This just in - Ohio State has a pretty damn good basketball team this season. Lost amid the hype of the football team, and awaiting the return of phenom Greg Oden, the teams dominating 6-0 start has gone largely unnoticed. In my latest, I recap the Buckeyes start to the season, which has been fueled by the members of The Thad Five not named "Oden".

"Hey Swerb, when does Buckeyes hoops season start?"

I actually got that from a reader in my e-mail box the other day.

The answer? The season started 17 days ago. The Buckeyes are 6-0, and just today - moved to **#1 in the nation** in the ESPN/USA Today coaches poll.

We deserve as much blame as anyone here at The Blurbs for the underappreicated (and very encouraging) start to the Ohio State mens basketball season. We haven't run a column on the Buckeye hoops team in a couple of weeks. Like alot of the other Cleveland media outlets, we've been swept up in that football game against that school up north, the first month of Cavaliers season, the baseball hot stove season, and the latest self-implosion of the team that is presently calling themselves the Cleveland Browns. Also, the team's non-descript early season schedule and the fact that Greg Oden is still out with a wrist injury have also contributed to a quiet start to the Thad Five Era.

Guess what? These guys are pretty damn good. And this is going to be a fun season to which only the sky is the limit.

Despite no big name conquests in the Buckeyes first six wins, the team has been incredibly impressive, and the Thad Five members not named "Oden" have most certainly lived up to the hype. The Bucks have cruised through their first half dozen games, winning by an average of 26 points per contest. And they've been doing it the right way. Not only is Thad Matta unusually adept at getting big name talent into Columbus, he's equally skilled at selling them on the concept of team basketball once they get here.

Matta preaches a philosophy that says it doesn't matter who is on the floor for the tip-off, and that everyones role is crucial in achieving the teams ultimate goals. For evidence of this, look no further than freshman phenom Daequan Cook, who comes off the bench as the team's super sixth man. Cook leads the team with a 17.8 scoring average, is shooting 58% from the floor and 48% from three point land, and has been the teams best player thus far. Cook has showed an inate ability to always create open looks for himself from any spot on the floor, eerily reminiscient to a guy named "Redd" that wore the scarlet and gray in the late nineties.

Equally as impressive has been fellow freshman Mike Conley (pictured above), who has all the potential to become one of the greatest Buckeye point guards ever. Conley is lightning quick, incredibly smart, and frighteningly efficient. Conley is amongst the NCAA Division I leaders in a slew of categories, including field goal perecentage (59.0%), assists (6.3), steals (3.2), and assist to turnover ratio (2.86). In Conley and junior Jamar Butler, the Buckeyes have two of the better point guards in the entire nation, and the duo is #1 and #3 in minutes played thus far this season.

The other members of The Thad Five are also off to good starts. Othella Hunter, one of the nation's top junior college transfers, has been a presence inside for the Bucks in the wake of losing Terence Dials to elgibility. In 22 minutes a night, Hunter is averaging 7.7 points, 7.2 rebounds, and 1.8 blocks per game. And swingman David Lighty is chipping in with 8.3 points per contest in just over 26 minutes a night.

The last member, of course, is 7'3 man-child Greg Oden. Oden was expected to be out until January with a wrist injury. The team is keeping his status very quiet, but all indications are that he may be ready to play in the next couple weeks. Matta even teased the home fans earlier this week by letting Oden suit up for the shootaround before the Youngstown State game ... before making him change back into his street clothes for the contest itself.

With the Thad Five, Jamar Butler, Ron Lewis (averaging 17.0 PPG), and senior big men Ivan Harris (11.3 PPG, 4.5 RPG) and Matt Terwilliger (5.3 PPG, 2.8 RPG) ... Thad Matta has as strong of a nine man rotation as any coach in the country. The team plays the game the right way. Intelligently, efficiently, and unselfishly. And they are awaiting the return of one of the most talented basketball players on planet Earth.

This is going to be a fun season Buckeye fans.