

Ohio State Cruises To 86-56 Win Over Santa Clara To Win Emerald Coast Classic Championship



Ohio State exploded in the second half to beat Santa Clara in the Emerald Coast Classic championship, shooting well from beyond the arc for the second straight game, and winning 86-56 in Niceville, Fla.

The Buckeyes (5-1) were led by Jamison Battle who is getting more comfortable in scarlet and gray, finishing with 21 points. As a team, they shot 52.4 percent from the field (33-of-63), 46.4 percent from three (13-of-28) and knocked down seven out of nine chances from the free throw line.

The Buckeyes got off to an early 15-6 lead behind four three-pointers in the first five minutes of the game, two from Battle with Roddy Gayle Jr. and Dale Bonner each adding one of their own. Santa Clara (6-1) answered with a three of its own, but Battle knocked down another, taking a 17-9 lead with 12:26 left in the first half.

After a jumper by Broncos guard Tyeree Bryan, the Buckeyes went on a 7-0 run. It started at 10:19 with Bruce Thornton making two free throws after a technical foul on Bryan, followed by a Bonner midrange jumper. Battle added another three-pointer when Bonner missed a jumper but followed it and corralled his own rebound to kick it out to the Minnesota transfer to take a 24-11 lead with 9:18 left.

Santa Clara fought back to get within six points of Ohio State when Jake Ensminger knocked one down from deep making it a 28-22 game. After a Thornton euro-step layup off of his third steal of the game, the Buckeyes and Broncos traded baskets back and forth for the rest of the first half heading to their locker rooms in a 34-26 game with 20 minutes remaining.

Battle finished the half with 16 points on 6-of-12 shooting, including 4-of-7 from three-point range. Ohio State was 12-of-30 shooting as a team (40 percent), but shot 42.9 percent from deep as a team and went 4-of-5 from the charity stripe all from Thornton, who had six points, three assists and three steals in the

half. The Buckeyes were beat on the boards 20-18 in the first 20 minutes but were able to take advantage of offensive rebounds and turnovers scoring five second chance points to the Broncos zero and eight points off turnovers to Santa Clara's two.

Felix Okpara opened the second half with a powerful dunk to give the Buckeyes another double digit lead. Santa Clara answered with a layup, but Battle's hands stayed hot in the locker room and he knocked down another three, followed by a steal to keep his great game going. Gayle had a three of his own to put Ohio State up 42-28 just over two minutes into the half.

After the Broncos made a corner three, Okpara had back-to-back dunks to start a 13-2 run for the Buckeyes to put them up 55-33 with 11:49 to go in the game. The lead was cut to 16 before Zed Key and Bonner scored seven straight points to start another 13-2 run, to give Ohio State a 73-46 lead with just over four minutes remaining.

Four Buckeyes scored double digits in the win, but they were led by Battle who shot 8-of-18 from the field and 5-of-10 from three. Thornton added 13 points of his own on 44.4 percent shooting, one make from deep and seven assists. Key had 10 points, shooting 83.3 percent from the field and Bonner had 11 points of his own.

Santa Clara was led by Adama Bal who had 13 points, while Carlos Marshall Jr. and Bryan each added 10 points. As a team the Broncos shot just 38.2 percent from the field and had 15 turnovers.

The Buckeyes match up against Central Michigan on Wednesday, Nov. 29, back home at Value City Arena at 7:00 p.m. The game will be televised on Big Ten Network.