

Ohio State Defeats Cedarville 95-52 In Exhibition



The Ohio State men's basketball team debuted with a 95-52 victory against Cedarville at Value City Arena on Oct. 30.

"It was good in a lot of ways because, as we expected we might, we got exposed in some areas," Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann said. "But a lot of good moments from our group. We obviously need to get better at a rapid pace here before Wednesday (Nov. 6), and we'll dive into that as a staff here, probably tonight."

Junior center Kaleb Wesson led the Buckeyes with 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting, including 3 of 4 on three-pointers, while adding seven rebounds with two blocks and two steals. Freshman guard D.J. Carton stood out in his Value City Arena debut with 15 points on 7-of-10 shooting with five assists and two steals.

Junior forward Kyle Young pitched in 10 points and nine rebounds, shooting 3 of 6 from the field and 4 of 6 from the foul line, while freshman forward E.J. Liddell added nine points, four boards and three steals in a solid debut.

Senior forward Andre Wesson scored the first bucket of the game on a dribble drive, which he turned into an and-1. After Young split a pair of free throws, junior guard C.J. Walker converted a layup and junior center Kaleb Wesson threw down a dunk for an 8-0 Ohio State lead.

Cedarville, who had fans all around the arena, fired off an 8-2 run, cutting the Scarlet and Gray lead to 10-8. The Buckeyes and Yellow Jackets battled back and forth, exchanging buckets with the game within four points for nearly 10 minutes.

Visiting Cedarville took its first lead of the game at 23-22 on a three-pointer by sophomore forward Isaiah Speelman, a Hilliard native. The Buckeyes regained the lead, which the Yellow Jackets cut back down to one at 26-25 with a layup by sophomore guard Branden Maughmer from Chillicothe.

Chris Holtmann's squad turned up its intensity with the visitors trailing by just one, ripping off a 15-0 run with eight points from Kaleb Wesson, including two three-pointers, three free throws from Young and two from Andre Wesson, as well as a layup from Liddell. Ohio State took a 41-27 lead into halftime.

Holtmann, who enters his third season as Ohio State head coach, was proud of how his team responded early, but saw plenty of room to improve.

“You don’t ever want to panic in those situations,” Holtmann said. “I thought our guys played with pretty good poise. We just needed to play better and more detailed. They made some shots, but I thought that our poor attention to detail defensively allowed them to get some things.”

The Buckeyes started hot in the second half, pushing their lead to 21 points at 54-33, but the visiting Yellow Jackets would not go down without a fight. They cut the Buckeye lead to 11 with a 10-0 run, which included a Speelman three-pointer, layup by sophomore guard Quinton Green, three-pointer by senior guard Demond Parker and pair of free throws from junior forward Conner TenHove.

The Scarlet and Gray answered with an 10-0 run of their own, with two buckets from Kaleb Wesson, a strong finish by Liddell, a thunderous slam by Carton, which brought the Ohio State’s fans to their feet, and a Carton jumper.

Green split a pair of free throws for Cedarville before Ohio State went on a 17-0 run, highlighted by two powerful dunks from Carton, including one that came on an alley-oop lob from Liddell.

Carton was asked which of his dunks was his favorite following the game.

“It had to be the lob from my boy, E.J.,” Carton said of the pass from Liddell. “He knew. I told him to throw it up and I don’t even think he saw me, but he knows how I play and it was a good connection there, good pass by my boy.”

Liddell was confident Carton would catch the lob, referencing a time when he failed to toss up an alley-oop pass.

“I remember D.J. and I were playing at open gym one time and I didn’t throw him a lob, and he was like, ‘You can throw it to me,’” Liddell recalled. “And I was like, ‘All right, I got you next time.’”

“And that was the perfect situation. He tipped the pass, I got it, dribbled and I saw him out of the corner of my eye just put a little finger up, so I just threw it.”

Liddell complimented Carton, but didn’t want his fellow freshman teammate’s ego to inflate after the emphatic, highlight-reel finish.

“I knew he was going to get it because D.J. can jump kind of well, I guess,” Liddell said with a smile.

The overall 25-1 run led to a 79-44 edge for the Scarlet and Gray before Cedarville scored again.

Overall, Ohio State controlled the game, although Cedarville made it interesting early in the first half.

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