

Ohio State Falls To Indiana In Big Ten Semifinals, 70-62



No. 1-seeded Ohio State's tournament run came to an end Saturday, as the Buckeyes fell to No. 5 Indiana in the conference semifinals, 70-62

Ohio State (23-6) was just 4-21 from deep - its second-lowest mark of the season behind a 16.7 percent performance against Wisconsin on Feb. 20 - and surrendered 14 points off 10 turnovers to the Hoosiers.

The contest was advertised as a battle between two of the best that the Big Ten has to offer, and it lived up to the hype in the opening stages as the teams combined to hit 12 of their first 21 shots from the field.

As the intricate chess match unfolded, it required creativity from both teams to weave through the opposing defense, and the Hoosiers eventually held a 15-12 lead with 4:28 remaining in the first quarter after a triple from Indiana guard Ali Patberg.

The Hoosiers had a strong start to the game on the offensive end, and Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff made a quick adjustment to bring in freshman forward Taylor Thierry, but she picked up two fouls within a minute of entering the game and was relegated back to the bench until the third quarter.

After a jumper from Hoosier guard Nicole Cardano-Hillary, who had 17 in their last game against the Buckeyes, Indiana took a 19-14 lead and looked prime to begin running away with it - that would not stand with senior guard Taylor Mikesell, however, who responded with a triple on the other end. Indiana guard Grace Berger drove in for a layup to make it 21-17 heading into the second.

The Hoosiers continued applying pressure in the second frame, increasing their lead to eight, 29-21 as Ohio State missed five of its first seven shots in the quarter. Junior guard Jacy Sheldon helped keep the Buckeyes close, completing a three-point play and scoring on the next possession to make it a three-

point game, 29-26, but Indiana closed the quarter on a 9-4 run to lead 38-30 at the half.

Thierry was not the only Buckeye to get in foul trouble in the first half, as graduate forward Tanaya Beacham, junior forward Rebeka Mikulsikova and sophomore guard Kateri Poole each picked up two fouls through the first 20 minutes.

Mistakes continued compounding for the Buckeyes in the third quarter, as Mikulasikova had two turnovers and a foul in just over three minutes as the Hoosiers jumped out to a 46-34 lead with 6:51 remaining.

Despite the deficit, Ohio State went shot-for-shot with Indiana for the next few minutes and began making up some ground after a 3-pointer from Mikesell, a block from Beacham and an ensuing score on the other end from senior guard Braxtin Miller to cut the deficit to just five points, 49-44. The momentum was brief, however, as the Hoosiers scored the next six points and finished the quarter on a 9-4 run to lead 57-48 going into the final frame.

Ohio State struggled to score through the first six minutes of the fourth, with just four points - all from Sheldon - as Indiana increased its lead to 66-53 with 4:03 remaining. The Buckeyes closed the deficit to as few as six points and held the Hoosiers to just two points in the final three minutes, but were unable to score on the other end as Indiana secured the 70-62 win.

Sheldon led the Buckeyes with 22 points on 10-of-19 shooting, while sophomore guard Rikki Harris and Poole had a team-high six rebounds. Cardano-Hillary led the Hoosiers with 16 points.

The Buckeyes will be off until the NCAA Tournament begins March 18-19, and Ohio State will find out its opponent on Selection Sunday on March 13.