

Ohio State's Losing Streak Extended To Five In 69-63 Loss To Northwestern



Northwestern guards Boo Buie and Brooks Barnhizer combined to score 38 points while Ohio State was handed its fifth-straight loss, falling 69-63 on Thursday at Value City Arena.

Ohio State (11-13, 3-10 Big Ten) shot 50.0 percent (24 of 48) from the field and out-rebounded the Wildcats 35-24, but also registered 15 turnovers — which Northwestern turned into 16 points — while shooting an ice-cold 1 of 14 from beyond the arc. Northwestern (17-7, 8-5) held the Buckeyes without a bucket for 3:28 during the game's final four minutes to seal the victory.

Both offenses raced out to a fast start as Northwestern connected on six of its first nine attempts, while the Buckeyes registered a 7-of-12 start from the field to knot the game up at 15 entering the under-12 timeout. However both squads fell into a rut as Ohio State and the Wildcats combined to miss their next seven shots while enduring prolonged scoring droughts, and Northwestern held onto a 17-15 lead with 9:59 to play in the opening half.

While the Wildcats dealt with a stretch of seven-straight misses, the Buckeyes connected on five-consecutive field goal attempts of their own to take a 25-19 lead with 3:58 left in the first half. Northwestern countered by closing the half on a 9-2 run, boosted by a layup from first-year forward Nick Martinelli as time expired, to take a 28-27 lead into the locker room.

Ohio State was paced by veteran forwards Zed Key and Justice Sueing during the first half, tallying 7 and 6 points in the frame, respectively. The Buckeyes boasted 54.2 percent shooting (13 of 24) during the first half, but missed all nine of their three-point attempts, while freshman forward and leading scorer Brice Sensabaugh was held scoreless throughout the frame.

Northwestern opened a 33-28 lead off the back of a three-pointer from guard Chase Audige and a jumper by Buie, but Ohio State guard Sean McNeil hit the Buckeyes' first three-pointer of the night with 17:34 left and aided OSU on a 9-0 run to pull back in front 37-33 with 15:59 remaining in regulation.

Northwestern's duo of Buie and Barnhizer pushed the Wildcats back into the lead, combining to score their next nine points to pull ahead 42-41, but Sensabaugh registered his first bucket of the night with 12:32 remaining and reclaimed the lead for the Buckeyes entering the under-12 timeout with a 43-42 advantage.

Sueing extended Ohio State's lead with a pair of free throws, but the Wildcats countered with a 9-2 run, boosted by five points from forward Robbie Beran to pull back ahead 51-47 with 7:51 remaining. Buckeyes guard Bruce Thornton kept Ohio State afloat, however, sinking a pair of jumpers to make it 54-52 with 6:06 left.

Northwestern responded with a 7-0 run, led by four free throws from Buie and a three from Barnhizer, to extend its lead to 61-52 with 4:30 remaining. But, Sueing tried to will the Buckeyes back into the game by scoring seven-straight points to cut the deficit to 61-57 with 3:37 to play.

Audige put the game out of reach with a dagger three-pointer to push the Northwestern lead back up to six with 2:04 left, and the Buckeyes were sent to their 10th loss in the last 11 games. Ohio State hit on just one of its last seven attempts to close the game.

Sueing led the Buckeyes with 19 points on 7-of-11 shooting while Thornton added 12 points, 11 of which came in the second half. Sensabaugh scored a career-low 4 points while shooting 1 of 8 from the field in the loss. Buie and Barnhizer each produced 19 points while Audige added 12 for the Wildcats.

Ohio State remains at home for a 1 p.m. matinee against Michigan State on Sunday. The game will be televised on CBS.