

Wrestling: No. 8 Ohio State Comes Up Just Short Against No. 2 Michigan, 18-16



Ohio State couldn't have asked for a much better start to its Friday night dual against No. 2 Michigan. With such a small margin for error against a top team like the Wolverines, dropping a match that saw a Buckeye favored would essentially be a death sentence, and 165-pounder Ethan Smith found himself facing down the barrel of a loss to No. 23 Cameron Amine in the opening bout of the match, as he trailed 3-1 in the final frame.

The black shirt rallied, however. Smith notched a quick escape and grabbed a takedown to claim a 4-3 lead that he would not surrender, completing the come-from-behind win for the Buckeyes to open the match up 3-0.

That positive start was short-lived for the Buckeyes, albeit not due to an upset. With title contender Kaleb Romero out of the lineup due to an injury, 174-pound reserve Fritz Schierl faced an uphill battle against No. 2 Logan Massa and surrendered a major decision, 14-2.

Rocky Jordan got the Buckeyes back on track at 184 pounds, jumping out to an outstanding 6-0 lead at the end of the first period, thanks to a four-point near fall. Jordan didn't look back from that early start. He extended his lead to 11-0 in the second period, and went on the hunt for bonus points in the final frame. That hunt came up just short, with Jordan earning a 13-0 major decision, rather than the tech fall that he was searching for. Still, four team points gave the Buckeyes a 7-4 edge entering match four.

At 197 pounds, Gavin Hoffman met an unexpected foe, with Michigan star Myles Amine making his season debut at a new weight after spending much of the season preparing for the Olympics. That pairing was not kind to the Buckeyes, though it certainly wasn't for a lack of effort from Hoffman. However, Amine proved too much, claiming an 8-5 decision.

Of the first half bouts, the battle at heavyweight seemed the least even. Michigan's Mason Parris made short work of Tate Orndorff, hunting a pin for essentially the entire bout but coming away with a third period 21-5 tech fall victory to put Michigan on top 12-7 entering the break.

Ohio State opened the second half of the dual almost exactly as it opened the first, with Malik Heinselman claiming a close victory over Kurt McHenry, 3-1.

With the Buckeyes trailing 12-10 on team score, Jordan Decatur's match against Jack Medley at 133 pounds loomed extremely large, and a slow start for Decatur had OSU in a very tricky spot. Trailing 3-0 in the second frame, Decatur earned a two-point reversal to cut into the deficit entering the final period.

There, Decatur grabbed another escape to even the bout, but surrendered a takedown that put Medley back in front, 5-3, with a minute to go. With Medley earning riding time, Decatur could not pull out the victory, falling 6-4 in what looked like a dual-defining loss.

With the Buckeyes in danger of falling out of the dual entirely, 141-pounder Dylan D'Emilio came through when Ohio State needed him most. He fell down early, but managed to come from behind to steal a 6-5 decision over Drew Mattin, bringing OSU back within striking distance entering the final two bouts.

At 149 pounds, in another hunt for bonus points, Sammy Sasso could not quite deliver, coming up just a point short of a major decision, 8-1.

That set up the final bout as the deciding one, with Elijah Cleary squaring off against Will Lewan. The first period flew by without a point, though not for a lack of trying from Cleary, as he took two shots but couldn't land either on the top-10 Wolverine.

Cleary took the first points of the bout with an early escape in the second period and defended that lead into the third, setting the Buckeye up with a one-point lead entering the final frame.

A Lewan escape knotted the bout to open the third. A Lewan shot with just over a minute to go looked dangerous, but Cleary fought it off and forced a reset with just under a minute remaining. A pair of Lewan shots went begging, sending the bout to extra time to decide the dual.

There, Cleary fought off another shot and was nearly taken down with seconds to go, but survived to see a tie-breaker period.

After a brief blood break, Cleary and Lewan returned to the mat and it was the Wolverine that struck first, earning another escape out of bottom position to take a 2-1 lead in the first of two 30 second tie-breaker periods. It wasn't easy by any means, but Cleary matched that escape in the final seconds of that second period to advance to a second sudden victory period.

And again, stalemate, with another pair of tie-breakers. Finally, after a true battle of attrition, Lewan matched another Cleary escape in the second tie-breaker period and took home the dual for the Wolverines, thanks to his slim riding time advantage.

125 — No. 11 Malik Heinselman def. Kurt McHenry — D, 3-1

133 — Jack Medley def. No. 23 Jordan Decatur — D, 6-4

141 — Drew D'Emilio def. Drew Mattin — D, 6-5

149 — No. 2 Sammy Sasso def. No. 7 Kanen Storr — D, 8-1

157 — No. 8 Will Lewan def. No. 26 Elijah Cleary — TB-2, 4-3

165 — No. 6 Ethan Smith def. Cameron Amine — D, 4-3

174 — No. 2 Logan Massa def. Fritz Schierl — MD, 14-2

184 — No. 17 Rocky Jordan def. Jelani Embree — MD, 13-0

197 — Myles Amine def. No. 24 Gavin Hoffman — D, 8-5

HWT — No. 2 Mason Parris def. No. 9 Tate Orndorff — TF, 21-5

