For those that have not seen the Minnesota Golden Gophers play basketball, count yourself among the lucky masses. I had the misfortune of watching Gopher basketball yesterday and boy is it ugly. They play in a style that is eerily similar to that of the early 1990's New York Knicks, the style that nearly killed the NBA.

Basically, for readers with short memories, the idea is to get the ball, hold it for as long as possible, run the shot clock to one, and then shoot. The desired effect is to limit the number of possessions the opposition takes and it also has the side effect of lulling everyone in the stands and on the court to sleep. Then the Gophers will try to steal the game while everyone is snoozing, capitalizing on breakdowns on the offensive and defensive side of the court. This strategy is very effective for a team that is "out talented", but it is also horrifically boring to the spectator.

The Buckeyes were able to withstand this test of attrition yesterday in Value City Arena 67-53, in a victory that shows how much this team has changed under the leadership of second year coach, Thad Matta. Although the Gophers are not a great team, this game provides a terrific benchmark for the growth of the Ohio State men's basketball team, who lost both games to a Minnesota team using this same strategy last year. The Buckeyes showed great patience in the execution of their game plan on both ends of the court and resisted the temptation to make the errors that were hallmarks of last year's defeats.

The Buckeye's defense did a terrific job forcing turnovers and really clamped down on the Gophers during the second half, limiting Minnesota to 37% from the floor. A team playing the type of ball control offense that Gophers use must make the most of each of its possessions, so their 18 turnovers for the game were disproportionately harmful and ultimately sealed their fate.

Also of note was the reemergence of Je'Kel Foster's shot. Foster led all scorers with 25, shooting 8 of 10 from the floor (7 of 8 from three point range). Remember, it was just five days ago that J.J. Sullinger led the Buckeyes offensively with 24 points on 8 of 12 shooting and it was Ron Lewis who led the Buckeyes with 19 in the loss on Jan. 28th in Iowa City. It seems that every game a new player emerges to lead the Buckeyes offensively and this depth bodes well for the Buckeyes as we look forward toward March.