

# Ohio State Sees Second-Half Comeback Fall Short, Falls To Michigan 73-65 For Third Straight Loss



Ohio State suffered its third straight conference loss in disappointing fashion Monday afternoon at the hands of its arch rivals, overcoming a 12-point second-half deficit to take a late lead but ultimately falling flat in the final minutes en route to a 73-65 defeat at the Crisler Center.

The Buckeyes (12-5, 2-4) trailed 55-43 with 11:46 remaining but embarked on what seemed to be a game-altering comeback, storming back with a 16-0 run in just over three minutes of action to take back a 59-55 lead with 7:58 left. This lead did not last long, though, as the Buckeyes scored just six points the rest of the way, allowing the Wolverines (7-10, 2-4) to go on a comeback of their own and eventually come away with a thrilling 73-65 win.

Despite the frigid temperature outside, Ohio State's offense jumped out to a hot start against Michigan, connecting on three of its first four shots and benefiting from six Wolverine misses in seven tries to go up 6-2. Michigan responded quickly to tie the game at 10 after a three-pointer from Olivier Nkamhoua with 13:31 left, starting a back-and-forth between the two teams that lasted over two minutes and brought the score to 15-15.

That sequence was broken after another basket from Nkamhoua and three straight Buckeye misses, which allowed the Wolverines to embark on an 8-0 run and take a 21-15 lead with 8:35 left. After a Felix Okpara basket and a pair of Roddy Gayle Jr. free throws cut the deficit to two, Michigan took momentum right back with two straight threes from Terrance Williams and Nkamhoua, starting an 8-0 Michigan run that allowed them to lead 29-19 with 5:28 left in the half.

Ohio State responded with five straight points to cut the deficit to 29-24, but it was answered by the Wolverines' sixth three of the half — this time from guard Dug McDaniel — to take back an eight-point lead, 32-24. Ohio State battled back again with four points, but the Wolverines closed the half on a 5-0

run capped by another Wolverines three from McDaniel, giving them their seventh three of the half and a 37-28 lead heading into the locker room.

The Wolverines hit seven triples in 11 attempts (63.6 percent) in the first half, while they also connected on 14 of their 34 attempts (41.2 percent) from the field. On the other side, the Buckeyes missed 1 of their 14 three-pointers — just 7.1 percent — in the first frame and shot just 32.3 percent (10 of 31) from the field.

Ohio State came out of the half strong, scoring the period's first four points — all from Evan Mahaffey — to cut the deficit to 37-32. This sparked another back-and-forth between the two teams — highlighted by a thunderous dunk from Jamison Battle — that kept the score tight, 43-39 in favor of the Wolverines, with 16:37 left.

The Buckeyes continued to keep the game close as the middle portion of the half progressed, cutting it to 47-43 after a Gayle reverse layup. But Michigan came back with an 8-0 run that was capped by another two threes from the home team, allowing them to increase the lead to 55-43.

This was the largest lead the Wolverines had all game, though. After a Dale Bonner basket stopped the bleeding, Ohio State stormed back with a game-altering 16-0 run in over three minutes that allowed them to take a 59-55 lead, their first since the 11:25 mark of the first half.

Ohio State's lead was quickly erased with a quick 4-0 run from the Wolverines, only to be followed by a Thornton steal off a miss led to a Gayle dunk that gave the Buckeyes the lead right back. Michigan then responded with another three pointer — which bounced off the rim multiple times before going in — to give them a 63-61 advantage, a play that started a 7-0 run to give the Wolverines a 67-61 lead with 2:26 left.

The Buckeyes attempted one last gasp, getting a quick basket from Thornton to cut the deficit to four, but a miss on the next possession from Gayle led to a Wolverine triple on the other end, allowing Michigan to later extend the lead to 72-65 with 33 seconds left and ultimately hold onto the 8-point win.

Ohio State was led in the loss by Thornton, who scored 19 points on 8-of-19 shooting, along with six rebounds and three steals. Gayle (12) and Okpara (10) also reached double figures, while Okpara also had a team-high nine rebounds and four blocks. Michigan was led by Nkamhoua, Williams and Mcdaniel, who combined for 53 of the Wolverines' 73 points and shot a combined 10-of-19 shooting from three.

Ohio State will look to get back in the win column on Saturday when they return home to face Penn State at noon.