With five seconds left on the clock and the game tied at 70, William Buford took the ball from Aaron Craft's hands and curled toward the top of the perimeter. Time was ticking down as Buford looked for some space -- and with Ohio State's chances for a share of the Big Ten regular season championship on the line -- the only senior on the team spotted up with a defender in his face and launched a high-arching shot toward the rim. That ball fell seamlessly through the net, not bothering to touch any part of the rim as Ohio State went on to beat the No. 5 Michigan State Spartans 72-70 in East Lansing.

"I was fortunate to knock down the big shot of the night to give us another Big Ten title," Buford said after the game.

This season's conference championship is split three ways between Ohio State, Michigan State and Michigan -- giving Ohio State its third league title in as many years. Buford was instrumental in leading Ohio State, who trailed by as many as 15 points in the game, past Michigan State for the two point victory. "Willie B" got hot late and scored 19 of his 25 points in the second half, but it was his late jumper with one second left that became the biggest bucket of his collegiate career.

"I just came in [on the last play] with a different mindset," Buford said. "During that last play, I wasn't going to miss."

Ohio State's chances for a Big Ten title seemed slim just seven days ago. Michigan State came into the week with a commanding two game lead over both Ohio State and Michigan. All the Spartans had to do was win either game between Indiana on the road or Sunday's contest against the Buckeyes to claim the conference championship outright. The Spartans stumbled at Indiana, faltering late in a 15 point loss to the Hoosiers before heading home for senior day

against the Buckeyes. Michigan State's first loss at home was likely the most painful of the season for the Spartans.

Michigan State coach Tom Izzo, who described the game as the most physical he had ever been a part of, was solemn in the postgame press conference, "No excuses. We just didn't get it done."

Buckeyes coach Thad Matta was thrilled for his team, who experienced some trying times in the closing month of the regular season, "I think we've grown," Matta said. "I like the fact that when they get knocked down, they've shown they get back up. You're always looking for cohesiveness though the hard times, but it's hard. It hasn't been perfect. But to end this way, I'm very happy for them."

Ohio State was knocked down in a big way at the outset against Michigan State. The Buckeyes played the Spartans even through the opening minutes of the first half as the game was tied at seven. It looked like the makings of a defensive slug-fest before the Spartans blew things wide open. Michigan State stifled the Buckeyes on defense, forcing five turnovers in five minutes while Ohio State started shooting just 2-6 from the field. Meanwhile, Michigan State used the same strategy that won them the first game against Ohio State in Columbus by getting out on the fast break for easy transition buckets. The Spartans connected on nine of their first 13 shots, fueling a 17-2 run that put them up 24-9 with 10 minutes left in the first.

Ohio State began it's slow climb back into the game by getting to the free throw line early and often. The Buckeyes' shots weren't falling -- the team was just 7-28 from the field in the first half -- but 14 first half points from the free throw line kept the Buckeyes within striking distance. The Spartans were red hot on offense, using a 14-2 advantage in transition on their way to shooting 54% from the field. With the tone and pace of the game, Ohio State was fortunate to take a nine point deficit (38-29) into the locker room at half time.

Sullinger was struggling with Michigan State's superb interior defense, going 2-10 from the field for eight points in the first. The Buckeyes looked lost on offense for most of the half and coach Matta knew his team was in trouble "It was looking pretty bleak."

The second half had a completely different tone than the first. For the first time in two games against the Spartans, Ohio State started hitting shots from the perimeter. Buford came out and connected on an array of mid-range jumpers and 3-pointers as the senior scored 12 of Ohio State's first 16 points in the second half. The Buckeyes had cut Michigan State's lead to less than five multiple times, but the Spartans answered seemingly every time Ohio State got close. The Buckeyes were in the midst of a 10-4 run when Deshaun Thomas connected on a 3-pointer that gave Ohio State its first lead (52-51) since the opening minute of the game.

The game's remaining 10 minutes featured eight lead changes as both teams went back-and-forth trading blows. A pivotal stretch came at the nine minute mark when Sullinger picked up his fourth foul and was forced to the bench. Boston College transfer Evan Ravenel

came in for Sullinger and gave the Buckeyes his most productive six minutes of the season, scoring seven straight points during one stretch when the Buckeyes desperately needed some offense. He also collected two rebounds and dished out a nice assist during his six minutes of playing time, and his production allowed Ohio State to keep pace with the Spartans. The junior was playing so well that Sullinger told Matta to leave Ravenel in the game.

When Sullinger finally made his way back on the court, the Buckeyes were in a dog fight. The final seven minutes of the game were played in a two point bubble and Craft, Sullinger and Thomas all hit big shots in the closing minutes to either tie the game or retake the lead. Michigan State had the ball late but Draymond Green missed a jumper from the elbow with 32 seconds left. That's when Buford and the Buckeyes drained the clock and stole the game in the final seconds.

"This is about as high a level game as you can see," Matta said. "I'm happy we were on [the winning] side of it."

Due to a variety of tie-breakers, the Ohio State Buckeyes will be the No. 3 seed in the Big Ten tournament behind No. 2 Michigan and No. 1 Michigan State. The Buckeyes will play the winner of the Purdue - Nebraska game on Friday at around 9:00 pm EST.

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