In their game against the Iowa Hawkeyes Tuesday Night, Ohio State stumbled into the locker room at halftime facing a six point deficit. With a heavy dose of Jared Sullinger, the Buckeyes outscored the Hawkeyes 44-33 in the second half to secure a 73-68 victory.

Ohio State (15-0) does not find themselves in that position often. Coming into the night, the Buckeyes had only trailed at halftime once in their first 14 games. Nearly two months ago, the Florida Gators took a three point lead to the locker room in a game that Ohio State eventually won by 18. On the road again, the Buckeyes failed to come up with the defensive stops that have become a foundation of this teams success.

Sullinger talked about that after the game, “What was said at halftime of this game was that we didn't play defense. We didn't care about offense. We win games by defense, and our defense obviously wasn't clicking... Our intensity on the defensive end was not there."

Iowa forward Melsahn Basabe made the Buckeyes pay for their lack of intensity in the first half. While the Buckeyes struggled offensively, Basabe started off hot by hitting his first three shots from the floor. He scored 10 of Iowa’s first 14 points, and through seven and a half minutes of play, he had outscored the entire Ohio State team himself. By the end of the first half, Basabe had racked up 16 points, which is double his season average and two points better than his career high.

Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery came away impressed by Basabe's performance, "I think you're seeing him blossom in terms of his versatility. There's so much more in there than I think he even realizes."

Meanwhile, Ohio State was uncharacteristically inefficient in the first half. The Buckeyes came into the game among the nation's best in taking care of the ball, but the Hawkeyes were able to force nine Ohio State turnovers in the first 20 minutes. Although the Buckeyes shot the ball well, connecting on 13 of their 26 attempts, the turnovers kept Ohio State from overcoming the first half deficit.

"We started off real slow. We give Iowa credit. They never let up," David Lighty said. "They knocked us on our heels, and we had to step it up in the second half..."

That they did.

Needing a spark offensively, the Buckeyes went to Sullinger in the second half. Seeing as how the freshman was one of their very few bright spots, scoring 10 points while grabbing seven rebounds through 20 minutes, the decision proved to be the right one. "Sully" notched the first two buckets of the half and 10 of Ohio State's first 17 points. Iowa had no answer for him down low, allowing the Buckeyes to seize control of the game. After retaking the lead, the Buckeyes went on a run where they scored 16 unanswered points. The barrage lasted five and a half minutes, giving the impression that Ohio State was on their way to another blow-out win.

"We had a stretch where it seemed like we couldn't score, and then our defense fell off just enough," Iowa coach Fran McCaffery said. He later added, "Sullinger was killing us."

Sullinger was killing them as he finished the night with 24 points and 12 rebounds.

But fortunately for McCaffery, his team responded with a run of their own. Over the next four minutes, the Hawkeyes put together an 11-4 stretch that cut Ohio State's lead to six. The Buckeyes had a comfortable lead going into the final minute and a half, but two consecutive 3-pointers by Iowa made it a one possession game with 22 seconds left. Aaron Craft was

immediately fouled on the ensuing inbounds pass and made the game clinching free throws (that put the Buckeyes up by five). Iowa turned the ball over on their next possession and Ohio State survived the night with a 73-68 victory.

The five point win was a wild departure from what the Buckeyes are used to as they came into the night outscoring their opponents by an astounding 26 points per game. Iowa was also the first team to draw within single-digits of the Buckeyes so far this season.

**Who's Next?**

The Buckeyes host the Minnesota Golden Gophers (ranked #21 in the country) on Sunday, January 9. The game will be carried by the Big Ten Network and will tip-off at 2:00 PM EST.