

Ohio State Bounces Back After Maryland Loss, Defeats Rutgers 80-66 At Home For First Big Ten Win Of Season



Ohio State shook off the Maryland loss to win its first Big Ten game Saturday afternoon at Value City Arena, defeating star-laden Rutgers 80-66 behind an all-around efficient performance on both sides of the floor.

Just four days after shooting just 37.9 percent from the floor and 21.2 percent from three in the 24-point loss, the Buckeyes completely turned it around on their home floor by making 32 of its 58 shots (55.2 percent) and six of its 18 three-pointers (33.3). They also bounced back on the defensive side of the ball, limiting the Scarlet Knights to 42.1 percent shooting and forcing 13 turnovers that led to 22 points to come away with the 14-point win.

Ohio State looked like a much different team in the friendly confines of its home court early on, making nine of its 12 nine shots and committing just one turnover to take a 20-18 lead with 12:17 left after a Bruce Thornton three-pointer.

That offensive efficiency stalled a bit as the half progressed, but the Buckeyes were still able to extend their lead due to their success on the other side of the floor, where they held Rutgers scoreless for 4:10 to go up 31-23 with 5:22 left in the half after a Thornton jumper.

Rutgers found its groove and proceeded to go on a 9-0 run to trail 31-29 with just 3:27 left, but the Buckeyes closed the half strong, scoring eight of the period's final 10 points to take a 39-31 lead into the locker room.

After shooting just 28.6 percent from the floor in the first half of the Maryland game, the Buckeyes made 17 of its first shots to finish the first half with a 56.7 percent field goal percentage.

Rutgers guards Ace Bailey and Dylan Harper, the No. 2 and No. 3-ranked prospects in the 2024 class and projected second and third picks in the 2025 draft per ESPN, began to showcase their transcendent talents after halftime, scoring a combined 16 points in the first 8:28 of the half, but that didn't put too much of a dent in the Buckeyes' lead. Ohio State continued to shoot well to hold a 59-51 lead with 10:08 after a Devin Royal three-point play.

OSU stretched its lead to 10 on two separate occasions in the ensuing minutes, the second coming on a Micah Parrish three with 5:28 left that helped spark a 7-0 run for the home team to put them up a comfortable 14 points, 70-56, with 3:58 left after a Meechie Johnson Jr. layup.

Rutgers tried to mount a comeback out of the final TV timeout by deploying a full-court press, but the Buckeyes broke it easily and scored on an alley-oop from Johnson to Sean Stewart to put them up 74-59 with 3:02 left.

Ohio State then closed out the win by holding Rutgers to just one field goal the final 2:34 and hitting each of its six free throws to secure the 14-point win.

The Buckeyes were led in the win by Royal, who notched a career-high 22 points on 9-of-12 shooting. Thornton also added 22 points on 8-of-13 shooting, while Stewart grabbed a team-high seven rebounds.

Rutgers was led by Harper and Bailey, who scored 18 and 12 points, respectively. The 6-10 Bailey earned a team-high seven boards while Harper dished out a team-high four assists.

Ohio State will look to go on a winning streak one week from Saturday when it takes on No.3 Auburn at State Farm Arena in Atlanta as part of the Holiday Hoopsgiving event.