

Ohio State Upsets No. 19 Texas In Season Opener, Defeats Longhorns 80-72 In First Game In Jake Diebler Era



Ohio State used a scintillating three-point shooting performance and some stout defense to emerge victorious in its 2024-25 season opener Monday night, upsetting No. 19 Texas 80-72 at Las Vegas' T-Mobile Arena to start the Jake Diebler era on a resounding high note.

In what was Ohio State's first season-opening twin against a ranked opponent in program history, the Buckeyes showed no rust or jet lag on either end of the floor. Sparked by a 14-point breakout performance from true freshman John Mobley, who hit on all four of his three-point attempts, Ohio State shot an efficient 50.0 percent from three (14-of-28), including 10 made threes in the first half alone.

The Buckeyes held their own on the defense end too, limiting an explosive Texas' offense to just 36.8 percent shooting (25-of-68) from the field and 25.0 percent from three (7-of-28), while they also held a 33-10 advantage in bench points and 40-38 edge on the glass.

Boasting a new-look starting lineup of Meechie Johnson Jr., Bruce Thornton and Micah Parrish and forwards Aaron Bradshaw and Sean Stewart, the Buckeyes started out with a bang, connecting on five of its first eight shot attempts — including four of its first seven attempts from three — to jump out to a 14-7 lead at the first media timeout.

Texas would come out of the timeout strong with two straight baskets to trail 14-11, but the Buckeyes continued to stay hot from beyond the arc, getting a second three from Thornton and then a deep pullup three from true freshman guard John Mobley — his first points of his collegiate career — to take a 20-13 lead with 12:30 remaining in the half.

The Buckeyes got another point right after an Evan Mahaffey free throw to go up 21-13, but Texas would soon tighten up on defense, forcing the Buckeyes to miss their next five shots to go on a 5-0 run. But it was the pure shooting of Mobley that put Ohio State back in control, with the true freshman hitting on two straight tightly contested threes — the second from way beyond the arc at the top of the key — to go back up 28-18 with 8:29 left in the half.

Mobley's threes were a part of a long 12-0 run for Ohio State that included yet another triple — this one

by Johnson — as well as a 5:01 scoring drought for Texas that featured two turnovers and 10 straight Longhorn misses.

Texas broke the long scoring drought with a put-back layup by forward Kadin Shedrick with 5:32 left to trail 33-20, which seemed to springboard it in a big way. The layup started a 10-0 run for the Longhorns — which included 10 straight Buckeye misses — to trim the lead to 33-28 with 2:29 left, forcing a Diebler timeout.

The break seemed to reset the Buckeyes on both ends. Ohio State got an instant three from Parrish and then a fall away jumper from Devin Royal to take a 38-31 lead with, one which, with the help of a big-time block by Stewart at the rim and a Royal steal, it would take into the locker room at the half.

Ohio State made 12 field goals in the first period, 10 of those being on three-pointers. The 10 made threes were the most the program has made in a half since 1998.

It also forced Texas into seven turnovers and just 34.3 percent shooting (30.7 percent from three).

Ohio State entered the second half with a different approach on offense, scoring its first eight points in the paint, two of those being dunks by Royal and Bradshaw, to keep pace with Texas and lead 46-39 entering the first media timeout.

But it soon turned into the Mobley show again, with the freshman hitting on his fourth three of the night and then making two more free throws to put the Buckeyes up 51-40 with 13:59 left.

Texas would respond again, however. The Longhorns went on a long 9-3 run — aided by a 1 of 4 stretch from Ohio State — to trail 54-49 with 10:58 remaining after an Arthur Kaluma and-one. The Buckeyes weathered that storm for a few minutes before Texas cut the deficit to 59-56 after a layup by Chendall Weaver, and then 61-58 following a Shedrick dunk

But the Buckeyes would respond right back. Parrish immediately responded with a three, and then Royal hit on a tough runner to go back up 66-58 with 6:48 left. After Johnson hit on one free throw, Ohio State seized full control with a jumper from Thornton and a three from Royal, capping a 10-1 run that gave the Buckeyes a 71-59 lead with 5:13 left.

Texas broke the run out of a timeout with five straight points to trail 71-64, but Thornton began the process of icing the game with a nifty and-one and a strong runner to go up 76-64 with just 2:24 left in the game. The Buckeyes team' captain hit on another floater and later two free throws to take an 80-68 lead with just 53 seconds remaining, scoring the final nine points of the game to help the Buckeyes close out the two-point victory.

With Thornton's strong finish, he led the team in scoring in the win with 20 points on an efficient 7-of-10 shooting from the field (3-of-4 from three) along with five rebounds and five assists. Royal added a career-high 16 points on 7-of-11 shooting along with three rebounds and an assist, while Parrish added 17 and Mobley 14.

Texas was led in the win by Johnson, who erupted for 29 points on 10-of-20 shooting in his collegiate debut, breaking Kevin Durant's Longhorns record for most points by a freshman in a debut set in 2006.

Ohio State will return to keep it going in one week when it welcomes in-state foe Youngstown State to

Value City Arena for the team's home opener on Nov. 11, which is set for a 6 p.m. tipoff on Big Ten Network.