

Ohio State Squanders 18-Point Second-Half Lead, Falls 76-73 To Indiana For Fifth-Straight Loss



Ohio State's losing streak reached five games Tuesday night at Value City Arena in demoralizing fashion, with the Buckeyes squandering an 18-point second half lead to fall to Indiana 76-73.

The Buckeyes jumped up to a 42-29 first-half lead and increased its advantage to a game-high 18 points with 18:58 left before the wheels fell off. After a Thornton triple gave Ohio State a 49-31 lead, the Buckeyes were outscored 47-26 the rest of the way — an extended slide that included a 10-0 run for the Hoosiers in the middle portion of the half. The Buckeyes briefly reclaimed the lead with 37 seconds left after two Jamison Battle free throws, but they were outscored 5-0 the remainder of the game

Ohio State's second-half collapse was due to its offense, which shot just 8-of-23 after halftime and committed seven turnovers — including one on the second-to-last possession of the game — that led to 10 Hoosier points. Meanwhile, the Hoosiers made 16 of its 29 shots from the field in the second half (55.2 percent) and connected on four of its six threes.

The game was tight to start, with the two teams exchanging leads five times and tying three times in the game's first five minutes, giving way to a 11-10 lead for Ohio State. It remained close up until the middle portion of the half when the Buckeyes went on an extended 9-0 run — aided by a 2:51 Indiana scoring drought — to take a 25-15 lead with 8:21 left, forcing a Hoosiers timeout.

After a lengthy review that resulted in a personal foul from Zed Key and flagrant penalty from Indiana center Payton Sparks, Ohio State extended its lead to 11 on two Jamison Battle free-throws. The Buckeyes' advantage reached 13 after a layup from Battle with 7:02 left, but the Hoosiers managed to cut the deficit back down to single-digits, 33-24, a few possessions later following a layup from center Mackenzie Mgbako.

Ohio State was able to extend the lead back up to double-digits at the free-throw line, with the Buckeyes hitting seven straight free throws — sandwiched between two Hoosier makes from the line — to go up 40-38 with 59 seconds left. Indiana continued the end-of-the-half foul fest with a make from forward Malik Reneau, but the Buckeyes responded with a driving layup from Gayle on the other end to

take a 42-39 lead into the half.

Contrary to many games this season, it was Ohio State who went on an extended run to end the first half, with the home team outscoring the Hoosiers 29-16 in the final 12:02. The Buckeyes dominated this sequence due to their play on the defensive end, where they held the Hoosiers to just 6-of-16 shooting (40.0 percent) from the field and forced five turnovers during that stretch.

Ohio State built upon its lead after halftime, scoring seven of the halves' first nine points — including two technical free throws and a Bruce Thornton three that came after two offensive rebounds — to go up 47-29. That was the largest lead the Buckeyes held all game, though, as Indiana followed with a 7-2 run of its own.

The Hoosiers continued to chip away as the half progressed, cutting the deficit to as low as eight, 55-47, after a Reneau free throw with 11:37 left. The Buckeyes answered that score with five straight points to go back up 60-47, but the Hoosiers weren't deterred. After a pair of Key free throws pushed the Buckeyes lead to 65-53 with 7:42 left, Indiana stormed back on a 10-0 run — aided by an extended scoring drought from Ohio State — to trail just 65-63 with five minutes left.

Ohio State came back with a pair of Gayle free throws, but the Hoosiers answered with a triple from forward Trey Galloway to cut it down to just one point. The Buckeyes held a small lead until Indiana forward Kal'el Ware made a layup to hold a 70-69 advantage, its first lead of the half.

After a Hoosiers free throw, Ohio State tied the game with a Battle jumper, who then added a pair of free throws with 37 seconds left to take a 73-71 lead. After an Indiana timeout, Galloway found guard Anthony Leal for a corner three, giving it a 74-73 with just 22 seconds left. Battle dribbled it off his foot and into the hands of Ware on the next possession, leading Leal to hit two free throws to close out the game.

Ohio State was led in the loss by Battle and Gayle, who each added 19 points on 10-of-21 shooting. Thornton added 11, while Evan Mahaffey had a team-high six rebounds. Indiana was led by Reneau and Galloway, who scored 26 and 25 a piece.

Ohio State will look to snap its losing streak on Saturday when they welcome Maryland to Value City Arena. Tip-off is set for 4 p.m. and will be broadcast on Fox Sports 1.