

Ohio State Spoils Cincinnati's Re-Opening of Fifth Third Arena, Beats Bearcats 64-56



CINCINNATI - On a night that was supposed to be a celebration of all things new for Cincinnati, it was Ohio State celebrating when the clock hit zero.

The Buckeyes, playing the role of visitor in the University of Cincinnati's re-opening of renovated Fifth Third Arena, pulled the minor upset on Wednesday night, knocking off the host Bearcats 64-56.

Ohio State carried a 16 point lead at multiple points in the second half before Cincinnati cut the Buckeye lead to just four with under a minute to play. Senior guard C.J. Jackson responded with a sweeping right-handed layup with just 29 seconds remaining to put OSU up six.

The Buckeyes then got a defensive stop before Jackson buried two free throws to seal the win. He finished with 13 points in the victory.

The first half featured more personal fouls than made field goals, as Ohio State converted on just 9-of-27 shot attempts in the first 20 minutes. Meanwhile, the Bearcats shot just 4-of-29 from the floor with the two in-state rivals combining for 18 fouls.

Cincinnati opened the game with the lead after guard Justin Jenifer canned a three-pointer that sent confetti flying from the Bearcat student section. From there however, Ohio State controlled most of the game.

While the Buckeyes converted on just 33.3 percent of their shots in the first half, their lead swelled to as many as 10 in the first half following a step-back three-pointer from Jackson. Ohio State didn't get to the free throw line until there was just 3:01 to play in the first half, however the Buckeyes converted six free throws in the final three minutes, four of which came from forward Kyle Young.

Ohio State carried a 27-18 lead into the half and came out of the half firing on all cylinders. After trading back-to-back scoring possessions with Cincinnati, the Buckeyes went on a 9-0 run that was capped by an Andre Wesson three-pointer off the dribble. The basket pushed Ohio State's lead to 38-22 with 15:26 to play.

Cincinnati roared back with a run of their own, rattling off seven straight to cut Ohio State's lead to nine with 12:04 to play. That run was ended by a pair of free throws from Kaleb Wesson, who finished with a team-high 15 points on the night.

An old-fashioned three-point play by Young pushed Ohio State's lead back to 14 at 46-32 with 9:32 to play before both teams entered the bonus just past the midway point in the second half. From there, the Buckeye lead swelled back to 16 with 6:23 to play off a Kaleb Wesson two-handed slam.

After Cincinnati countered with a made three-pointer following the Wesson dunk, Luther Muhammad answered with a three-pointer of his own. He was however, whistled for a technical foul for taunting a UC defender after the made shot. From there, the Bearcats went on an 8-0 run to cut the score to 55-47 with just more than three minutes to play.

Shortly after a Kaleb Wesson three-pointer, Cincinnati cut the Ohio State lead to seven with 2:13 to play on a pair of Jarron Cumberland free throws. After Jackson split a pair of free throws for Ohio State, Cumberland converted a sweeping layup. Kaleb Wesson responded by splitting a pair of throws before Cumberland buried a three-pointer to cut Ohio State's lead to 60-56 with 59 seconds remaining.

Cumberland finished with a game-high 22 in a losing effort for UC.

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