

Poor Shooting, Rebounding Costs No. 13 Ohio State In 77-71 Loss To No. 2 UCLA



It was a long night for No. 13 Ohio State (9-2, 1-0 Big Ten) on Monday at Value City Arena as second-ranked UCLA (10-0) came away with a 77-71 win over the Buckeyes, snapping their nine-game winning streak.

The Bruins held a 40-30 advantage in rebounding that led to 14 second-chance points, a margin that proved pivotal in the six-point loss for the Buckeyes that shot just 38.5 percent from the field.

A focus for Ohio State heading into the contest was limiting the impact of Bruins sophomore center Lauren Betts, who stands at 6-7. The Buckeyes made that emphasis clear early, forced her into a travel on UCLA's first possession of the game.

Ohio State utilized the early momentum to build a 7-0 lead, boosted by five early points from junior guard Taylor Thierry, who scored the Buckeyes' first five points of the game and assisted fifth-year guard Jacy Sheldon on a basket following a steal. After another three-pointer, this time from sophomore forward Cotie McMahon to give the Buckeyes a 10-2 lead, the Bruins responded with an 8-0 run to tie the game.

The Buckeyes later took a 17-13 lead after a pair of free throws from Sheldon, but the Bruins scored the final baskets of the half to tie it up at 17 entering the second.

Things were sloppy to open the second frame, as each team committed two turnovers within the first two minutes of the quarter, but Ohio State was the first to find a groove after Sheldon scored back-to-back baskets, and a layup by fifth-year forward Rebeka Mikulášiková put the Buckeyes up 24-19 with 7:12 left in the half.

But the Bruins responded with a 12-0 run to take a 31-24 lead with 3:28 left in the quarter, holding the Buckeyes scoreless for over four minutes until Mikulášiková broke through with a three-pointer to make

it 31-27. Ohio State got a last gasp before the break, however, as fifth-year guard Rikki Harris and Thierry scored to face just a 37-31 deficit heading into the half.

Through the first two quarters, the Buckeyes had 20 combined points from Sheldon and Thierry but just 11 from the rest of the team, which as a whole shot 36.4 percent from the field and 33.3 percent (4 of 12) from deep. The Bruins, meanwhile, shot 48.3 percent from the field but were 0 for 10 from beyond the arc, and held a 22-13 advantage in rebounds.

Ohio State missed four of its first five shots to begin the third quarter, giving way to an 11-4 run by UCLA as the Bruins took a 48-35 lead with 6:28 left in the frame, leading to a quick timeout by the Buckeyes. Sheldon scored out of the break, but the Bruins again responded, this time with a 11-2 run, to take a 59-39 lead with 2:43 left in the quarter, though Sheldon hit another triple to make it 63-45 going into the fourth.

The Bruins scored the first two baskets to begin the quarter, but Ohio State showed life with three-pointers from Mikulášiková and Sheldon that cut the deficit to 67-51 with 7:42 left in the game. And after a jumper by Betts broke into the scoring run, the Buckeyes responded with an 8-0 run - all from Sheldon and Thierry - that made it 69-69 with 4:41 remaining.

UCLA shot back with a three-pointer and held Ohio State to only free throws over the next few minutes until a triple from McMahon with 1:15 remaining and Sheldon later cut the deficit to just 75-71 with four seconds remaining, but it was too little and too late as the Buckeyes suffered their second loss of the season.

Ohio State was led by Sheldon, who had 30 points on 12-of-23 shooting, while Thierry added 20 points. McMahon posted a team-high six rebounds, while Betts and guard Charisma Osborne led the Bruins with 17 points and 19 points, respectively.

Ohio State returns to the floor on Friday, set to host Belmont at 1 p.m. The Bruins' roster includes junior guard Kilyn McGuff, the daughter of Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff.