

Ohio State Women's Basketball Strong Finish Leads To 77-56 Win Over Minnesota In Big Ten Tournament



With two wins against Minnesota already in the books, Ohio State appeared to have its first Big Ten tournament game locked up early.

The Buckeyes held a 23-6 lead in the first quarter on the back of a 10-0 run, all of which started by forcing the Golden Gophers to 0-of-5 shooting and five turnovers to open the game.

But despite the two defeats, and despite the 17-point margin early, 11-seeded Minnesota did not go down without a fight, cutting the deficit to six points at halftime.

That lead eventually dropped down to 54-50 in the fourth quarter, but from there, Ohio State ignited, eventually winning in dominant fashion 77-56.

The Buckeyes will advance to play three-seeded Iowa in the tournament's quarterfinals.

"I think we did pretty good as a team staying together," freshman guard Kierstan Bell said. "Just doing what we do best, executing. We got like a lot of weird shots but they were falling, so that was pretty good, and we just stayed in it."

With the advantage down to just four in the fourth quarter, the Buckeyes went on an 14-0 run, holding Minnesota scoreless for 6:39, to officially seal the win.

Despite the gap closing significantly, Ohio State never trailed, or lost the lead, through the entirety of the game.

"We just finally started making some shots," Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said. "I thought we got good shots throughout, but we were really kind of inconsistent with our shooting, and once the shots started going in, it kind of fueled our defense a little bit, too."

Sophomore guard Janai Crooms was huge for Ohio State off the bench, finishing with 14 points, four

rebounds and four assists in just 20 minutes.

“It felt great,” Crooms said. “My teammates found me, got me the ball in transition and had confidence in me, and I just think my teammates gave me the ball, got me open, and just had confidence in me throughout the game.”

Another sophomore that came up big was forward Aaliyah Patty. She ended the night with 15 points and eight rebounds.

Ohio State led by as much as 15 points in the second quarter, but only took a 39-33 lead into halftime after hitting three of its final 16 shots from the field.

Freshman guard Madison Greene found her shooting touch early after struggling in the past few games and led the Buckeyes with nine points, including scoring seven of the team’s first 15 points to start the game.

Sophomore forward Dorka Juhasz also made an impact, grabbing 10 rebounds in the opening half despite scoring just four points.

Juhasz struggled from the field all night (six points, 3-of-11 shooting), but had a strong game on the boards with 16 rebounds.

“She played really hard. I thought she was good defensively,” McGuff said. “She had some huge rebounds, and she missed some shots she normally makes, but that’s the way it goes.”

On the night, the Buckeyes shot 43.1 percent (31 of 72) from the field and 22.2 percent (6 of 27) from three, while Minnesota shot 32.3 percent (20 of 62) and 36.0 percent (9 of 25) from three.

Ohio State played without freshman forward Rebeka Mikulasikova, who did not travel with the team and will be out for the remainder of the Big Ten tournament.

The game between the Buckeyes and Hawkeyes will take place at 9 p.m. Friday.

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