

# Ohio State's Second-Half Comeback Falls Short In 69-62 Loss To No. 18 Michigan State



Ohio State (9-5, 1-2 Big Ten) had its second-half comeback fall just short Jan. 3 in front of a packed Value City Arena, falling 69-62 to No. 18 Michigan State (12-2, 3-0) in its first game of 2025.

It seemed as if the Buckeyes were in store for a signature home win when they turned a 14-point early second-half deficit into a one-point lead, but Jake Diebler's team struggled down the stretch due to some poor decision-making and sloppy play, allowing Michigan State to close the game an 8-4 run to pull out the hard-fought road win.

Ohio State seemed a bit sluggish to start in this primetime bout, misfiring on two of its first eight shots and allowing Michigan State to bruise in the paint en route to an early 9-5 deficit. But Diebler's team ignited the home crowd by scoring eight straight points to take a 13-9 lead with 12:19 left after a Bruce Thornton fast break layup.

Michigan State took back control of the game by dominating on the inside once again, scoring 16 of its next 22 points off of drives or paint touches to go up 31-23 with 5:12 left after a pair of free throws from sophomore forward Coen Carr.

The Buckeyes tightened it up on defense and went on a 6-0 run to trail just two, 31-29, with 2:28 left after a Devin Royal jumper, but they committed four turnovers in the final 1:57 to allow Michigan State to end the half on a 6-0 run to lead 37-29.

Both Ohio State and Michigan State committed nine turnovers each in the first half.

Ohio State continued to be pummeled in the paint to start the second half, with Michigan State 7-0 sophomore center Szymon Zapala scoring six straight points near the basket to give the Spartans a 43-29 lead with 18:19 left.

The Buckeyes continued to slog through the beginning portion of the second half and trail by double digits until Thornton connected on an ankle-breaking stepback jumper, which seemed to completely turn the tide of the game in the home team's favor and allow them to erupt on a 15-2 run to take a 50-49 lead with 8:47 after a Thornton jumper. He scored seven points in that sequence.

But Michigan State showed its grit out of its timeout, forcing a turnover on the Buckeyes' veteran and then scoring eight straight points to take back a 57-50 lead after a Xavier Booker dunk with 6:05 remaining.

Ohio State did not go away, cutting the Spartans' lead back down to two after five straight Micah Parrish points and then, after MSU went back up by six, cutting it back down to three, 61-58, following another Parrish three with 3:06 left. But Tom Izzo's team closed the game out strong by scoring five of their final seven points off free throws to hang onto the seven-point win.