

Ohio State Out Of Sync In Last Two Losses



The hits just keep coming for head coach Chris Holtmann and Ohio State.

Four days removed from their worst offensive outing of the season, coming in a 62-41 loss to Michigan State on Sunday, the Buckeyes registered their worst defensive showing in their 92-75 loss to Iowa — allowing the most points and highest field goal percentage of the season to the Hawkeyes on Thursday.

While Ohio State is in a full-on tailspin, losing seven-straight games and 12 of its last 13, it has struggled to put together a complete performance since New Year's Day. No games have shown Ohio State's disconnection on the offensive and defensive ends more than its last two contests against the Spartans and Hawkeyes.

In the Buckeyes' loss to the Spartans, Ohio State shot just 28.3 percent (17 of 60) from the field — its lowest percentage by far this season — while scoring an abysmal 41 points, the lowest scoring output since the 1995-96 season. Ohio State's shooting percentages dipped further from beyond the arc, where the Buckeyes shot just 20.7 percent on 29 attempts — their most this season.

"I do want to shoot more threes, but (against Michigan State) was probably too many," Holtmann acknowledged on Sunday. "We'll make some that we just missed (against the Spartans), I really believe we'll make some that we missed. I believe some of the misses were the byproduct of just the frustration of it being a low-scoring game and us just not adjusting to that."

Ohio State's struggles to move the ball efficiently — a defining trait of the recent losing streak — was also on display against the Spartans. The Buckeyes tallied just five assists to 10 turnovers, tying their lowest output of assists on the season.

On the flip side, the Ohio State defense showed some encouraging signs against the Spartans, holding them to 62 points — the lowest scoring output by an opponent during the losing stretch — on 45.8 percent shooting.

The Buckeyes were unable to build on their defensive performance against the Spartans in Iowa City on Thursday. Iowa torched Ohio State for 92 points, the most points scored by an opponent since Michigan

produced 92 against the Buckeyes on Feb. 21, 2021, while the Hawkeyes shot 56.9 percent, the highest mark since Maryland shot 58.1 percent in a 75-61 win over OSU on Jan. 18, 2019. By all accounts, it was one of Ohio State's worst defensive outings in the Holtmann era.

While the defense struggled, Ohio State's offense got back on track, albeit against a porous Iowa defense — which entered the game ranking last in the Big Ten in points allowed and opponent field goal percentage. The Buckeyes registered 57.1 percent shooting (28 of 49) while connecting on 8 of 15 three-point attempts in the loss. Ohio State's struggles to move the rock continued, though, as the Buckeyes produced 11 assists to 14 turnovers.

As Ohio State has failed to register a truly complete game since its 73-57 win over Northwestern on New Year's Day, Holtmann felt the Buckeyes just didn't have enough unity with its offensive and defensive game against the Hawkeyes to come out with a win.

"We need to be better. I don't make any bones about that," Holtmann told The Columbus Dispatch after the loss to Iowa. "They're good offensively and we just didn't have a good enough defensive approach today. I thought offensively, we were better. We worked on a lot of those things in practice the last couple days in terms of movement. I just didn't think we were good defensively."