The No. 3 Ohio State Buckeyes (3-0) beat the Washington Huskies (2-2) 77-66 in Uncasville, Connecticut Sunday night, claiming the Hall of Fame Tip Off tournament championship in the process.

Deshaun Thomas fueled the Buckeyes, hitting 12 of his 20 shots to tie a career high with 31 points. Thomas also grabbed eight rebounds and dished out three assists in the 11 point victory.

Washington coach Lorenzo Romar talked about Thomas' outburst, "We haven't played against anyone like him this year. He came out, he was on fire. He couldn't miss anything."

The junior forward connected on his first seven shots from the field, scoring 15 of Ohio State's first 19 points against Washington. Thomas cooled off a bit, but still managed to finish the first half with 21 points.

"When I knocked those first couple down it was on tonight," Thomas said. "I felt pretty good and confident. My teammates found me in the right positions."

Ohio State and Washington played each other relatively even through eight minutes of play, scorching the net as the Huskies led 18-17. That's when the rest of the team got involved, and the Buckeyes closed the half on a 24-13 run. Ohio State didn't commit a single turnover the first 17 minutes of the game, which helped the Buckeyes take a 41-31 lead into the locker room at halftime.

"It's always a lot of fun when you have a guy that's feeling really good and can knock down shots from just about anywhere," Aaron Craft said after the game.

When play resumed, Washington cut Ohio State's lead in half and appeared to be making a run, but the Buckeyes answered with a 10-1 spurt of their own. From that point on, Washington never seriously threatened Ohio State and the Buckeyes cruised to its third straight win to open the season.

Craft finished the game against Washington with 18 points, four assists and two steals. The junior point guard, known for his smothering defense, has been a viable offensive option so far this year. Craft is averaging 17 points a game early, connecting on 50 percent of his shots from the field.

Thomas, though, is Ohio State's best offensive weapon. Through three games, Thomas is sixth in the country with 25 points per game. After averaging 28 points and nine rebounds against Rhode Island and Washington last week, Thomas earned the Big Ten's Player of the Week honors.

The key to Ohio State's success this season, though, is Thomas' ability to play within the offense, "The coaches tell me to just play my game and just come together. If you're a team player, you're going to get your shots."

Ohio State moved up a spot to No. 3 in both polls this week after Kentucky fell to Duke last Tuesday.

**Who's Next?**

The Buckeyes host the UMKC Kangaroos Friday night. The game will be televised by the Big Ten Network and tips off at 6:00 p.m. EST.

*(Photo credit - Jim Davidson - TheOzone.net )*

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