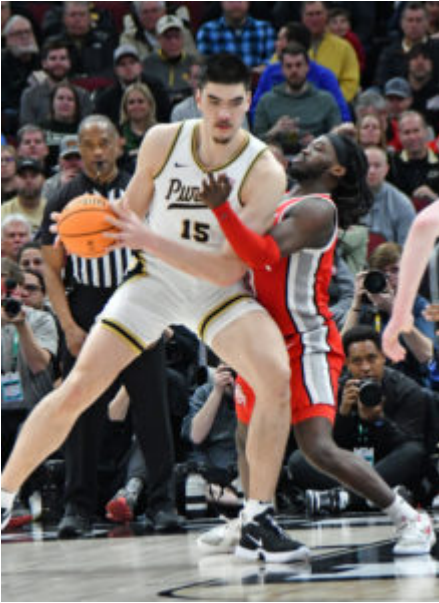


Ohio State's Big Ten Tournament Run Ends With 80-66 Loss To Purdue In Semifinal



Ohio State's Big Ten Tournament run came to a close on Saturday, as the Buckeyes fell to top-seeded Purdue 80-66 in the semifinals at the United Center.

Ohio State (16-19, 5-15 Big Ten) struggled to contain Big Ten Player of the Year and Purdue 7-4 center Zach Edey, who registered 32 points and 14 rebounds, to lift the Boilermakers (28-5, 15-5) past the 13th-seeded Buckeyes. Edey's efforts helped the Boilermakers out-rebound the Buckeyes 37-27 and stake out a 36-18 scoring advantage in the paint.

Purdue opened the game by connecting on a pair of threes, shot by Brandon Newman and Fletcher Loyer, to help stake out an 8-2 lead with 17:36 remaining in the frame. But, the Buckeyes quickly responded thanks to a layup from Felix Okpara and a three-pointer from Justice Sueing to close the gap to 10-8. Okpara tallied another bucket, this time a dunk, but a Braden Smith three-pointer kept the Boilermakers in front 15-10.

Roddy Gayle Jr. emerged from there, hitting four consecutive three-pointers and going on a personal 9-4 run, while helping the Buckeyes forge their first lead, 26-19, with 10:15 remaining in the opening frame. Sueing furthered the advantage to eight with a three-pointer, to make it 29-21 with 8:18 to play, but Edey took hold of the game from there.

Edey scored 12 of the Boilermakers' next 14 points, including four points on a six-point possession after Eugene Brown III picked up a flagrant foul, to allow Purdue to retake the lead 35-34 with 3:37 remaining. Ohio State was held scoreless for the rest of the half, while Purdue extended its lead to 42-34 entering the break.

Purdue closed the half on a 21-5 run while Edey produced 17 points and two assists during the frame, leading the Boilermakers to 59.3 percent shooting (16 of 27) in the half. Gayle countered 16 points — including five made threes — while Ohio State shot 50.0 percent (13 of 26).

Edey got things going for the Boilermakers to start the second half, hitting a post-hook shoot, before ceding control to Smith — who scored Purdue's next five points and pushed the lead to 49-38 with 15:38 to play. The Boilermakers' lead ballooned to as many as 15 points, but Ohio State closed the gap to seven, aided by a pair of threes from Bruce Thornton and Sueing, as well as a prolonged scoring drought by the Boilermakers, to make it 57-50 with 7:44 remaining.

Four-straight points from Edey pushed the Boilermakers back up by double-digits, 61-50, with 6:26 to play. But Ohio State, again, cut the deficit down to six, 61-55, thanks to four-straight points from Thornton. Purdue then surged on a 12-2 run to extend the lead to 16, 73-57, with 2:19 remaining and put the game out of reach for good.

Gayle led the Buckeyes with 20 points while shooting 5 of 6 from deep, helping the Buckeyes register 42.3 percent shooting (22 of 52) and a 10 of 24 mark from three-point range. Sueing added 15 points, while Thornton scored 9 — all of which came in the second half.

Supporting Edey's efforts was Smith, who scored 14 points — connecting on all five of his field goal attempts — while adding five rebounds and five assists. Newman added 15 points while shooting 5 of 7.

Purdue advances to the Big Ten Tournament Championship, where it will play either Penn State or Indiana on Sunday. The game is set to tip off at 3:30 p.m. on CBS.