Fueled by 25 points from Deshaun Thomas, the No. 11 Ohio State Buckeyes (16-4, 6-2 Big Ten) cruised past the Wisconsin Badgers (14-7, 5-3) for a 58-49 victory in Columbus Tuesday night.

Through nearly 30 minutes of game action, the two teams went back-and-forth trying to gain an edge. Trailing by four points with 12 minutes to go, Thomas scored 10 of his 25 points in a 15-0 Ohio State run that blew the game wide open.

Wisconsin answered back with back-to-back 3-pointers, two of the 11 triples they connected on against the Buckeyes, but Ohio State was able to hold off the Badgers down the stretch for the nine-point victory.

When asked about the Buckeyes' game-defining run, Badgers coach Bo Ryan blamed it on defensive breakdowns by his team, "Guys missed some assignments defensively and that allowed [Ohio State] to get some easy baskets."

Aaron Craft, though, credited the offense's patience against Wisconsin's always-stingy defense, "The biggest thing is to get the lead," Craft said. "Rebounding the ball was important to getting the lead and not wasting an offensive possession with a bad shot. We didn't do anything special. We took it one possession at a time."

It really wasn't anything special Ohio State did to earn the victory, which might be the biggest development of the season. The Buckeyes have struggled mightily with their half-court offense this year, particularly in their losses to Kansas and Michigan State.

Against the Badgers, Ohio State shot an efficient 51 percent from the field and an even better 60 percent (3/5) from behind the arch. The Buckeyes did commit 10 turnovers, but over all, the offense operated smoothly a tough Wisconsin defense.

Thomas talked about Ohio State's success on offense late in the game, "We did real well down the stretch. We screened and passed the ball really well. Coach told us we needed to be aggressive and start out with a fast tempo and that's what we did."

The Buckeyes got key contributions from Aaron Craft and Laquinton Ross. Craft scored 13 points on five of 11 shooting to go along with seven rebounds. Ross came off the bench and chipped in eight points, two rebounds, one steal, one assist and no turnovers in 20 minutes. Ross was terrific on defense as well, something he's struggled with so far this season.

His growth has been gradual, but Ross feels he is coming along under Thad Matta "For me as a player, the biggest area I have grown in is listening. Last year, I was rebellious and it really hurt me. It's not all about scoring. I do what I can for my teammates."

The game started in typical Wisconsin-paced fashion.

The Buckeyes missed nine of their first 10 shots while committing two turnovers through seven minutes, but despite the horrible start, they trailed Wisconsin just 3-2.

The Badgers scored six unanswered points to take a five-point lead, but Thomas caught fire, scoring Ohio State's first eight points of the game. Ross came off the bench and scored five quick points, but the Buckeyes' offense came to a halt down the stretch.

Wisconsin built a 24-17 lead behind an 8-2 run with just under two minutes to play in the first, but the Buckeyes answered back with seven unanswered points in a 33-second span. A George Marshall layup off a backdoor cut gave the Badgers a 26-24 advantage as the two teams hit the locker rooms at halftime.

Both teams shot 39 percent from the floor through twenty minutes, but Wisconsin connected on six 3-pointers. Thomas, Craft and Ross combined for all 24 of Ohio State's first half points on nine of 16 shooting. The rest of the team combined to miss all of its seven shots.

When the second half started, the Badgers connected on two of their first three 3-pointers, and it looked like they might pull away after building a four-point lead. Thomas and the Buckeyes always had an answer though, and stayed close until exploding for 15 unanswered points.

In the end, Wisconsin just couldn't contain the Big Ten's leading scorer, "They've got a good team," Ryan said. "Thomas is the best player we've played against and we took away his three-point shot, but he can attack so well and is so strong. His mid-range game is what hurt us most tonight."

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes travel to Lincoln this Saturday for a matchup with the Nebraska Cornhuskers. The game will tip off at 7:00 p.m EST and be televised by the Big Ten Network.

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