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Vol. 29, No. 22

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

March 20, 2010



SONNY BROCKWAY

CHAMPIONS – Ohio State men's basketball head coach Thad Matta (far right) and his Buckeyes won the 2010 Big Ten tournament championship March 14 with a 90-61 victory against Minnesota.

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Buckeyes Add Big Ten Tournament Title

By ADAM JARDY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Thad Matta kicked off Ohio State's run in the Big Dance by performing a little one of his own.

His top-seeded Buckeyes had just completed a three-game run through the Big Ten tournament and captured the league's automatic postseason bid. The Buckeyes were already assured of a high NCAA seed, but the victory removed any doubt about whether OSU was one of the best teams in college basketball this season.

Standing on a makeshift stage at center court inside Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, Matta was surrounded by his players as Buckeye fans who stuck around cheered. Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany began to speak, but it was then that the OSU head coach performed a little jig.

Right hand on his hip, left arm extended with his palm facing outward, he shuffled to his left for a step or two and then repeated the gesture in the opposite direction while smiling and looking out into the crowd.

Moments later, after handing the tournament

trophy over to his players and briefly addressing the crowd, Matta was seated with the rest of the Buckeyes when their NCAA Tournament destination was announced.

They would not have to wait long. After the four No. 1 seeds for the tournament were revealed, Ohio State was announced as the No. 2 seed in the Midwest Region. The Buckeyes' opening-round opponent is UC Santa Barbara, the Big West regular-season and tournament champion, with the game set for a 9:35 p.m. Eastern tip March 19 in Milwaukee.

"We're excited," junior center Dallas Lauderdale said. "We got the two seed and we've got Santa Barbara. We're getting excited. We're excited to go to Wisconsin."

The Gauchos boast their own version of OSU junior star Evan Turner in sophomore guard Orlando Johnson, who like Turner captured league MVP honors for both the regular season and conference tournament. He sat out last season after transferring from Loyola Marymount and averaged 17.9 points and 5.4 rebounds per game this year.

Continued On Page 10

UConn Looms For Champs

Just before BSB went to press, NCAA women's tournament bids were announced and Ohio State got some good news and bad news.

The good news? The Buckeyes' 30-4 season that included Big Ten regular-season and postseason tournament championships earned them the No. 2 seed in the Dayton Regional.

The bad news? The top seed in their region is overall No. 1 Connecticut, the defending national champion that is working on a 72-game win streak.

Before Ohio State can worry about the Huskies, it will take on St. Francis (Pa.) of the Northeast Conference in the tournament opener. The Buckeyes and the Red Flash, who finished the year at 17-14, will hook up March 21 in Pittsburgh. Tip-off time is 12:06 p.m. Eastern.

Should OSU get past its first-round opposition, it will take on the winner of the 7 vs. 10 game between Mississippi State and Middle Tennessee State. The winner of that contest advances to the Sweet 16, scheduled to begin March 27 or 28 at University of Dayton Arena.



Jantel Lavender

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OPINION

Don't Sleep On Buckeyes As Title Contenders

If you want my advice on filling out your NCAA Tournament bracket, you've come to the wrong place. I haven't finished in the money in my office pool since Moby Dick was a minnow.

That said, I have this sneaking suspicion that Ohio State may do well – perhaps even make a run to the Final Four in this year's tournament.

Although that is a prediction naturally expected from someone who follows the Buckeyes, it doesn't come from idle homerism. There simply are no super teams in college basketball this season, and that opens the possibility of a championship run for any number of about a dozen teams. So why not the Buckeyes?

Ohio State is certainly one of the hottest teams in the country as it heads into March Madness. Sweeping Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota on the way to the Big Ten tournament title gave the Buckeyes seven straight victories and 13 wins in their last 14 games.

Best of all, despite having one of the top national player of the year candidates, OSU is far from a one-man show.

There is little doubt Evan Turner is the star, and his averages of 26.7 points, 8.0 rebounds and 6.7 assists in the league tournament are testament to that. But he has an excellent supporting cast, players who not only know their roles but embrace them.

On any other team, David Lighty would likely be the star – and if Lighty were like most players in today's game, he would demand the spotlight. Instead, the 6-5 junior from Cleveland seems to enjoy concentrating on defense and simply being in the right place on the floor at the right time while his teammate Turner commands most of the attention.

Meanwhile, Lighty remains a sneaky offensive presence. When Minnesota still entertained fleeting hopes of a late second-half comeback in the Big Ten tournament title game, Lighty scored four quick baskets – three slashes to hoop and a three-pointer that delivered the dagger.

While Turner and Lighty are most assuredly Batman and Robin, there are other equally important players such as William Buford, who has become a much more complete player in his second season. You may have guessed he was the team's second-leading scorer behind Turner, but did you realize he was second in rebounding and assists as well?

Jon Diebler, now the Buckeyes' all-time leading three-point scorer, is another player who has continued to work hard on his defense to become a better all-around player. There is no doubt his shooting remains streaky, but when he gets hot the Buckeyes are nearly unstoppable. And then there is the center position manned by Dallas Lauderdale and Kyle Madsen. Together, they averaged a more-than-respectable 9.4 points and 6.9 rebounds per game.

It's a small rotation to be sure, and head coach Thad Matta's strategy for using only six players remains debatable. But one thing is for sure. Matta has himself a real basketball team, something of a rarity these days with one-and-done players more interested in racing to the NBA than building any kind of college legacy.

Is it one of the best teams in the nation? We might have a clearer focus on that had Turner not missed six games with two broken vertebrae in his back. Yet those six games may actually have benefited the Buckeyes. With Turner on the sidelines, other players had to step up their games.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK with Mark Rea

They could no longer stand around and wait for their star player to ride to their rescue.

That mentality was on full display in the Big Ten semifinal win over Illinois. The Buckeyes had trailed for much of the game and fell behind by as much as 11 in the second half before going on a blistering 20-0 run that featured a little bit of everything.

There was a nifty drive by Buford, a three-pointer from Turner and another from Diebler after Lighty scrambled for a loose ball and swept the ball out behind the arc.

Some teams have an overwhelming inside presence, some have deadly shooters and others wear you down with their athleticism. Ohio State's calling card would seem to be the simple formula for winning basketball games – guys who can make plays.

Big Ten Tourney Observations

- Buford has been one of the Buckeyes' unsung heroes all season, and he seems to be getting better and better. While much of the focus was on Turner and Lighty, the OSU sophomore averaged 16.7 points and 6.3 rebounds at the league tournament in addition to playing 129 of a possible 130 minutes. He does, however, sometimes continue to show a lack of maturity. Buford incurred Matta's wrath for an obscene gesture toward the end of the Penn State game in late February and drew a totally unnecessary technical foul – the first called on Ohio State all season – down the stretch against Minnesota.

- Despite that technical foul, Buford remained in the game. In addition to the fact it was almost an unwritten rule among coaches for players to have a seat on the bench after committing a technical, it was difficult to understand why the starters remained on the floor late in the Minnesota blowout win. Despite a lead that remained more than 20 points, Matta did not substitute until the clock had ticked below two minutes. The Buckeyes didn't look tired, but stealing a few minutes of rest for a possible NCAA run seemed like a good idea.

- As much as I like this team, it does have some flaws. First of all are turnovers. Ohio State averaged 13.0 per game in the Big Ten tournament, and many were unforced errors. For all of his gifts, Turner remains sometimes careless with the basketball. I don't think I have ever seen anyone try so many ill-advised bounce passes, both crosscourt and in the lane.

- It wasn't much of a secret why Madsen began to get more and more minutes as the tournament continued. After being saddled with foul problems in the opener against Michigan, Lauderdale seemed to take a step back and was decidedly more timid in the following two games. As a result, Madsen saw 57 minutes combined against Illinois and Minnesota while Lauderdale saw 32. Additionally, Lauderdale continues to have problems with controlling the basketball, especially in the transition game the Buckeyes love so much.

- I'm not as down on longtime Big Ten official Ed Hightower as some Ohio State fans, but I did think it was somewhat strange that Hightower worked all three OSU games at the tournament. Remember the old saying about how familiarity breeds contempt? It was Hightower who called the technical on Buford. Hightower is one of the top officials in college basketball in my humble opinion but he works too many games.

- I guess I'm getting old because I can easily remember the college careers of Michael Jordan at North Carolina and Ralph Sampson at Virginia. That's not too difficult since they won a combined four Naismith Awards (three for Sampson and one for Jordan). At the Big Ten tournament, each man played the role of proud father with a son in uniform – Illinois junior guard Jeff Jordan and Minnesota big man Ralph Sampson III.

- This is certainly not your father's Big Ten. Perennial powerhouse Michigan has fallen upon hard times in football, and the same is true for Indiana basketball. The Hoosiers have earned 35 trips to the NCAA Tournament and five national championships, the most of any conference school in both categories. But after IU limped home this year with a 10-21 record following a one-and-done loss to Northwestern in the tournament, you have to wonder the same thing about Tom Crean that they're wondering about Rich Rodriguez in Ann Arbor. Just how long is this rebuilding process going to take and is he really the man for the job?

Final Thoughts

- Turner's superlative season has triggered discussion among Ohio State basketball fans regarding whether the junior guard is one of the program's all-time best players. My reply is usually that Turner is enjoying one of the best seasons in OSU history and there is a difference. When it comes to determining the best player ever to play basketball in scarlet and gray, the discussion begins and ends with Jerry Lucas. Everyone else is playing for second place.

- Formulas for determining success among college football and basketball coaches are strangely dissimilar. In football, it really doesn't matter how many Bowl Championship Series games you accumulate. Bring home the title or don't bother to come home. Meanwhile, success in basketball is measured in Final Four appearances while a national title is merely the cherry on top of the sundae.

- If you're thinking about taking Syracuse to win it all, do so at your own peril. The Orange lost their opening-round game of the Big East tournament, and no team has ever lost in the first round of its conference tournament game and gone on to win the NCAA championship.

- In case you missed it, former Ohio State recruiting coordinator Robert McNea died March 6 at the age of 87. The Cleveland native and Miami (Ohio) graduate was recruiting coordinator on Earle Bruce's staff from 1979 until his retirement in 1987. Before that, McNea was an assistant coach under Ara Parseghian at Northwestern and enjoyed a successful high school coaching career in Ohio, piloting programs at Leontonia, Mansfield, East Liverpool, Massillon Jackson and North Lima South Range. He was named to the Ohio High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 1988.

OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Run Featured Plenty Of Drama

By ADAM JARDY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It was somehow fitting that Evan Turner needed a new pair of scissors to cut down the net at Consecro Fieldhouse.

The Ohio State junior guard had just led his team to the Big Ten tournament championship, in the process securing most outstanding player honors for himself. Getting there required only three tasks – hitting a buzzer-beating 37-foot jumper in the quarterfinal round against Michigan, scoring 11 of his game-high 31 points in two overtime sessions one day later against Illinois, and then putting up another 31 in a title-game blowout victory over Minnesota.

For the first time all weekend, then, the arena nets offered Turner some trouble. Standing on a ladder on the home court of the NBA's Indiana Pacers, Turner's attempt to cut a piece of the net bordered on fruitless.

After Turner hacked at the twine for a good 30 seconds, teammate P.J. Hill saved the day with a new, sharper pair of scissors.

It was time for a celebration.

"It was part two of our goals," OSU junior forward David Lighty said. "We didn't want to come here and say these are just basketball games and it doesn't matter because we're already in the (NCAA) tournament. It's some-

thing that we all wanted to accomplish, especially with us losing the (title) game last year – a game I think we could have won. I really wanted to come out and win this time."

Already assured of a high seed in the NCAA Tournament, the Buckeyes had nothing to play for but pride and a chance to bring home another trophy. League rivals such as Minnesota and Illinois, on the other hand, were fighting for their postseason lives.

The Buckeyes endured three tough tasks in as many days to bring home the tournament championship for the third time in program history. After the final victory against the Golden Gophers, confetti fell from the Consecro rafters as OSU hoisted the trophy on a stage erected at midcourt.

"I can't remember a team as compelling as this one," Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany told the crowd before presenting head coach Thad Matta with the trophy.

Not surprisingly, Turner was named the tournament's most outstanding player after averaging 26.7 points, 8.0 rebounds and 6.7 assists. He was joined on the all-tournament team by teammates Lighty and sophomore guard William Buford as well as Illinois guard Demetri McCamey and Minnesota guard Devoe Joseph.

OSU's juniors spoke of wanting to bring home the tournament title after sharing the regular-season championship with Purdue and



SONNY BROCKWAY

ANOTHER RING – Men's basketball head coach Thad Matta waves the freshly-cut net for Ohio State March 14 after the Buckeyes defeated Minnesota to win the Big Ten tournament at Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

Michigan State, and they also cited the fact that aside from an NIT title two seasons ago the class had not accomplished much.

That message clearly got through to Buford, who sat next to the trophy in the locker room and affectionately referred to it as his baby.

"It's absolutely important," he said of winning the tournament title. "We want our names on that banner saying that we won. Not too many of us have won one of these. We wanted to go out and play hard and get this. We wanted to win the championship."

The following is a recap of Ohio State's road to the tournament title.

Minnesota, March 14

In Matta's eyes, two of the best performances in tournament history allowed Ohio State to capture the Big Ten tournament trophy.

In what would become a 90-61 victory against sixth-seeded Minnesota, the Buckeyes blew the lid off what had been a close game to that point with a 23-5 run that put them ahead by 20 points with 7:12 remaining.

Turner had eight of his game-high 31 points during that stretch including the first five, but it was then that Lighty took over. After grabbing a defensive rebound, he pushed the ball up the court and slashed to the basket. With a diving scoop, the ball banked off the glass and went in as he slid off the court and into the Ohio State cheerleaders.

The Gophers (21-13) answered with a missed three-point attempt only to see Lighty again grab the rebound, go the length of the court and convert another driving layup.

That made it a 9-0 run and put the Buckeyes ahead by a 51-40 margin with 10:36 remaining, but Lighty was not done yet. Minnesota broke the skid with a basket by sophomore Colton Iverson at the other end that OSU senior center Kyle Madsen was ruled to have interfered with as it went down, but Lighty negated that with a third drive on as many OSU possessions.

He would add a three-pointer two possessions later and finished with nine points during the spurt. It was that stretch Matta singled out unprompted following the game.

Asked about Turner's tournament performance, the coach replied, "I think that probably has to go down as one of the greatest Big Ten tournament performances – from

the halfcourt shot to what he did in overtime yesterday and what he did today. I will say that David Lighty had a two-minute stretch today that blew Evan out of the water. I've never seen anything like what he did there for a couple of minutes."

The Gophers never had the ball with a chance to tie the game or take the lead in the final half. As the game went on, the only question was how high the OSU lead would stretch.

"We were playing well on defense, we got a lot of good looks and we were knocking down our shots," Buford said. "It was just over with from there."

The Buckeyes opened a seven-point lead in the final moments of the first half when Jon Diebler stole the ball and threw down a two-



SONNY BROCKWAY

ANOTHER ACCOLADE – Junior standout Evan Turner was named the Big Ten tournament's most outstanding player after averaging 26.7 points, 8.0 rebounds and 6.7 assists in Ohio State's three victories.

Ohio State 90, Minnesota 61											
March 14, 2010 Consecro Fieldhouse, Indianapolis											
		Total FG		FT		Rebs.		A		PF Pts.	
Minnesota (21-13)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.				
Joseph	34	4-10	2-2	0-0	1	0	14				
Westbrook	32	6-13	3-5	0-2	3	3	17				
Hoffarber	31	0-3	0-0	1-2	3	0	0				
Johnson	17	3-5	1-2	1-3	2	5	7				
Sampson III	28	2-6	2-2	2-0	1	2	6				
Carler	17	1-6	2-2	2-3	0	1	4				
Allen	1	0-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	0				
Cobbs	6	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	2				
Bostick	12	2-2	0-0	1-1	1	3	5				
Williams	3	0-0	0-2	0-0	0	0	0				
Iverson	19	3-5	0-1	0-2	2	2	6				
Totals	200	22-52	10-16	8-15	13	17	61				
Percentages: FG: 42.3%, FT: 62.5%, 3-point goals: 7-16 (Joseph 4-7, Westbrook 2-6, Hoffarber 0-2, Bostick 1-1), Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 5 (Johnson 2, Joseph, Westbrook, Iverson). Turnovers: 14 (Joseph 4, Sampson III 3, Westbrook 2, Cobbs 2, Hoffarber, Bostick, Iverson). Steals: 8 (Johnson 2, Sampson III 2, Joseph, Westbrook, Hoffarber, Bostick).											
Ohio State (27-7)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.				
Turner	39	12-18	4-5	2-9	6	3	31				
Lighty	39	8-14	2-4	3-4	5	4	20				
Diebler	39	6-12	2-2	0-2	1	1	19				
Buford	39	5-8	1-2	1-2	4	4	13				
Lauderdale	14	1-2	0-0	2-0	0	2	2				
Simmons	1	0-1	1-2	0-0	0	0	1				
Hill	1	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	2				
Peters	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0				
Madsen	25	0-2	0-0	1-4	0	3	0				
Kecman	1	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	2				
Sarikopoulos	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0				
Totals	200	34-59	10-15	12-25	16	18	90				
Percentages: FG: 57.6%, FT: 66.7%, 3-point goals: 12-22 (Turner 3-5, Lighty 2-3, Diebler 5-11, Buford 2-2, Simmons 0-1), Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 3 (Turner 2, Buford). Turnovers: 10 (Turner 4, Buford 3, Madsen 2, Lighty). Steals: 8 (Buford 3, Madsen 2, Lighty, Diebler, Lauderdale). Halftime: Ohio State 33, Minnesota 30. Officials: Hightower, Burr, Sanzere. A: 14,598.											

OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

handed dunk at the other end to make it 28-21 with 2:03 left.

But just as the crowd of 14,598 was roaring like it was an OSU home game, Minnesota answered with a jumper from forward Paul Carter to quiet the crowd, and a turnover by Turner at the other end was answered by a basket from Ralph Sampson III after a 4-on-1 break to make it 28-25.

Diebler buried a trey to push it back to a six-point lead for the Buckeyes, and the teams traded baskets to make it 33-27 with 13 seconds left. The Gophers pushed the ball up the court and found Joseph at the top of the circle with about two seconds left in the half.

He gave a head fake and after Turner flew by, the 6-3 sophomore buried the three-pointer at the buzzer to set the halftime score at 33-30.

It was not a pretty half by any stretch. The teams combined for 17 turnovers and 13 fouls.

Playing their fourth game in as many days, one of which went into overtime, the Gophers substituted liberally and had nine players see first-half action. The Buckeyes, playing their third game in as many days – one of which went to double overtime – used only six players in the first half as four starters went the distance heading into the break.

Minnesota managed to stay close for the first part of the second half, facing only a two-point deficit at 42-40 at the 13:41 mark. But that was when the Buckeyes went on their

9-0 run and outscored the Gophers by a 39-21 margin afterward.

At one point in the second half, Ohio State hit 12 straight shots from the floor en route to a 65.6 percent performance (21 for 32) after halftime. The Buckeyes shot 57.6 percent (34 for 59) for the game while the Gophers made 22 of their 52 shots, good for 42.3 percent.

Turner finished with game-high totals of 31 points and 11 rebounds. Lighty had 20, while Diebler had 19 and Buford added 13.

Senior guard Lawrence Westbrook led Minnesota with 17 points and Joseph added 14.

March 13, Illinois

Having tried to stop Turner by all conventional methods during two games earlier this season, Illinois attempted to throw the OSU guard off his game by getting inside his head.

All it accomplished was to make Turner angry, and his game-high 31 points helped the Buckeyes pull off an 88-81 double-overtime victory in the first multi-overtime game in Big Ten tournament history.

Reclined in a chair in the locker room after the game, a frustrated-looking Turner said the win had taken more of a toll than the previous two contests with the Fighting Illini this season.

"It was (an emotional game) due to the simple fact that when they started hitting shots they started talking a little more smack," Turner said. "They were front-runners and I

didn't like that too much. This was the day they chose that they wanted to win as opposed to the rest of the season? I didn't like that at all. We weren't having that."

That the game made it to the first overtime – much less the second – was partially due to the fact that the fifth-seeded Illini (19-14) were unable to get shots off despite having possession in the final seconds of both regulation and the first overtime.

After entering the second overtime with the game tied at 75, the Buckeyes got the first basket on a three-pointer from Diebler. That made him the school's all-time leader in treys and allowed OSU (26-7) to draw first blood.

Turner scored two possessions later to push it to a five-point lead, and Illinois never again had possession of the ball with a chance to tie the game.

Getting to that point took plenty of drama, however. After trailing by a game-high 11 points at 50-39 with 12:54 left in regulation, the Buckeyes exploded over the next five minutes and put together a 20-0 run capped by a five-point possession – two free throws from Diebler on a flagrant foul committed by Illinois guard and Big Ten Freshman of the Year D.J. Richardson and a trey from Buford that made it 59-50 with 8:00 showing on the clock.

OSU appeared firmly in control, but the Illini clawed back and eventually took the lead twice in the final minute and a half. McCamey gave his team its final lead in regulation when he hit two free throws with 31.6 seconds remaining, but Turner drove from the right corner and laid it in from along the baseline with 11 seconds left to tie things at 66.

Turner would reprise that role in the first overtime as OSU battled back from a four-point deficit with 2:23 remaining. With his team trailing by a 73-69 margin, Turner scored six of the first overtime's final eight points – including four from the free-throw

Ohio State 88, Illinois 81 (2OT)

March 13, 2010 Conseco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis									
Illinois (19-14)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.	Rebs.	
Richardson	45	6-18	0-0	1-2	4	2	15	4	2
Davis	46	6-15	1-1	6-12	1	2	13	1	2
Cole	33	1-3	0-0	3-1	1	2	2	1	2
McCamey	46	7-19	5-5	0-4	5	3	22	5	3
Tisdale	27	4-7	2-2	1-3	1	5	10	1	5
Paul	19	1-5	0-0	0-4	4	5	3	4	3
Jordan	6	1-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	3	0	3
Griffey	28	5-7	1-2	2-3	1	2	13	2	13
Totals	250	31-75	9-10	14-31	18	21	81		

Percentages: FG: 41.3%. FT: 90.0%. **3-point goals:** 10-30 (Richardson 3-10, McCamey 3-11, Paul 1-4, Jordan 1-1, Griffey 2-4). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 4 (Cole 2, Richardson, Tisdale). **Turnovers:** 17 (McCamey 6, Davis 5, Tisdale 2, Paul 2, Jordan, TEAM). **Steals:** 13 (McCamey 4, Davis 3, Cole 3, Richardson, Paul, Jordan).

Ohio State (26-7)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.	Rebs.	
Turner	49	10-18	10-12	3-7	6	5	31	11	3
Lighty	50	5-12	2-3	0-3	4	2	12	4	12
Diebler	40	4-10	2-2	1-4	1	2	14	1	2
Buford	50	9-20	1-5	4-6	1	2	22	2	22
Lauderdale	18	1-1	0-2	1-1	0	0	2	0	2
Simmons	10	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	1	3	1	3
Hill	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Madsen	32	2-4	0-0	2-5	0	1	4	1	4
Totals	250	32-67	15-24	11-30	13	13	88		

Percentages: FG: 47.8%. FT: 62.5%. **3-point goals:** 9-25 (Turner 1-3, Lighty 0-4, Diebler 4-9, Buford 3-7, Simmons 1-2). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Lauderdale). **Turnovers:** 18 (Turner 10, Lighty 3, Buford 3, Madsen 2). **Steals:** 11 (Diebler 4, Lighty 3, Turner 2, Lauderdale, Madsen). **Halftime:** Illinois 37, Ohio State 31. **End of regulation:** Tied 66-66. **End of overtime:** Tied 75-75. **Officials:** Hightower, Sanzere, Janssen. **A:** 18,424.

line – and his layup with 22.0 seconds left knotted the score at 75.

Turner's late-game performance came despite having picked up his fourth personal foul at the 5:13 mark. He stayed in the game and eventually fouled out at the 1:00 mark of the second overtime with OSU ahead, 84-80.

Continued On Page 8



SONNY BROCKWAY

UP, UP AND AWAY – Despite fouling out, junior Evan Turner (21) led Ohio State March 13 with 31 points in an 88-81 victory against Illinois in the semifinals of the Big Ten tournament.

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OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Turner's Buzzer Beater Breaks U-M Hearts

Continued From Page 7

Illinois got a free throw from Tyler Griffey following Turner's fifth foul to make it a one-possession game, but then Lighty took over. His slashing drive to the basket with 34.6 seconds left put the Buckeyes back up by five and he added an exclamation point with another layup less than 12 seconds later.

"Evan fouled out and it went back to when he got hurt (earlier this season)," Lighty said. "I'm in the position to come off the ball-screen now (and) that's exactly what we did. I came off the screen and made a good play."

To go along with his game-high 31 points, Turner contributed 10 rebounds, six assists and two steals. Buford added 22 points and 10 rebounds, while Diebler and Lighty also scored in double figures with 14 and 12, respectively.

McCamey led his team with 22 points. Richardson added 15 while junior forward Mike Davis contributed 13 as well as a tournament-high 18 rebounds. Griffey came off the bench to score 13 points while 7-1 center Mike Tisdale added 10.

March 12, Michigan

Turner stood near midcourt with his right hand in the air, holding his follow-through after the 37-foot shot that left his hand with 0.2 seconds remaining gave top-seeded Ohio State a 69-68 victory against Michigan.

He was not showing off or rubbing it into his Michigan counterparts. As he put it, "I just held up my hand, so I wouldn't scream and run around like a little girl all excited."

It was that kind of shot. Playing their first game in 10 days, the Buckeyes (25-7) showed rust against eighth-seeded Michigan (15-17) before being saved by Turner's last-second heroics.

The Wolverines had double-teamed Turner for virtually the entire game but chose to lay back in a zone defense before the game-



SONNY BROCKWAY

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO... – Michigan's Manny Harris (inset) put the Wolverines ahead by two, 68-66, March 12 in the Big Ten tournament quarterfinals with a jumper over Dallas Lauderdale (52) with 2.2 seconds remaining, but Evan Turner (21) and the rest of the Buckeyes were celebrating after the final horn when Turner made a long three-pointer from just inside the midcourt line as time expired.

winning shot. With 2.2 seconds left, Lighty inbounded the ball to Turner, who accepted the ball on the run and sprinted upcourt. Two dribbles later, he launched the shot over U-M defender Stu Douglass.

Matta said he had a handful of options for the final play but admitted Turner was involved in all of them.

"We were going to put it in Evan's hands," the OSU coach said. "We told him, 'Get it up there as quick as you can.' He knew how far he could get. They gave him a running start, which was good for us, and he made a great, great play."

Matta refused to second-guess his counterpart's decision not to guard the inbound pass or man up on Turner in the backcourt.

"John Beilein has won more games than I ever will, so I'm not about to question him," Matta said.

Later, the Michigan head coach defended his own decision.

"I don't think Evan Turner or anyone else is going to hit a halfcourt shot," Beilein said. "We just wanted to make sure we had one or two guys in front of him. If you put two guys on Evan (in the backcourt), then they'll just try to throw it over the top and he gets even closer. We wanted to try to limit him to a halfcourt shot, which you don't expect anyone to make."

That such a shot was even necessary was largely a credit to the play of U-M guard Manny Harris. After having been held to four points in the first half, the junior scored 22 second-half points including what figured to be the game winner with 2.2 seconds left.

After Lighty tied the game with 13.2 seconds remaining, Michigan called timeout with 9.7 ticks left and drew up a play. Inbounding the ball from the left side of the court, the Wolverines passed the ball to Harris, who was being guarded by Diebler. OSU was under directive to switch on all screens, so when Harris went off a ball screen and drove to his right, it was OSU junior center Dallas Lauderdale who was in his path.

Cutting to the right elbow, Harris pulled up and lofted a shot over Lauderdale's outstretched arms that swished through the net.

"That just shows how good of a player Manny is," Diebler said.

Michigan had its way early in the contest, breaking open a close game with an 11-2 run to grab a 19-10 lead at the 9:31 mark. Diebler ended that streak for the Buckeyes with his first basket of the game, triggering an Ohio State offensive explosion that lasted for the remainder of the opening half.

The Buckeyes scored 25 of the first half's final 31 points, including 13 in a row at one stage, and cruised into intermission with a 35-25 advantage.

They managed to build that lead to 12 points inside the first two minutes of the second half, thanks to back-to-back buckets from Madsen. But the Wolverines answered when Douglass bagged a trio of three-pointers during a 9-2 run that cut Ohio State's lead to 42-38 at the 13:46 mark.

OSU responded by going on a 9-0 run over the next 3½ minutes to seemingly seize control again at 51-38 with 10:23 to go. From there, Harris helped fuel the ill-fated comeback.

"It would have been tough (had we lost)," Madsen said. "I think it kills your momentum. I was sad there for a second and then never felt happier in my life before. That's an awesome way to end a game."

Following the win, the Buckeyes said they seldom practice shots like the one Turner hit other than when they are fooling around after practice. When they do, the junior is among the worst at hitting them.

"(Senior guard Jeremie Simmons) and (Diebler) hit them like free throws all the

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Ohio State 69, Michigan 68									
March 12, 2010 Conseco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis									
Michigan (15-17)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.		
Novak	37	3-6	2-2	2-1	1	4	8		
Douglass	40	5-9	1-2	0-2	2	1	16		
Harris	39	8-15	7-8	2-4	4	0	26		
Morris	18	0-1	0-0	1-1	1	2	0		
Sims	36	7-13	2-2	2-4	3	1	16		
Wright	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0		
Lucas-Perry	19	0-3	0-0	0-0	3	2	4		
Gibson	10	1-2	0-0	1-0	0	1	2		
Totals	200	24-49	12-14	9-19	13	14	68		
Percentages: FG: 49.0%. FT: 85.7%. 3-point goals: 8-21 (Novak 0-2, Douglass 5-8, Harris 3-5, Morris 0-1, Sims 0-1, Lucas-Perry 0-3, Gibson 0-1). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 1 (Harris). Turnovers: 12 (Sims 4, Harris 3, Novak, Morris, Wright, Gibson, TEAM). Steals: 5 (Morris 2, Novak, Harris, Lucas-Perry).									
Ohio State (25-7)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.		
Turner	40	6-15	3-4	1-2	8	2	18		
Lighty	40	7-11	0-0	2-3	3	1	15		
Diebler	40	4-8	1-1	0-0	0	2	11		
Buford	40	6-13	2-3	2-4	4	3	15		
Lauderdale	16	1-2	0-0	0-5	0	4	2		
Simmons	0+	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Madsen	24	3-3	2-2	1-1	0	3	8		
Totals	200	27-52	8-10	7-16	15	15	69		
Percentages: FG: 51.9%. FT: 80.0%. 3-point goals: 7-12 (Turner 3-3, Lighty 4-1, Diebler 2-5, Buford 1-3). Team rebounds: 2. Blocked shots: 2 (Turner 2). Turnovers: 11 (Turner 4, Buford 4, Lighty, Lauderdale, Madsen). Steals: 6 (Buford 3, Turner, Diebler, Madsen). Halftime: Ohio State 35, Michigan 25. Officials: Hightower, Hughes, Perone. A: 16,207.									

OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

time," Lighty said. "ET gets in there with us every now and then and tries to make them, but he's probably the worst one out of everybody."

Told that his teammates had singled him out as the worst long shooter on the team, Turner said, "That's probably because my aim is a little bad and it's not really game-time situations (after practice). This was a game-time situation."

Awards Begin To Pour In

Turner started what figures to be a prolific awards circuit March 8 when he was named the Big Ten Player of the Year one season after losing out to Michigan State guard Kalin Lucas.

After seeing the Spartan bring home the conference's top individual award a season ago, Turner made a vow that he would not get passed over again.

"I just figured we were going to win the conference and I wasn't going to give anybody any reason to put somebody else over me," he said. "I worked hard and got my team together and we're a good unit. We got it accomplished."

Turner became the fifth Buckeye to bring home the player of the year honor, awarded since 1985. He joins Dennis Hopson (1987), Jim Jackson (1991-92), Scoonie Penn (1999) and Terence Dials (2006).

In addition to finishing the year as the regular-season league leader in points (19.9) and rebounds (9.4) as well as finishing second in assists (5.8) and steals (1.8), Turner brought home a Big Ten-record seven player of the week honors. With each award, the junior said the significance would not hit him until he was a few years removed from the event.

That has not changed with this most recent – and biggest – award.

"It probably won't hit me for a couple of years," he said. "I can't really just sit here and rest on my laurels right now. My teammates and I are hungry for more."

Although he led the league in scoring a season ago at 17.3 points per game, Turner said he felt his biggest improvement as a junior was in his mental approach to the game. A player who would often wear his emotions on his sleeve during games, Turner has learned to curb that this season.

"I feel like I'm mentally tougher," he said. "I feel like I look at the glass half-full instead of half-empty. When there's a tough time, I feel like I have the ability to overcome anything."

Turner was selected player of the year by both the coaches and the media, but only the media named him unanimously. Asked which coach he thought might not have voted for him, Turner said, "I honestly don't know, but it doesn't matter to tell you the truth."

The big honor still to be decided is the Naismith College Player of the Year award, which will be handed out during the Final Four. However, Turner has already brought home one such award when the Sporting News named the Ohio State guard its national player of the year and a first-team All-American. He is the first Buckeye to land the top individual award since Jerry Lucas, who won back-to-back awards in 1961 and '62.

Turner is also one of six finalists for the Bob Cousy Award, which is annually given to the nation's top point guard.

Should Turner bring home the Naismith Award, the Buckeyes would boast both the top player in college and in high school. Columbus Northland center Jared Sullinger, a member of OSU's class of 2010, brought home the prep version of the award while his father, Satch, was named national coach of the year.

Turner is not the only current Buckeye to have some hardware to show for his 2009-10

season. Buford earned third-team all-conference honors as voted by the coaches and the media, while Lighty earned third-team honors in the media poll and honorable mention from the coaches. Diebler was a consensus honorable mention and Lauderdale was named to the league's all-defensive team.

On the sidelines, Matta shared coach of the year honors with Matt Painter of Purdue as selected by conference media members.

"I've always said you guys (the media) know a hell of a lot more than what we know," Matta said March 10 with a laugh. "I really believe this – it's the players. I don't score, I don't rebound, I don't get stops. Those are the guys that earn coaches those awards. I'm as thankful to them as I can possibly be."

Lighty was also named captain of the "All-Glue Team," a squad put together annually by SI.com writer Seth Davis. Criteria to make the team are difficult to define, but Davis describes members of the group as guys who do all the little things necessary to win.

"If an NBA team wants to win, it would be smart to draft the 2010 All-Glue Guy captain David Lighty," Davis wrote March 9. "He might not light up your stat sheet, but when times get tough, you can be sure he'll help your team stick together."

Ironically, Lighty did not make the Big Ten's all-defensive team.

"Evan and I were laughing about that the other day," Matta said. "If there were five seconds to go and I had to pick one guy in this league to get a stop, I'd put David on it, that's for sure. I just love the kid and think he's a heck of a defender."

Diebler Sets Trey Record

When Diebler connected on a three-pointer to open the second overtime against Illinois, it did more than give the Buckeyes momentum for the semifinal victory. It made the junior guard the school's all-time leader in three-point baskets.

Diebler, a product of Upper Sandusky, Ohio, passed former teammate Jamar Butler (2005-08) on the record list by canning his 243rd career trey. Standing with a crowd of cameras surrounding him in the locker room after the game, Diebler had no idea he had broken the record.

"That's pretty cool, I guess," he said. "Jamar was a great shooter and to pass him feels good. I give a lot of credit to him because he helped me out a lot my freshman year. I didn't shoot too well my freshman year and he was really there for me. He told me not to worry about it. I guess it's ironic to pass a guy who helped me a lot when I was struggling."

As a freshman, Diebler lost his starting spot and shot only 28.9 percent (48 for 166) from behind the arc. That same season, Butler hit 104 of 217 (47.9 percent) of his three-point attempts.

"He's a real shooter, especially thinking about his freshman year knowing that he overcame a lot," Turner said of Diebler. "His freshman year, he couldn't really hit his shot and now to break a record like that during his junior year – if he could have hit shots like this during his freshman year he could have had it already."

As a sophomore, Diebler started all 33 games and improved his mark to 41.6 percent (96 for 231). He enters the NCAA Tournament having hit 104 of 257 (40.5 percent) in 34 games this season.

"I'm happy for Jon," Matta said. "Jon flies under the radar screen in his career here but I know how important he is. I know how good he is and I love the kid to death."

Diebler began the process of putting distance between Butler and himself in the tournament final, hitting five more treys against the Golden Gophers to put his career mark at 248 and counting.

Madsen Shines In Tourney

That the Buckeyes have utilized a strict six-man rotation for the majority of the season is not exactly news, but the play of Madsen while in Indianapolis was.

The senior entered the tournament averaging just 2.4 points and 1.6 rebounds in 12.5 minutes of action but improved upon all those totals during the three-game swing. Madsen's averages for the tournament were 4.0 points and 4.7 rebounds in 27.0 minutes of action while he spelled a largely ineffective Lauderdale.

Included in those totals were new career highs in rebounds (seven) and minutes played (32), both against the Fighting Illini.

"Kyle was tremendous and I couldn't be happier," Matta said. "He really picked up what we were doing defensively. I thought he went to the boards harder than he'd ever gone. I was very excited to see him play that way."

Seated in the locker room after the title game, Madsen said fatigue had not yet set in.

"I felt really good," he said. "I think once you get into the flow of the game and into the moment you just forget about it. I was sitting here thinking, 'I don't even feel that bad right now.'"

Lauderdale had only two points and five rebounds in 16 foul-plagued minutes during quarterfinal action against Michigan. Then he had only two points and two rebounds in 18 minutes of action the following day vs. Illinois. He was sent to the bench after catching an inadvertent elbow from an Illinois player at the 17:18 mark of the first half but said the injury did not affect him the rest of the way.

"Kyle played great," Lauderdale said. "He played an excellent game. They went on a 20-0 run with him in the game and when that happens, he has to stay in the game because the team is doing well."

For his part, Lauderdale averaged 3.0 points, 2.0 rebounds and 16.0 minutes in the three-game tournament, all well below his season averages of 7.2, 5.2 and 25.5, respectively.

He also missed three free throws in one trip to the line against Illinois after a lane violation gave him another chance. For the season, Lauderdale is 35 for 82 (42.7 percent) from the charity stripe. Still, he continued to work at it.

"I'm not getting frustrated at all," he said. "I just know I've got to knock them down. It's all mental. If I can make 20 straight in practice, I can make 20 straight in a game. It's all mental to me. It's not my technique. It's not anything. It's just mental. I've just got to get focused."

As for Madsen, the product of Dublin (Ohio) Coffman initially committed to Vanderbilt out of high school but wound up transferring back home to play for OSU after his redshirt freshman season with the Commodores.

Matta said he made a mistake not recruiting him harder out of high school, but Madsen said that would have mattered little.

"I honestly wasn't that interested (in Ohio State) out of high school because I wanted to go a little farther from home," he said. "They ended up going a different direction, too."

Trust is key to earning playing time on Matta's team, and the coach has given Madsen as much playing time as he has this season because he believes the center will do exactly what he is asked to do while on the court.

He has since impressed his teammates with his work ethic.

"I didn't really know too much about him when I first met him, but once you first saw him play you could tell he played really hard," Turner said. "The way you play in practice is

the way you play in games. I'm not surprised at all."

Madsen's 102 points this season are more than double what he scored as a sophomore (18) and junior (31) combined.

"Kyle is always positive," Lighty said. "He always comes in and works hard and does the little things. This being his senior year, you couldn't be more excited for the guy. He's hit some big shots for us."

Holding down a substantial role on a team poised to make a run in the NCAA Tournament seemed like a tall order when Madsen first arrived on campus. Sporting a shaggy haircut, Madsen weighed in around 250 pounds. He was listed at 240 the next two seasons before getting back up to 250 this season by putting on some muscle. His appearance during his early days on campus left an impression on Turner, first as a recruit and then again as a player.

"When I first met Kyle, he was like 255 (pounds) and they were saying he's on the team," Turner said. "I was thinking, 'This kid is huge. He can't even move.'"

"I came back and I was starting summer school my freshman year and he came up and started talking to me and I had no clue who he was. They were like, 'That's Kyle.' I was like, 'You used to be big and fat, right?'"

No Tats, Thanks

Shortly before the Buckeyes headed to Indianapolis, Turner was asked why he was one of the few players on the roster without a tattoo.

"I think I mentioned one and my mom was like, 'Please, please, please don't get a tattoo,'" he said. "I'm so impatient and it takes a while to get a tattoo. I'm not all for sitting down with a needle. It's just not my thing to tell you the truth."

Situated next to Lighty, who has a number of visible tattoos, Turner gestured at his teammate and said, "I'm not as big as Dave. I don't have the swagger he has."

Tournament Quotables

- McCamey on if he had seen high school teammate Turner hit game-winning shots during their prep careers like the one that beat Michigan: "No. Usually I took all the big shots."

- Diebler on the shot: "I guess that's a good sign we're supposed to be here."

- Matta on why he was so mad while yelling at his team during an early second-half timeout against Illinois: "The first thing was I wasn't happy with the way we were playing. Then when I started going, I lost my gum so I lost it for the rest of the game. At that point, I got madder because my gum came out of my mouth."

- Matta on Turner after he tied a season high with 10 turnovers against Illinois: "I thought he was a little bit loose. The one thing I told him after the game was, 'The backdoor pass was not there today. I don't know if you picked up on that after the fifth one they stole.'"

- Buford on his improved defense: "I'm still not getting any respect as a defender, but hopefully next year when I come back I'll get defensive player of the year. I'll keep working hard and guard the best players on the floor."

- Buford on cutting down the nets: "It felt pretty good. It felt better that we won the championship. Cutting down the nets, that's pretty normal. I've done that a couple of times. It wasn't anything too major."

- Matta on how the process works when he sits down with players to talk to them about whether they will leave early to go to the NBA: "It doesn't work well (for us)."

BSB managing editor Mark Rea contributed to this report.

COVER STORY: TWICE AS NICE

Buckeyes Draw Gauchos In NCAA Tourney

Continued From Page 1

It will be the third-ever contest between the two programs. Ohio State defeated UCSB on its home court, 82-75, in December 1991 and then took a 79-56 decision two years later in St. John Arena.

Matta said the Buckeyes would not take long getting familiar with this year's version of the Gauchos. The OSU coaches had already acquired some game film they planned to watch on the bus ride home from Indianapolis.

Among the players, the opening-round opponent mattered little. The fact that the Buckeyes were beginning a new season was the topic on their minds in the aftermath of the selection show.

It was a far cry from two seasons ago when Ohio State did not hear its name called at all.

"This feels a lot better," Lauderdale said. "The NCAA is much better than the NIT."

Throughout his career, Turner has referenced the feeling from the day the Buckeyes missed out on an invitation to March Madness as being among the worst he has ever felt in his playing career. When the team wasn't busy carving a path to the NIT championship in New York City, Turner said he remembers sitting on his couch watching Davidson star Stephen Curry lead his 10th-seeded Wildcats into the Elite Eight before dropping a two-point decision to top-seeded Kansas.

Two years later, the Buckeyes have come a long way to become a No. 2 seed in the Big Dance – a fact in which junior guard Jon Diebler said he takes little solace.

"It honestly doesn't make me feel any better because we still haven't won a tournament game yet," he said. "We've got to win a game right now."

Remember Last Year?

On the line is a chance for the program's first NCAA Tournament victory since a 67-60 win over Georgetown in the 2007 Final Four. For all the success a player like Turner has enjoyed during his OSU tenure, the conference's player of the year said that is a statistic that needs changing.

"It seems kind of weird," Turner said, "so we'll have to take care of that."

The only scholarship member of this year's team to have an NCAA Tournament victory under his belt is junior forward David Lighty, a freshman on that 2007 team who took a medical redshirt last season. The Cleveland native's emotions have run the gamut on Selection Sunday during his OSU career.

As a freshman, he saw the Buckeyes capture a No. 1 seed after winning both the Big Ten regular-season and tournament championships. That was followed by a disappointing sophomore season that saw Ohio State miss out on the NCAA Tournament and wind

2009-10 Ohio State Men's Basketball Statistics

27-7 Overall (14-4 Big Ten) Statistics through games of March 14

Player	G-GS	Min-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds			PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									Off.	Def.	Total-Avg.						
Evan Turner	28-28	992-35.4	217-402	.540	17-46	.370	117-158	.741	54-204	258-9.2	78-3	166	117	27	49	568-20.3	
William Buford	34-34	1152-33.9	182-416	.438	44-116	.379	84-111	.757	50-140	190-5.6	75-1	108	59	9	38	492-14.5	
Jon Diebler	34-34	1255-36.9	133-304	.438	104-247	.421	65-75	.867	9-89	98-2.9	58-0	51	35	3	39	435-12.8	
David Lighty	34-34	1242-36.5	152-306	.497	40-104	.385	88-141	.624	48-110	158-4.6	81-1	96	80	18	54	432-12.7	
Walter Offutt	2-0	22-11.0	4-9	.444	2-5	.400	4-6	.667	1-2	3-1.5	3-0	2	0	1	1	14-7.0	
Dallas Lauderdale	33-31	813-24.6	94-123	.764	0-0	.000	35-82	.427	54-111	165-5.0	71-0	8	29	66	21	223-6.8	
Jeremie Simmons	31-0	385-12.4	48-109	.440	27-72	.375	24-34	.706	3-20	23-0.7	31-0	25	13	1	15	147-4.7	
P.J. Hill	26-6	325-12.5	25-56	.446	13-34	.382	20-24	.833	5-27	32-1.2	33-1	33	16	0	10	83-3.2	
Kyle Madsen	34-3	468-13.8	39-69	.565	0-0	.000	9-12	.750	26-37	63-1.9	59-1	6	21	6	11	87-2.6	
Nikola Kecman	15-0	70-4.7	12-25	.480	2-13	.154	3-5	.600	3-13	16-1.1	14-1	2	2	2	1	29-1.9	
Zisis Sarikopoulos	14-0	84-6.0	6-11	.545	0-0	.000	1-5	.200	9-11	20-1.4	14-0	2	5	6	2	13-0.9	
Mark Titus	8-0	18-2.3	0-3	.000	0-3	.000	1-2	.500	0-1	1-0.1	1-0	1	0	0	0	1-0.1	
Eddie Days	4-0	7-1.8	0-2	.000	0-2	.000	0-0	.000	0-1	1-0.3	0-0	0	0	0	1	0-0.0	
Danny Peters	11-0	18-1.6	0-2	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-1	1-0.1	2-0	0	2	0	1	0-0.0	
TEAM									47-620	109-3.3					6		
Ohio State	34	6850	912-1837	.496	249-642	.388	451-655	.689	309-829	1138-33.5	520-8	500	385	139	243	2524-74.2	
Opponents	34	6850	752-1830	.411	231-673	.343	346-490	.706	330-735	1065-31.3	614-13	420	483	70	175	2081-61.2	

up in the NIT, which it subsequently won.

Watching last year from the sidelines as he continued to rehab a foot injury, Lighty was in street clothes as the Buckeyes returned to the Big Dance only to suffer an opening-round, double-overtime loss to ninth-seeded Siena.

A No. 1 seed, no seed, a No. 8 seed and now a No. 2 seed. It is an opportunity Lighty said he is excited to have in front of the team.

"I'm real happy for it, especially not being able to play last year and sitting out for the whole season," he said. "I haven't played in the tournament in forever, so playing in this one and now going into the NCAA Tournament, I'm still really excited."

The memory of last year's Siena loss still sticks with the Buckeyes to an extent. After leading by as many as 11 points in the second half, OSU was unable to close out the Saints in a 74-72 loss. It was Turner who had the last shot to send it to a third overtime, but his spinning jumper from just inside the three-point arc rimmed out.

"It pops in my head sometimes," Turner said. "You think about it sometimes but at the same time, it already happened. You have to move on. We've been working so hard so we won't have to worry about that situation again."

The primary emotion Turner said went through his mind when that shot fell harmlessly to the floor at University of Dayton Arena was one of anger that the game had gotten to that point.

"I thought it was going to go in but it didn't," he said. "It happens. At the same time, I felt like it shouldn't have even come down to that shot. I felt like the game should have been over 15 minutes before that."

Difficult Tourney Draw

Although OSU finished fifth in the final regular-season Associated Press poll, it

appeared to draw a tough bracket for the tournament. The Buckeyes are in the same region as overall No. 1 seed Kansas and will likely have to go through both the Jayhawks and No. 3 seed Georgetown simply to reach the Final Four.

"There are going to be a lot of good chal-

lenges," Turner said. "But it's March. Every game is going to be tough. Nobody wants to go home and lose. It's a lot of people's last game around the country. Nobody wants that to happen. I'm looking forward to some great games."

Added Matta, "I don't think there's any



SONNY BROCKWAY

VETERAN PRESENCE – Ohio State junior David Lighty (23) is the only member of the men's basketball team to have been a part of a team that won an NCAA Tournament game. He was a part of the 2007 squad that made the Final Four.

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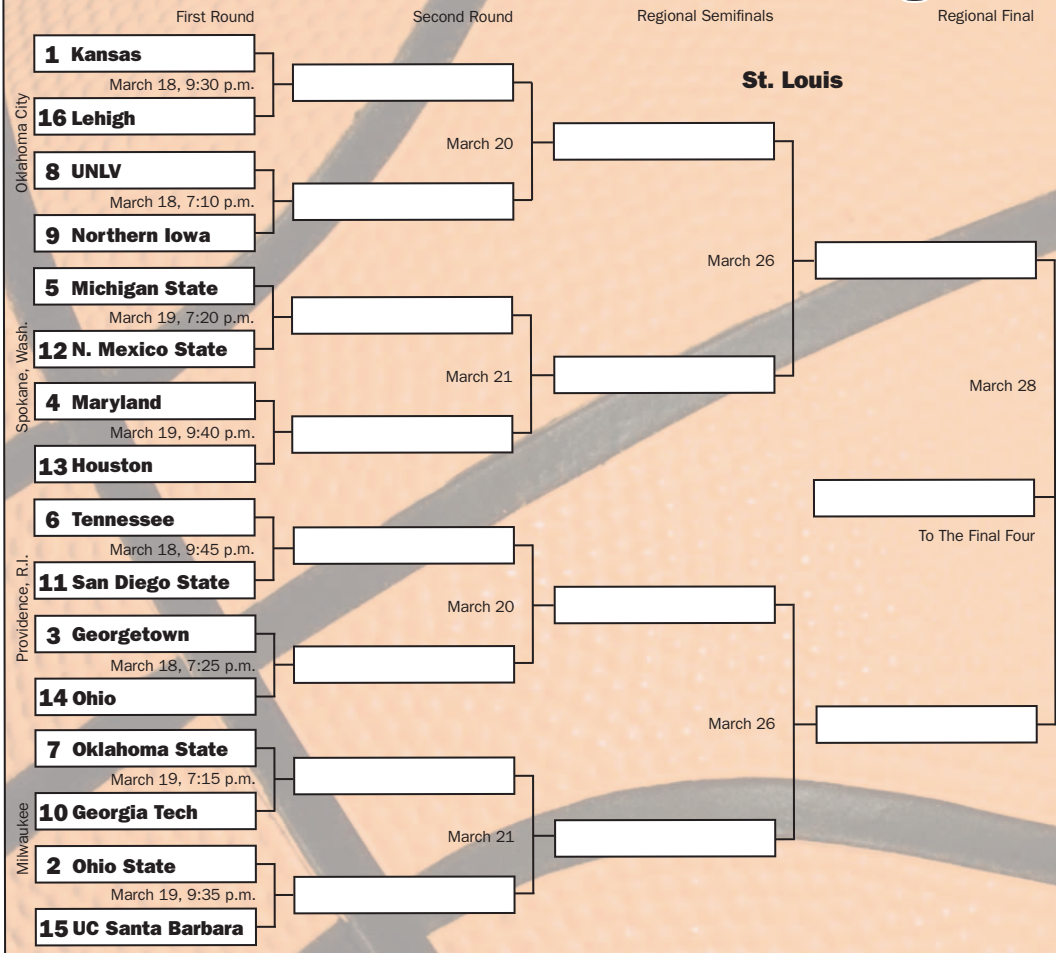
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2010 NCAA Tournament Midwest Region



easy way. I just hope we're playing our best basketball right now as we move forward."

Georgetown, ranked No. 14 in the final AP poll, finished 23-10 overall and tied for seventh in a deep Big East with a 10-8 record, while unanimous No. 1 Kansas won the Big 12 regular-season and conference tournament with a 32-2 overall record. Ironically, both teams that beat the Jayhawks – Tennessee and Oklahoma State – are also in the Midwest Region and seeded sixth and seventh, respectively.

The Buckeyes entered the weekend of the Big Ten tournament with the goal of securing a No. 1 seed in the NCAA tourney. Asked if he was disappointed in the No. 2 seed, Matta replied, "No because you can't change it. A two is fine. What's the difference? I'm sure there is (one), but you've got to go in and play good basketball."

Likewise, Lauderdale downplayed the significance both of not landing a No. 1 and on improving from last year's No. 8 seed.

"I don't know (that it matters) because everybody is good in the NCAA (Tournament)," he said. "I don't know what the seed is. The seed is just what you get because of your record. Everybody is good."

The Washington Post apparently sees things differently. After examining the pairings, the newspaper proclaimed the Midwest Region as the most difficult and implied that the Buckeyes received a tough draw given their body of work this season.

"This region does not seem balanced at all," the Post reported. "Ohio State would have been a popular Final Four pick for lots of people. Instead, Evan Turner and Co.

are stuck having to face Kansas in the Elite Eight."

Stewart Mandel of SI.com went one further, saying the Buckeyes landed the worst draw in the tournament.

"Whichever team wins the game opposite theirs – Oklahoma State or Georgia Tech – won't be an easy out, but that will be heaven compared to their next two possible opponents: Georgetown and Kansas," Mandel wrote.

ESPN.com college basketball analyst Andy Katz also referred to the region as the most difficult among the four, and although he sees the Jayhawks advancing to the Final Four he pegged Turner as the player most likely to lead his team to the Elite Eight.

"He's likely either the outright or co-national player of the year," Katz wrote. "Turner has made big shots throughout the season and is as versatile a player as any in the country. He's more than capable of taking the Buckeyes past UC Santa Barbara, Georgia Tech/Oklahoma State and then either San Diego State, Tennessee or Georgetown."

CBSsports.com senior writer Gary Parrish gives OSU fans a little bit of hope. In looking at the tournament, he pegs five teams with a shot of winning it all. In order, they read Kansas, Kentucky, Syracuse, OSU and West Virginia.

As they face the final stretch of their season, the Buckeyes will revert to the mindset that got them this far. After rebounding from a 1-3 start in Big Ten play to win 13 of its final 14 games, Ohio State adhered to a mantra of simply staying focused on the next

game rather than being bogged down with the big picture.

After beating Minnesota to capture the Big Ten tournament crown, Turner said that will again be the plan.

"We've just got to go out there and take care of business, try and handle what we can control," he said. "We can't really worry about the games afterward. We have to worry about the first game, which is UC Santa Barbara."

"They're there for a reason. Then (we'll) take it step by step."

When the season began, the Buckeyes set out a few goals for themselves. The first two

About UCSB



Located: Santa Barbara, Calif.

Enrollment: 20,559

Nickname: Gauchos

Colors: Blue and Gold

Conference: Big West

Record: 20-9 (12-4)

Head Coach: Bob Williams

(Record: 199-54,

0-1 in NCAA Tournament)

Home Arena: UCSB Events Center (aka the Thunderdome)

How'd They Get Here:

Won Big West Tournament

Top Players:

Orlando Johnson, So. Guard

17.9 PPG, 5.4 RPG

James Nunnally, So. Forward

15.0 PPG, 5.7 RPG

James Powell, Sr. Guard

9.4 PPG, 2.1 RPG

– win the Big Ten and then the conference tournament – have been crossed off the list.

The only one remaining is the biggest of the three.

"We have two steps accomplished," Lighty said. "The next step is reaching the Final Four and hopefully winning a national championship. That's next on our list."

Regardless of who is suited up on the other bench or where OSU is seeded, Turner reaffirmed his faith in what this team can accomplish.

"I think we can go really far," he said. "I think we can go all the way to the championship game."



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OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



SONNY BROCKWAY

WE'RE NO. 1 – Members of the Ohio State women's basketball team pose with the 2010 Big Ten tournament championship trophy March 7 after the Buckeyes defeated Iowa in the championship game at Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

Double Trouble: Buckeyes Repeat As Champs

By **MARCUS HARTMAN**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In winning the Big Ten women's basketball tournament for the third time in school history, Ohio State overcame a team trying desperately to extend the career of one of the best players in school history and then dispatched two squads hoping to add one more impressive pelt to an NCAA tournament résumé.

Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa each took hard shots at the 10th-ranked Buckeyes, but head coach Jim Foster's team emerged champions with their biggest star leading the way.

Jantel Lavender, a few days after being named Big Ten Player of the Year for the third time in her three seasons at Ohio State, scored 81 points and grabbed 25 rebounds in three games en route to being named most outstanding player of the tournament.

She broke the Big Ten record for points in a championship game with 35 and in the process became the 15th Big Ten player and third Buckeye to surpass 2,000 points in her career.

Fellow first-team All-Big Ten performer Samantha Prahalis played her usual role as well, scoring 48 points and handing out 19 assists. She also made all 15 of her free-throw attempts during the tournament and added seven steals.

Not to be overlooked were the 34 points, 15 rebounds and four blocked shots of Tayler Hill. The guard endured an up-and-

down freshman campaign, but she seemed to peak at the most important time of the year.

"When you add that extra person (like Hill), I think it makes Ohio State so much more difficult to defend," Iowa head coach Lisa Bluder said.

Iowa, March 7

For the second year in a row, the Big Ten's best women's basketball player delivered the Big Ten tournament title to the league's regular-season champion.

Lavender made two free throws with 1.9 seconds remaining in the championship game March 7 to provide the winning points in a 66-64 defeat of Iowa.

Ohio State improved to 30-4 on the season and tied the school record for victories set in 2005.

Last season at the same end of the Consecro Fieldhouse floor, Lavender made one free throw to break a 66-all tie with 6.2 seconds remaining against Purdue.

This time around, the third-seeded Hawkeyes pushed Ohio State to the brink with an early offensive barrage as foul trouble limited Lavender and Prahalis to 16 and 12 first-half minutes of action, respectively.

Iowa (19-13) led by as many as 11 in the first half, but just before intermission Hill cut that to eight with a shot from well behind the three-point line on the left wing.

That sent the teams to the locker room with the score 41-33.

"I don't think we built enough of a lead at halftime, quite honestly," Bluder said. "I

think we should have had a bigger lead with their two guns on the bench."

Foster was not about to complain.

"I was surprised that it was (only) eight points," he said. "We could not have played more poorly than we did. And even some of the kids coming in off the bench – instead of helping they were sort of throwing gasoline on the fire."

Just before the start of the second half, the Iowa pep band fired up the Hawkeye contingent behind the Iowa bench with a spirited rendition of "The Imperial March" from the Star Wars movie series, but that provided a kind of foreshadowing the Black and Gold would have preferred to avoid with the six-time Big Ten regular-season champions on the other bench.

The empire struck back, but not before a few more tense moments.

The second half began disastrously for the Buckeyes as Iowa guard Kachine Alexander intercepted an entry pass from Prahalis intended for Lavender and then drew Prahalis' third foul near midcourt on the ensuing fast break.

Iowa sophomores Kamille Wahlin and Kelly Krei compounded the Buckeyes' troubles with a pair of three-pointers, and two Alexander free throws swelled the Iowa advantage to 49-33 with 18:25 yet to play.

With her frustration about to bubble over because of several whistles and no-calls she seemed to feel should have gone her way, Prahalis went to the bench with 17:12 on the clock and the Buckeyes looked to be in serious trouble.

"I was looking at the scoreboard (and thought), 'This is unbelievable,'" Lavender said. "Something had to change. We had to get tough defensively. We had to get tough offensively and just start playing."

They did, in no small part because of the return of a calmer, more effective Prahalis.

Iowa held a 51-37 lead when the OSU point guard returned to the game two minutes after leaving, and the sophomore quickly went to work to cut into the deficit.

She drove to the basket and drew Alexander's third foul then followed with a pair of free throws to kick off a 10-0 spurt she capped with a fastbreak layup to make it 51-47 with 10:17 left.

"Once we got her back on the bench and brought her back to reality, I think that was a big spurt of growth for her going back out there," Foster said.

The Hawkeyes countered with threes by Wahlin and Krei sandwiched around a Hill layup, but by then the Buckeyes were building momentum.

They finally caught Iowa just before the five-minute mark when Prahalis sliced through the defense for a layup that knotted the score at 60, setting up a tense finish in front of 6,832 at Consecro Fieldhouse.

Lavender and Wahlin took turns hitting both ends of one-and-one free-throw situations, and then Iowa freshman Jamie Printy put Iowa ahead, 64-62, with a layup off a backdoor cut with 2:35 left.

Hill failed to tie the score again with a driving layup attempt, but Lavender was there to follow her miss with a basket as

OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Ohio State 66, Iowa 64										
March 7, 2010 Conseco Fieldhouse; Indianapolis										
Iowa (19-13)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.			
Total	FG	FT	Rebs.							
Wahlin	39	7-15	3-4	0-2	2	0	20			
M.Johnson	20	0-1	2-2	0-3	1	3	2			
Krei	36	7-13	0-1	3-5	1	1	18			
Alexander	32	4-14	5-5	1-6	3	4	13			
Printy	35	3-14	2-2	1-4	2	2	9			
Nesbitt	14	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	2	2			
Cermak	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Machado	20	0-2	0-0	3-2	0	3	0			
Totals	200	22-61	12-14	11-23	9	15	64			
Percentages: FG: 36.1%, FT: 85.7%, 3-point goals: 8-22 (Wahlin 3-9, Krei 4-8, Alexander 0-1, Printy 1-4). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 5 (Krei 2, M.Johnson, Printy, Machado). Turnovers: 14 (Alexander 4, Wahlin 2, Krei 2, Printy 2, Machado 2, M.Johnson, Nesbitt). Steals: 12 (Alexander 4, Wahlin 3, Machado 2, M.Johnson, Krei, Printy).										
Ohio State (30-4)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.			
Total	FG	FT	Rebs.							
Hill	26	5-11	2-2	0-6	1	1	14			
Prahalis	30	2-10	2-2	1-2	7	3	6			
B.Johnson	27	3-5	0-0	1-1	0	3	9			
Lavender	36	14-25	7-7	4-6	2	2	35			
Schulze	37	0-2	0-0	1-6	1	1	0			
Stokes	4	0-0	0-1	0-0	1	0	0			
Jackson	5	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0			
Moeller	10	0-2	0-0	0-1	0	1	0			
Little	19	0-1	0-0	2-1	3	3	0			
Daniel	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	1	0			
Walker	3	1-2	0-0	0-2	0	3	2			
Totals	200	25-59	11-12	12-29	16	18	66			
Percentages: FG: 42.4%, FT: 91.7%, 3-point goals: 5-17 (Hill 2-5, Prahalis 0-3, B.Johnson 3-5, Schulze 0-2, Moeller 0-1, Daniel 0-1). Team rebounds: 6. Blocked shots: 4 (Hill 2, Lavender, Walker). Turnovers: 18 (Hill 4, Prahalis 4, Lavender 4, Schulze 2, Moeller 2, Little, Walker). Steals: 6 (Prahalis 3, Hill, B.Johnson, Little). Halftime: Iowa 41, Ohio State 33. Officials: Napier, Roberts, Zents. A: 6,832.										

the clock showed 1:20 remaining in the contest.

Iowa had a couple of chances to go in front on its ensuing possession, but the last trickled out of bounds off Wahlin after Ohio State forward Sarah Schulze stepped up to block her path to the basket.

That put the ball back into the hands of Prahalis, who found Lavender camped on the low block with Iowa's Gabby Machado on her back. Machado, an undersized freshman post defender at 6-0, had been a thorn in Lavender's side throughout the contest, but this time the OSU center turned and drew a blocking foul on the Iowa defender.

"I just wanted to turn strong and I got fouled," Lavender said. "Then I went to the foul line and I just took my time - took deep breaths and did what I did all night."

Lavender was 7 for 7 from the free-throw line, and the last pair of freebies capped a 35-point night that broke Stephanie White's record for points in a Big Ten championship game. White scored 31 for Purdue against Illinois in 1999.

While her total established a new title-game record, Lavender tied three other players who had previously scored 35 points in a Big Ten tournament game - Barb Franke of Wisconsin vs. Michigan State in 1995, Kristina Divjak of Northwestern against Penn State in 1998 and Allison Curtin of Illinois vs. Iowa in 2001.

There was little doubt about where Foster wanted the ball to go after he called timeout with 13 seconds on the clock.

"If you've got a first-team All-American (like Lavender), you throw them the ball - if you're lucid," the OSU head coach said.

Wahlin took Iowa's final shot, but her attempt just inside the midcourt stripe was off-target.

"It felt good when it left my hand, but when I saw it in the air, I knew it was off to the right," said the point guard, who led Iowa with 20 points.

Krei added 18 and Alexander finished with 13. That duo and Wahlin were named to the all-tournament team along with Lavender and Prahalis.

For her part, Bluder looked like the coach of a beaten-but-unbowed squad.

"Congratulate Ohio State on their vic-



SONNY BROCKWAY

PUTTING IOWA AWAY - Junior center Jantel Lavender (42) made a pair of free throws with 1.9 seconds remaining to give Ohio State a 66-64 victory over Iowa in the Big Ten tournament championship game.

tory today," she said. "Great team. Jantel Lavender is the player of the year for a reason, and she showed it tonight with her excellent play.

"I feel bad for my team. I feel like we played hard. We didn't get the victory, and it hurts right now, but I think we'll bounce back and be ready for the (NCAA) tournament."

Ohio State improved to 3-3 in Big Ten championship games and became the third school since the event was reinstated in 1995

to win at least two Big Ten tournaments in a row, joining Purdue and Penn State.

The Lady Lions won the first two, in 1995 and '96, while Purdue won three in a row from 1998-2000 and took home the title in 2007 and '08.

The Boilermakers lead all schools with seven tournament titles.

Wisconsin, March 6

The Buckeyes trailed for nearly all of the first 30 minutes before taking control and

Ohio State 82, Wisconsin 73										
March 6, 2010 Conseco Fieldhouse; Indianapolis										
Wisconsin (21-10)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.			
Total	FG	FT	Rebs.							
Steinbauer	27	1-6	0-0	0-2	1	3	3			
D'Alie	29	3-6	0-1	0-7	3	5	7			
Gant	33	4-9	4-4	0-4	5	3	12			
Karel	38	10-15	6-7	1-2	0	2	31			
Zastrow	33	6-11	2-5	4-1	1	3	14			
Davis	14	1-3	0-0	0-1	0	2	2			
Wurtz	10	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	2	0			
Thomas	7	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	3	0			
Covington	9	1-6	2-2	0-6	0	4	4			
Totals	200	26-57	14-19	6-25	10	27	73			
Percentages: FG: 45.6%, FT: 73.7%, 3-point goals: 7-15 (Steinbauer 1-3, D'Alie 1-4, Karel 5-5, Davis 0-2, Thomas 0-1). Team rebounds: 2. Blocked shots: 4 (Gant 3, Steinbauer). Turnovers: 7 (Gant 4, Steinbauer 2, Davis). Steals: 6 (Steinbauer, D'Alie, Gant, Karel, Zastrow, Thomas).										
Ohio State (29-4)	Min.	M-A	M-A	Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.			
Total	FG	FT	Rebs.							
Hill	31	3-9	8-9	1-5	3	1	14			
Prahalis	40	7-16	11-11	1-5	4	3	29			
Johnson	22	1-3	2-2	2-2	1	1	4			
Lavender	33	7-15	13-16	2-7	0	3	27			
Schulze	30	2-6	0-0	0-5	1	4	6			
Stokes	4	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	2			
Jackson	6	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0			
Moeller	5	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0			
Little	15	0-1	0-0	1-2	1	1	0			
Walker	14	0-1	0-0	1-1	2	1	0			
Totals	200	21-54	34-38	11-28	13	19	82			
Percentages: FG: 38.9%, FT: 89.5%, 3-point goals: 6-16 (Prahalis 4-7, Johnson 0-2, Schulze 2-6, Moeller 0-1). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 4 (Lavender 3, Hill). Turnovers: 7 (Prahalis 2, Lavender 2, Schulze 2, Hill). Steals: 4 (Hill 2, Prahalis, Schulze). Halftime: Wisconsin 41, Ohio State 37. Officials: Courteau, Trammell, Morris. A: 7,471.										

putting away the Badgers by an 82-73 score in their semifinal matchup.

"The fact that we dug deep as a team shows our poise and shows how tough our team is," said Lavender. "I'm happy we won this game because Wisconsin played an extremely great game."

A trio of threes by three different Badgers helped Wisconsin (21-10) open an early 13-9 lead through four minutes, and the tournament's No. 4 seed maintained its advantage until Schulze buried a three from the right wing to tie the score at 21 with 8:25 to go.

The teams traded baskets from there until Wisconsin senior guard Teah Gant broke a 32-all tie at the 3:51 mark with a jumper. That came during an 11-4 run for the Badgers - seven points of which came from Gant - as the Badgers took their biggest lead of the game at 41-34 with 1:20 to go until halftime.

Then Hill provided the spark again for the Buckeyes as she drove through the

Continued On Page 18

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OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Buckeyes Rally Past Wisconsin In Semis

Continued From Page 17

Badger defense for a layup and drew another foul, this one on Taylor Wurtz, with 32 seconds to go.

Hill's ensuing free throw was the last point of the half, making the score 41-37, and her drives would be a recurring theme in the final 20 minutes.

Wisconsin opened a seven-point lead again at 46-39 early in the second half after junior guard Alyssa Karel made a wide-open three-pointer at the 18:14 mark, but Ohio State quickly erased the deficit.

The Buckeyes tied the game at 46 with a three-point play by Lavender at the 15:53 mark, but they couldn't get over the hump until Prahalis canned a three-pointer to give her team a 62-60 advantage.

That prompted a Wisconsin timeout with 9:17 showing on the clock, but the back-and-forth action continued in front of 7,471 fans.

Lavender gave Ohio State a 73-72 lead with a pair of free throws at the 3:52 mark before Ohio State did something it had not done much all night, putting together three consecutive defensive stops.

At the same time, the Buckeyes stretched their lead to six with a layup by Lavender and an old-fashioned three-point play by Prahalis.

Karel ended Wisconsin's scoreless streak by making 1 of 2 free throws with 1:34 left, but that was the last Badger point.

Hill and Prahalis each hit a pair of free throws to ice the contest, which would send the Buckeyes to the championship game.

That Ohio State's semifinal victory ended with a parade to the foul line was appropriate.

The Buckeyes made 34 of 38 free throws, dwarfing Wisconsin's 14-for-19 effort from the line and bringing a smile to Foster's face.

"One of the things this team has done all season long is really get to the foul line," he said. "We've taken a huge number more foul shots than our opponents have attempted. It's a very, very significant number (and) it's always something that we strive for."

2009-10 Ohio State Women's Basketball Statistics

30-4 Overall (15-3 Big Ten) Statistics through games of March 7

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-DQ	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									Off.	Def.						
Jantel Lavender	34-34	1148-33.8	286-553	.517	2-5	.400	155-200	.775	85-263	348-10.2	51-0	55	106	52	18	729-21.4
S. Prahalis	34-34	1157-34.0	192-451	.426	50-139	.360	126-154	.818	31-94	125-3.7	68-1	270	135	3	61	560-16.5
Brittany Johnson	34-34	837-24.6	101-219	.461	70-147	.476	34-43	.791	21-65	86-2.5	46-0	29	28	1	30	306-9.0
Taylor Hill	34-34	848-24.9	90-211	.427	23-76	.303	85-121	.702	30-64	94-2.8	38-1	54	44	8	36	288-8.5
Sarah Schulze	33-33	833-25.2	73-177	.412	52-129	.403	40-45	.889	56-138	194-5.9	56-0	33	45	16	34	238-7.2
Andre Walker	34-0	471-13.9	57-116	.491	0-0	.000	35-50	.700	53-105	158-4.6	52-0	18	27	38	14	149-4.4
Maria Moeller	34-0	412-12.1	30-71	.423	21-47	.447	19-26	.731	6-23	29-0.9	28-0	38	24	0	11	100-2.9
Amber Stokes	24-0	181-7.5	26-50	.520	2-4	.500	13-18	.722	10-9	19-0.8	16-0	8	14	3	13	67-2.8
Shavelle Little	31-0	406-13.1	33-70	.471	0-4	.000	17-27	.630	32-45	77-2.5	35-0	37	29	2	51	83-2.7
Alison Jackson	30-1	260-8.7	21-57	.368	0-0	.000	20-22	.909	14-30	44-1.5	31-0	15	19	0	9	62-2.1
Cherise Daniel	20-0	125-6.3	13-37	.351	2-9	.222	4-6	.667	19-17	36-1.8	8-0	10	6	5	5	32-1.6
Emilee Harmon	15-0	93-6.2	10-29	.345	0-0	.000	3-12	.250	10-11	21-1.4	7-0	5	6	3	2	23-1.5
A. Dobranic	14-0	54-3.9	4-9	.444	0-0	.000	2-2	1.000	4-8	12-0.9	8-0	4	6	2	2	10-0.7
TEAM									57-81	138-4.1						
Ohio State	34	6825	936-2050	.457	222-560	.396	553-726	.762	428-953	1381-40.6	444-2	576	499	133	286	2647-77.9
Opponents	34	6825	808-2084	.388	186-572	.325	289-417	.693	397-795	1192-35.1	618-10	405	589	98	222	2091-61.5

The 34 made free throws broke the Big Ten tournament single-game record of 29 set by Indiana in 2002.

Lavender did the most damage from the charity stripe, making 13 of 16 attempts while Prahalis was perfect on all 11 of her free throws. Then there was Hill, an athletic wing guard who was 8 for 9 at the stripe while adding three assists, two steals and a blocked shot in 31 minutes of action.

"Taylor draws contact really well," Prahalis said. "I think she always gives energy, and I think tonight everything she did really helped us."

The Buckeyes needed points from any source they could find because they were matched up with a physical Wisconsin squad that led the Big Ten in scoring defense during the regular season.

"I think Wisconsin came out to play extremely hard," Lavender said. "They were executing extremely well in the first half. Alyssa was hot."

Prahalis and Lavender combined for 56 points, tallying 29 and 27, respectively.

Karel made 10 of 15 field goals and was a perfect 5 for 5 from three-point land to set the conference tournament record for proficiency in that department. The sec-

ond-team All-Big Ten performer finished with a career-high 31 points, but she was held without a field goal in the final six minutes.

"We had to figure out a way to get a stop down the stretch," Lavender said. "Once we switched up what we were doing defensively, that kind of slowed them down as we got to the one-minute mark and we pulled through."

Karel said she would have traded the points for a victory.

"The last four or five minutes of the game I was running off a lot of screens, try-

ing to get open, but they were just kind of face-guarding me, playing really great D," Karel said.

Illinois, March 5

The Buckeyes took an early 5-3 lead at the 16:45 mark of the first half and were never headed, building their lead to as much as 12 points in the opening 20 minutes and 16 points with 8:47 remaining in the game.

But the Fighting Illini (16-14) doggedly kept nipping at OSU's heels thanks to a series of mini-runs. Illinois got the deficit down to six points at 59-53 with 1:00



SONNY BROCKWAY

BASHING THE BADGERS – Sophomore point guard Samantha Prahalis (21) scored a team-high 29 points March 6 and helped lead Ohio State to an 82-73 win against Wisconsin in the Big Ten tournament semifinals. Prahalis' total was aided by a perfect 11-for-11 performance at the free-throw line.

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OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Ohio State 66, Illinois 55

March 5, 2010		Conseco Fieldhouse; Indianapolis				
Illinois (16-14)	Min.	M-A	M-A Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.
Penn	38	3-9	0-2	3-5	4	2
McCully	40	4-13	0-0	1-3	1	3
J.Smith	40	6-13	0-0	3-8	2	2
Simpson	38	6-17	0-1	4-3	4	0
Magrum	17	2-4	0-0	1	0	2
Toone	20	3-7	2-3	0-2	1	3
Josil	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Godbold	4	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	1

Totals 200 24-63 2-6 16-29 12 14 55
Percentages: FG: 38.1%, FT: 33.3%, 3-point goals: 5-14 (McCully 3-5, J.Smith 1-2, Simpson 1-6, Toone 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 10. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Penn 2). **Turnovers:** 18 (McCully 7, Simpson 4, Penn 3, J.Smith, Magrum, Josil, TEAM). **Steals:** 4 (Penn 2, J.Smith 2, Simpson, Josil).

Ohio State (28-4)	Min.	M-A	M-A Off-Def.	A	PF	Pts.
Hill	27	2-7	2-2	1-2	2	0
Prahalis	40	5-19	2-2	0-2	8	3
Johnson	31	4-8	2-2	0-5	0	13
Lavender	37	8-17	3-3	0-6	1	19
Schulze	36	2-5	2-2	1-7	0	2
Moeller	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Little	12	2-3	1-2	0-0	0	5
Walker	8	1-1	0-0	1-2	0	2

Totals 200 24-60 12-13 8-26 12 8 66
Percentages: FG: 40.0%, FT: 92.3%, 3-point goals: 6-22 (Hill 0-2, Prahalis 1-8, Johnson 3-7, Schulze 2-5). **Team rebounds:** 7. **Blocked shots:** 3 (Hill, Lavender, Walker). **Turnovers:** 10 (Lavender 5, Prahalis 2, Hill, Johnson, TEAM). **Steals:** 9 (Prahalis 3, Little 3, Hill, Schulze, Walker). **Half-time:** Ohio State 33, Illinois 24. **Officials:** Dressander, B.Smith, Grinter. **A:** N/A.

remaining but that was as close as it could get.

"It was a game of runs," Foster said. "When they were coming at us at the end, we switched out of our zone defense into a man and the girls did what we expected them to do. When we went to man, we had great position and great communication."

Illinois head coach Jolette Law credited the Buckeyes for playing a stingy defense throughout the contest, and that led her team to miss 11 of their first 14 shots from the floor and finish 24 for 60 (40.0 percent) for the game.

Still, Law thought her team was its own worst enemy as it committed 10 first-half turnovers and put itself in a 33-24 hole at the break.

"We didn't play with very much confidence in the first half," the Illinois coach said. "We were a little unsure, a little tentative. Give a lot of credit to Ohio State. They got those loose balls we should have gotten."

The Buckeyes grabbed nine steals, including three each by senior Shavelle Little and Prahalis, giving Ohio State a total of 33 steals in three games this season against the Illini. Little had 11 of those, including a career-high eight when the teams met in Champaign in late December.

"I have been stressing (turnovers) to my team for the last month," Law said. "Little is great. When she played us at our place, she was a one-woman press. You know she's going to get her steals and those are turnovers she forces. But we had a lot of unforced turnovers and when I look at the stats, I see our turnovers and the fact they had 18 points off our turnovers. That's a big difference."

The first half was ragged with neither team seeming to get its early bearings. While Illinois was making only three of its first 14 attempts from the floor, Ohio State wasn't much better. The Buckeyes were 4 of 12 with the main culprit being Lavender. The three-time conference player of the year missed her first four attempts and six of her first seven.

But when Lavender hit her first shot at the 13:06 mark of the opening half, it gave her team a 12-7 advantage and kicked off a 12-5 run for the Buckeyes over the next 3½ minutes. Prahalis capped the run to push the OSU lead to double digits for the first time at 22-12 with 9:31 to go until the break.

Illinois made a mini-run of its own, outscoring the Buckeyes by a 7-2 margin over the next three minutes to pull within five at 24-19. But Ohio State responded by scoring nine of the half's final 14 points for a 33-24 advantage at the break.

The Illini made another run at the beginning of the second half, getting a basket from three-time All-Big Ten center Jenna Smith and a three-pointer from sophomore guard Lydia McCully inside the opening minute. That cut the Buckeyes' lead to four at 33-29 at the 19:03 mark.

OSU then went on another run of its own, scoring 22 of the game's next 32 points to seemingly put the game away at 55-39 with 8:47 left. But Illinois refused to give up. It went on a 12-2 run to get the game back to a manageable six points at 57-51 when freshman forward Karisma Penn hit a jumper at the 5:03 mark.

It remained a six-point game into the final minute when Ohio State turned up the defense. With precious seconds ticking down, the Illini couldn't find decent looks and were forced to put up low-percentage shots.

Then with the clock under 30 seconds and the Buckeyes holding a 61-53 lead, Little picked McCully's pocket at the top of the key for her third steal of the game. The Illinois turnover resulted in a layup for Hill with 26.4 seconds remaining, and the Illini were never able to threaten again.

Lavender made up for her cold first half by hitting 5 of 6 shots in the second half to finish with a game-high 19 points. Junior Brittany Johnson added 13 points, a total matched by Prahalis, who also passed out a game-high eight assists. Schulze added eight points and a team-high eight rebounds.

Smith led Illinois with 13 points and a game-high 11 rebounds. Senior forward Lacey Simpson also had 13 points while McCully added 11.

Smith finished the game with 2,087 points, two shy of the Illinois career record held by Ashley Berggren (1994-98), but Smith surpassed the single-season school record for rebounds by three (finishing with 338) and was already the school's all-time leader in boards, finishing her career with 1,168.

But she got choked up when asked if it had yet dawned on her that she would not find out what it was like to play in an NCAA tournament game.

"I can't describe how it feels," she said. "It just hurts to know that we haven't been there, but we did what we could all four years."

Youth Being Served

Although Smith's Big Ten career is over, the tournament served notice that 2011 could be a strong one for the conference based on the abundance of young talent that was on display.

No seniors started for either team in the championship game, and that was on the heels of a semifinal round that featured only four seniors among the 20 starters.

Four freshmen (Hill, Printy, Northwestern forward Kendall Hackney and Penn State guard Alex Bentley) and four sophomores (Krei, Prahalis, Wahlin and Michigan forward Carmen Reynolds) were among the top 21 scorers in the tournament.

"This conference should gain a ton of respect because of the youth movement," Wisconsin head coach Lisa Stone said. "If you look at the freshmen in the league and the sophomores, bottle that up and the parity in our conference speaks for itself. It's fun to watch those young kids play."

Stone's top two scorers from the regular season - Karel and forward Tara Steinbauer - are juniors, as is forward Lin Zastrow, but the coach also started senior guards Gant and Rae Lin D'Alie. Her top reserves were Wurtz, a freshman, and sophomores Anya Covington and Jade Davis.

Meanwhile, Bluder played no seniors in the title game, and her Iowa starting lineup consisted of freshmen Printy and center Morgan Johnson, sophomores Wahlin and Krei and a junior in Alexander.

"I don't feel like we're young anymore because we played so much this year, but certainly they've not been through this experience," Bluder said after the title game. "This is the first time most of them have played in the Big Ten tournament - the first time any of them have played in a Big Ten tournament championship - so it's going to do us a world of wonder in the future. It's going to do nothing but help us."

Tournament Notes

- With eight assists against Illinois, Prahalis broke Jamie Lewis' single-season Ohio State record of 257 in 2001. Prahalis finished the tournament with 270 helpers this season. Tina Nicholson of Penn State set the Big Ten record with 283 in 1996.

- Prahalis finished with 38 career assists in Big Ten tournament games, which ranks ninth on the all-time list.

- Prahalis tied a tournament record for free-throw percentage when she made 11 of 11 against Wisconsin. She shares the record with Penn State's Tanisha Wright (10 of 10 during the 2002 tournament) and Purdue's Shereka Wright (10 of 10 during the 2004 tournament).

- Against Iowa, OSU point guard Maria Moeller played in her 131st career game, breaking the school record of 130 she had shared with Jessica Davenport (2004-07), Tamarah Riley (2005-08) and Kim Wilburn (2003-06). The senior also tied the Big Ten record, one she shares with Erika Valek of Purdue, Lindsay Bowen of Michigan State and Liz Shimek of Michigan State. D'Alie also has 131 games under her belt with the Badgers.

- Iowa set a tournament record for three-pointers attempted with 70. The previous record was held by Purdue, which attempted 60 during the 1996 tournament.

- The Hawkeyes converted 46 of 50 free throws (92.0 percent), which ranks second all-time. Penn State made 29 of 31 free throws (93.5) during the 2003 tournament. Ohio State finished the tournament shooting 57 of 63 from the free-throw line, a 90.4 percentage that is third all-time.

- Smith had 19 rebounds in an opening-round 59-53 defeat of Indiana to set a Big Ten tournament game record. The previous record was 18, set by former Penn State player Amanda Brown in 2007.

- Purdue had played in four consecutive championship games but lost its quarterfinal matchup with Wisconsin, 73-51.

BSB managing editor Mark Rea contributed to this report



Maria Moeller

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