Illinois, with tip-off set for 7 p.m. The game will be streamed exclusively on Peacock.