

Ohio State Struggles Again On Offense, Suffers Third Straight Loss in 69-61 Defeat At UCLA



Ohio State (15-13, 7-10) was hindered by another anemic offensive performance and a depleted roster in a 69-61 loss to UCLA (20-8, 11-7) Sunday night at Pauley Pavilion that further decreased its NCAA tournament hopes.

Just three days after their worst offensive night of the year against Northwestern, the decimated Buckeyes had an equally poor outing against the Big Ten's top-ranked scoring defense.

Playing without the services of Aaron Bradshaw for the second straight game and with a limited John Mobley Jr. due to the flu, OSU shot 31.7 percent from the field (20 of 63), 22.7 percent from three (6 of 27), which allowed the Bruins to lead for all but 1:40 and hand Jake Diebler's team a damaging third-straight loss with just three more regular season games left.

The shorthanded Buckeyes had another horrid start on offense, but it was matched by an equally poor start from the Bruins. The two teams combined to make just five of their first 29 shots and each had early scoring droughts that lasted over four minutes, giving way to just an 8-7 score in favor of UCLA with 12:01 left in the half.

The scoring picked up a bit after Micah Parrish and Bruce Thornton each connected from deep to help OSU go up 15-13 with 8:47 left and UCLA went on a 14-7 run to lead 27-22 with 2:55 remaining. But just one field goal would be made for either team the rest of the way as UCLA took a 28-24 lead into the break.

After shooting just 35.7 percent and committing 11 turnovers in the first half against Northwestern, the Buckeyes shot 27.3 percent (9 of 33) and had another six turnovers. UCLA, however, also had six turnovers and shot 32.4 percent (11 of 34) from the field.

Ohio State briefly got out of its scoring funk by getting a pair of three-point plays from Austin Parks and

John Mobley Jr. on two of its three possessions of the period to trail 31-30, but that momentum was quickly erased when UCLA went on an 8-0 scoring run to lead 39-30 with 15:41 remaining. The Buckeyes answered with seven straight points — five of those coming from Ques Glover — but another disjointed offensive stretch allowed UCLA to take back control with a long 18-7 run to lead 55-44 at 7:24 after a pair of free throws from junior forward Tyler Bilodeau.

OSU used some tenacious defense to find themselves within seven, 55-48, with 6:00 left after two Thornton free throws, but UCLA responded with a 7-3 run to extend their lead to 11, 62-51, with 2:17 remaining. Ohio State made one final push and cut the deficit down to six, 62-56, after a Thornton floater, but a stepback three-pointer by Clark on the next possession proved to be the dagger as UCLA hung on for the eight-point win.

Ohio State once again had little production from anyone outside of Thornton (21 points) and Micah Parrish (12), with the seven other Buckeyes who earned playing time combining for just 28 points on 11 of 36 shooting.

UCLA was led in the win by sophomore guard/forward Eric Dailey Jr., who notched 20 points on 8-of-15 shooting and grabbed eight rebounds, helping the Bruins hold a 45-34 edge on the glass. They also scored 13 points off nine Buckeye turnovers.

Ohio State will look to end its three-game winning streak on Wednesday night when it ends its two-game West Coast trip with USC. Tipoff is set for 10:30 p.m. on FS1.