

Ohio State Squanders Nine-Point Second-Half Lead, Falls To Indiana 71-65 To Snap Four-Game Winning Streak



Ohio State let another second-half lead get away from them on the road Saturday night in front of a hostile Assembly Hall crowd, succumbing to sloppy play and poor shooting to fall to the Hoosiers 71-65 and snap its four-game win streak.

The Buckeyes (12-3, 2-2) used a strong shooting performance from fifth-year guard Jamison Battle to jump out to a 46-37 lead with 18:11 left in the game, but that advantage slowly slipped away from them due to some costly turnovers and shooting woes. They committed seven turnovers in the second half and hit on just two of their 12 three-point attempts, allowing the Hoosiers to outscore the Buckeyes 34-19 in the game's final 18 minutes. Conversely, the Hoosiers shot 46.2 percent after halftime and scored nine points off Ohio State's turnovers.

Unlike the previous game against Rutgers, Ohio State's offense struggled in the early going, missing three shots and committing two turnovers on its first four possessions to allow Indiana to jump out to a quick 4-0 lead. The Buckeyes got their first points off a Bruce Thornton three-point play with 17:10 left in the first period, but Indiana was still able to hold a 9-5 advantage before the first media timeout.

Despite the early offensive woes — 2 for 8 shooting and three turnovers to start — the Buckeyes were able to stay within reach as the first half progressed thanks to Battle, who rattled off two triples in 50 seconds to quiet the Hoosier faithful. This sequence helped spark a 12-0 run for Ohio State that allowed them to take a 20-15 lead with 10:20 remaining in the half, a run that was also aided by four points from Bruce Thornton.

Ohio State continued its hot shooting into the middle portion of the half, hitting two of its next three shots — including a three-pointer from Zed Key — to maintain a 25-20 lead. Due to an extended back-and-forth between the two teams that lasted over seven minutes, the Buckeyes lead was able to stay

right at five, all despite Thornton heading to the bench with 8:17 left and not returning all half.

But the stalemate ended with just 47 seconds left in the half after Hoosiers guard Xavier Johnson connected on a four-point play, trimming the Buckeyes' lead to just 36-35. Johnson hit two more free throws on the very next possession to take a 37-36 lead, but the Buckeyes responded with two free throws of their own after Key was fouled on the other end of the floor with just four seconds left, allowing them to take a 38-37 lead into the locker room.

Both teams came out of halftime going on runs, with Ohio State scoring the period's first seven points — aided by another three from Battle — followed by eight straight points from the Hoosiers to cut the Buckeyes' lead to 46-45. Key broke the Hoosiers' run with a dunk, but a three from forward Malik Reneau on the very next possession tied the score at 48 with 12:07 left.

While Ohio State retook a brief 52-50 lead off a Roddy Gayle Jr. dunk, Indiana exploded with seven straight points to hold a 57-52 advantage. After a Dale Bonner three helped quiet the crowd, the Hoosiers delivered another major blow with another five straight points to inflate the lead to 62-54 with 4:42 left. That lead then inflated to 10 points, 66-56, after an alley-oop dunk by Reneau that further energized the Indiana faithful.

Ohio State attempted a valiant comeback, scoring nine of the game's next 10 points to cut the deficit to just 67-65 with 1:44 left. But another Reneau basket out of a Buckeyes timeout and a miss from Gayle gave the Hoosiers the final separation they needed to close out the come-from-behind six-point victory.

Ohio State was led in the loss by Battle, who finished with 17 points on 6-of-12 shooting, including 5-of-10 from three. Key was the only other Buckeye to reach double figures with 11, while Gayle, Thornton and Scotty Middleton each scored nine, and Felix Okpara recorded a team-high 15 rebounds. Indiana was led by Reneau and Johnson, who scored 23 and 18 points on 14-of-25 shooting, with 29 of those points coming in the second half.

The Buckeyes will look to get back in the win column on Wednesday when they host No. 22 Wisconsin, with tip off set for 7 p.m.