The No. 4 Ohio State Buckeyes were scheduled to start their season last Friday against Marquette as part of college basketball's Carrier Classic, but condensation on the court forced the head coaches of both teams to cancel the game.

So instead of starting the season on a boat, the Buckeyes kicked off their 2012 campaign in Columbus with an 82-60 victory over the Albany Great Danes.

Ohio State was sluggish to start the game, missing its first five shots from the field while playing lazy defense. Albany kept pace with the No. 4 team in the country early and even led the Buckeyes 23-22 with less than five minutes to go in the first half.

After Sam Rowley's layup gave the Great Danes that one-point lead, Ohio State head coach Thad Matta had seen enough -- enough of his teams lackadaisical play alongside a poor attitude on the court. Matta called a timeout and erupted on his team.

"It was a scramble situation," Matta said after the game. "Those things are going to present themselves, but what I didn't like was one of our guys putting his palms in the air and saying something to a teammate."

The Buckeyes responded.

Ohio State came out of the timeout and closed the half with a 17-2 run. Deshaun Thomas, who missed six of his first seven shots before Matta's outburst, scored 13 of Ohio State's 17 points to close the half, and the Buckeyes took a 39-25 lead into the locker room at halftime.

Albany never recovered.

Deshaun Thomas kicked off the second half much like he closed the first, draining a three-pointer to give the Buckeyes a 17-point lead. The preseason All-American connected on six of his last 10 shots and finished the game with 19 points.

Surprisingly, it was Aaron Craft who led the Buckeyes in scoring. The junior point guard, known for his stifling defense, hit five three-pointers on his way to a career-high 20 points.

Matta talked about how much Craft had worked on his outside shooting this offseason, “I give him a lot of credit for working hard all offseason; he was in the gym every day. Having another guy who can put the ball in the basket is vital for this team.”

Lenzelle Smith, Jr. added 18 points, Laquinton Ross scored 10 of the bench and Shannon Scott chipped in nine as the Buckeyes cruised to a 22-point victory.

One thing Ohio State will have to address is the lack of production from the center position. Without Jared Sullinger in the paint this year, the Buckeyes will need Even Ravenel and Amir Williams to step up. Against the Great Danes, the two combined for zero points, six rebounds on no blocks.

Albany coach Will Brown saw firsthand how talented the Buckeyes are, but knows they could be even better with some production at center, “They have McDonald All-Americans on their bench; my team goes to McDonald's just to eat. I think if this team finds some more consistency at the five spot, they can surely go far."

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes don’t play again until Saturday, when they host the Rhode Island Rams. The game will tipoff at 5:00 pm E.T.

(Photo credit - Jim Davidson - TheOzone.net)

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