

Ohio State Overcomes Slow Start To Secure Blowout 80-30 Win Over Evansville



Ohio State used a strong second half and some anemic Evansville shooting to improve to 3-1 on the 2024-25 season, handily defeating the Purple Aces 80-30 in front of a sparse Value City Arena crowd.

Ohio State shot just 29.2 percent from the field and committed six turnovers in the first half before turning it on in after halftime, making 21 of its 30 shots (70.0 percent), to help it cruise to the 50-point win. The Buckeyes did have some help from the now-1-4 Purple Aces, though, who shot just 19.0 percent from the field, including an anemic 12.9 percent in the first half.

Thirty points is the fewest the Buckeyes have allowed in a game since Nov. 29, 2008, when they beat Samford 59-22.

Ohio State's offensive struggles from the Texas A&M loss carried over to the early portion of the game, with the Buckeyes missing 10 of its first 12 shots and committing two early turnovers and six fouls to find themselves in a 9-9 tie with Evansville — who also struggled to start, shooting 2-of-12 from the field itself — with 10:36 left.

True freshman guard John Mobley Jr. broke a 4:09 field goal drought with a driving layup at 9:08 to take an 11-9 lead, and that score remained the same for the next two minutes and change until Evan Mahaffey made one of his two free-throw attempts.

After Evansville broke a 6:38 scoring drought with a Joshua Hughes three to tie the game at 12 with 6:57 left, Ohio State finally began to find its flow on offense. It made each of its next four field goals, starting with a Mobley layup and ending with an alley-oop from Bruce Thornton to Aaron Bradshaw, to help spur a 9-2 run that put OSU up front 21-14 with 4:40 left, forcing an Evansville timeout.

Ohio State did not make another field goal in the half, but it was able to extend its run to 16-2 with seven straight free throws, six from Devin Royal and one from Thornton, to take a commanding 28-14

lead into the half. The extended run was largely due to Evansville's offensive struggles, as it did not score a point for the final 5:51 of the half.

The game turned uglier in the second half but for a different reason, as forward Sean Stewart took a hard foul on a loose ball and seemed to hit his head on the ground, forcing him out of the game and into concussion protocol. He did not return to the game.

The injury seemingly stunned Ohio State for a bit, but it still was able to create some more separation on the scoreboard by making six of its first seven field goals of the second half, the final make of that sequence being a thunderous one-handed alley-oop dunk by Aaron Bradshaw that gave the Buckeyes a 41-20 lead with 15:09 left (Evansville's early basket was taken off the board after a review reversed a goaltending call).

Despite Evansville waking up a bit on offense with a pair of field goals, Ohio State was able to keep its lead over 20 points and eventually extend it to 30 points, 57-27, with 8:19 left after a Devin Royal layup. That sequence also included true freshman guard Colin White's first points of his career off a corner three. White later added another three at 6:54 to give the Buckeyes a 62-27 lead.

The rest of the game was window-dressing for the Buckeyes, who emptied the bench with 4:04 left up 69-29 and cruised to the 50-point victory. True freshman center Ivan Njegovan scored the final seven points of the game to reach the stat sheets for the first time in his career.

Ohio State was led in the win by Royal, who had a career-best 20 points and 11 rebounds for his first-ever double-double. Johnson was the only other Buckeye in double figures with 13, while Thornton had a team-high seven rebounds.

Evansville did not have a player reach double figures in points and were led by freshman guard Gabriele Pozzato with eight points and three rebounds.

Ohio State will look to earn its fourth win of the season on Friday night when it welcomes Campbell (3-2) to Value City Arena, with tip off set for 6 p.m. on Big Ten Network.