After building a 24-point lead with just under 13 minutes to play, it's safe to say Ohio State relaxed a bit down the stretch against Iowa Tuesday night.

That almost cost them the game.

The Hawkeyes chipped 19 points away from the deficit behind a 30-11 run that spanned over 11 minutes. Ohio State saw its huge lead evaporate after Iowa began using a full-court press against the Buckeyes, and with under two minutes to play, the Hawkeyes trailed just 63-59.

Iowa put Ohio State at the line, and despite struggling with free throws throughout the year, the Buckeyes connected on five straight freebies to effectively ice the game.

Ohio State went on to win 72-63.

Buckeyes coach Thad Matta talked about Iowa's furious rally, "Our fouling hurt us; defensively we had a hard time. We kept putting them at the foul line," Matta said. "You have to finish the play with a defensive rebound and we did not do that. We were playing with the pressure of them playing catch up."

Just three days after suffering a loss to Michigan State where no player outside of Deshaun Thomas scored more than six points, the Buckeyes got tremendous balance out of their offense Tuesday night. Thomas led all scorers with 16 points, both Aaron Craft and Lenzelle Smith, Jr. scored 12 while Evan Ravenel chipped in 11 off the bench.

The Buckeyes combined to shoot 52 percent from the field and 40 percent from behind the arch, but the team struggled with turnovers again, giving the ball away 17 times against the Hawkeyes. When 25 percent of a team's offensive possessions result in a turnover, it disrupts the flow of the game.

"Personally I had a couple turnovers and they got to the free throw line pretty early but you have

to try to make plays at the end," Craft said. "We did not get to finish the game the way we wanted to but we have to better ourselves for next week."

It could have been a different game had Iowa made its free throws.

Despite shooting just 36 percent against the Buckeyes, Iowa had a chance to steal a game they had no business being in. Making just 13 of their 26 free throws, though, doomed the Hawkeyes late.

Iowa coach Fran McCafferry was surprised by his team's off night at the line, "We had been so good in that area. We were the best in the league, I think. We missed 13 in a nine-point loss. That's disappointing."

Ohio State received a much-need lift from players that haven't shown much consistency throughout the year. The bench produced 22 points as LaQuinton Ross shined in the first half on his way to seven point and five rebounds. Amir Williams was a force defensively, notching a career-high six blocks, but the seven foot center didn't collect a single rebound in 17 minutes of action.

"The fact that I had zero rebounds is unacceptable. I am better than having zero rebounds in a game so that will make us lose games," Williams said. "I have to try to get around seven rebounds a game."

For Matta, he just wants to see his team play with intensity for 40 minutes, "We have been this way before in terms of searching for an identity. I have been in games like this before, where we have our moments. We are searching for consistence. I'll take consistency over greatness. "

Who's Next?

Ohio State will travel to Happy Valley to play the Penn State Nittany Lions this Saturday. The game will tip off at 12:00 p.m. EST and will be televised by ESPN2.

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