Morehead State gave Ohio State all they could handle in the first half of Tuesday night's game before the Buckeyes pulled away in the second for a 64-45 victory.

After an impressive start to the season, Ohio State (4-0) struggled at home against Morehead State's pressure zone defense. It was an offensive performance that head coach Thad Matta called "pathetic" in his post-game remarks.

To this point, Ohio State had been a team that has started quickly, averaging 46 points in the first half. Against the Eagles, the Buckeyes fell short of their average by 16 as they took a meager 30-24 lead into intermission.

"I think we were a little stagnant in the beginning against their zone," David Lighty said after the game. " I think they were active and long in their zone, and we just kind of stood around."

The first half was a grind for the Buckeyes for many reasons, but mainly because of the foul trouble talented freshman Jared Sullinger fell victim to. Sullinger picked up his second foul eight minutes into the contest, and was relegated to the bench for the remainder of the half. Add to that the absence of junior swingman William Buford, who missed the game due to back spasms,

and the Buckeyes weren't able to find a groove offensively.

In regard to the slow start, John Diebler placed the blame on himself and the seniors, "We have to make sure ,every game, that everyone is ready to play."

To Morehead State's credit, they are an impressive team that has a true star player in Kenneth Faried. The Eagle's talented forward is projected by many to be a first round pick in this year's NBA draft, and he has had an impressive start to the season. After scoring 20 points and grabbing 18 rebounds in a near upset of Florida last week, he continued his strong play against the Buckeyes. In the first half alone, Faried dominated as he stuffed the stat sheet by collecting nine points, seven rebounds, three steals and two blocks. He was a big reason why Ohio State couldn't gain any momentum on offense.

"Coach got in our face and challenged us tonight," Diebler said. "He wasn't happy with the way we started the game, because we didn't start the game correctly."

After that challenge from Matta, Ohio State put together a better half the final twenty minutes. The Buckeyes were able to draw two quick fouls on Faried, and with four fouls total, Eagles coach Donnie Tyndall had to pull his best player for a pivotal stretch in the game. When Faried left the game with just over 15 minutes to play, the game was a competitive three point dog-fight. When he returned with just under 10 minutes remaining, the Buckeyes were leading by 11 and pulling away.

Sullinger was able to contribute offensively in the second half after going scoreless in the first. His presence inside and the eight points he collected opened things up for the Buckeyes. While tightening defensively, timely shooting by John Diebler is what ultimately put this game away for Ohio State. The senior guard finished with 20 points, four rebounds and three assists, easily his best performance of the young season.

Diebler addressed his impressive night, "For us, we have a lot of weapons offensively. Any given night, someone else can lead us in scoring." That has proven true so far this season as four different players have held game high scoring totals for the Buckeyes. The teams depth will be a serious problem for Ohio State's opponents, and one that Eagles coach Donnie Tyndall reiterated:

"Obviously that's a very talented Ohio State team. They're well coached and they're disciplined, and there's really not a weakness that I see." He later added this nugget, which should make Buckeye fans feel better after a disappointing performance, "We played Kentucky about this time a year ago, and right now, Ohio State is a better team than Kentucky was at that time... I feel like Ohio State is certainly a team that, knock on wood they stay healthy, will have an opportunity to play for a National Championship."

It might be telling that a 19 point win is seen as a disappointment for this team. It's clear that Ohio State has lofty goals for this season, and it's safe to assume that the coaching staff will use this game as an opportunity to teach the freshman and keep the veterans hungry.

**Who's Next?**

Ohio State stays in Columbus to host the Miami (OH) Redhawks on Friday, November 26. The game will tip-off at 4:00 PM EST on the Big Ten Network.