The opening game of the season was a coming out party for a new-look Ohio State team as two freshman stole the show in a 102-61 rout of North Carolina A&T.

Deshaun Thomas treated the first 20 minutes of regulation as a personal spotlight, scoring 15 points (a team high) coming off the bench. “My job is to come out and play hard and keep the team hyped and motivated," Thomas said after the game. That objective was clearly met as he provided a huge boost for the Buckeyes, helping build a 52-25 halftime lead.

Meanwhile, fellow freshman teammate Jared Sullinger got off to a slow start. Ohio State's top recruit from the 2010 recruiting class had a relatively quiet first half, scoring only three points. But in the second half, the Aggies had no answer for him down low as he finished the game with 19 points and 14 rebounds.

It was a great night to be a freshman on this team as Aaron Craft, Jordan Sibert and J.D. Weatherspoon recorded big minutes for the Buckeyes. Aaron Craft in particular played a fantastic game at the point guard position, registering nine assists against zero turnovers. After the game, head coach Thad Matta admitted he was a little anxious to see how his freshman would preform in a live-game situation. With his first year players accounting for 60 of Ohio State's 102 points, and 15 of their 24 assists, I'd say the coach was satisfied with their performance.

While the talented 2010 class played fantastic, the veterans of the team turned in solid games as well.

With a star like Jared Sullinger, it's easy to overlook a guy like Dallas Lauderdale. Last night, the senior big man served notice to the rest of the teams on Ohio State's schedule -- there are two very talented players occupying Ohio State's frontcourt this year. Lauderdale recorded the first double-double of his Ohio State career, and almost notched a triple-double as he scored 12 points, grabbed 13 rebounds and added an astounding eight blocks. Dallas looks noticeably quicker after dropping some weight in the offseason, and said that he's feeling better on the court this year; “I feel a lot quicker and more in shape and I’m able to move a lot better – I’m like a gazelle out there.”

With Lauderdale and Sullinger starting the game, the Buckeyes absolutely dominated the glass, out-rebounding the Aggies 60-22. Although one game can't serve as any indication for the rest of the season (especially considering the competition), it's encouraging to see the Buckeyes dominate the low post, something they struggled with last year. If there was one thing missing from last year's squad, it was the ability to secure defensive rebounds against the bigger teams they played.

It was a sentiment that A&T head coach Jerry Eaves shared in his post-game comments, “Ohio State is a very good team and a very deep team...They had more offensive rebounds than our rebounds in total." He later added, "They have all the pieces they need to go all the way... There are a lot of weapons here.”

Speaking of weapons, Lighty, Diebler and Buford all had solid performances as well. Lighty showed a ton of aggressiveness throughout the game, pushing the tempo and attacking the basket effectively. Diebler had a very Diebler-esque line, scoring nine points off three made shots behind the arch. Buford struggled a bit shooting the ball, only hitting on four of his 12 attempts (11 points total), but he added seven rebounds and four assists in his 28 minutes.

Who's Next?

Ohio State hits the road for its next contest, heading south to play the Florida Gators in the "O Dome". Florida is ranked 9th in the AP Poll and 11th in the Coaches poll, returning all five starters from last year's team that went 21-13. The game will be nationally televised on ESPN, Tuesday November 16 at 6:00 PM EST.