The Ohio State Buckeyes (21-0) blasted the 12th ranked Boilermakers 87-64 in Value City Arena last night, easily handing Purdue the worst loss of their season to date.

Ohio State turned a showdown between the top two teams in the Big Ten into a laughable blowout. The highly-anticipated game was all but over before halftime as the Buckeyes put together one of the best 20 minutes of basketball any team has played so far this season.

After trading buckets through the first few possessions of the game, Ohio State caught fire and went on an 18-4 run early in the first half. The Buckeyes hit five of their first six 3-pointers and absolutely blitzed the shell-shocked Boilermakers. Ohio State was leading 26-9 midway through the first half, and the Boilermakers had no answer for the balance they saw in the Buckeyes' offense.

It's hard to pick out which Buckeye had the best performance through the first 20 minutes. Freshman reserve Aaron Craft was absolutely fantastic on both ends of the court, creating two highlight drives to the basket that probably left JuJuan Johnson's ankles begging for ice after the game. Craft finished the first half with nine points, five rebounds and four assists.

Diebler added 10 points while Buford, Lighty and Deshaun Thomas each had seven. Maybe the most surprising stat of the first half was Jared Sullinger's modest four points and five rebounds. Fortunately for the Buckeyes, they didn't need a ton of contributions from their freshman big-man as the team shot a blazing 57% from the field (17-30) and 6-9 from behind the 3-point line.

Meanwhile, Purdue couldn't get anything going early in the game. The Boilermakers missed nine of their first 13 shots and turned the ball over four times in the stretch where Ohio State built their 17 point lead. Outside of JuJuan Johnson, Purdue had nothing going as no player outside of him and E'Twaun Moore had more than two points in the first half. The Boilermakers were able to stop the bleeding (sort of) after the inital 10 minute barrage by Ohio State, but they still couldn't crawl to within 20 points of the Buckeyes at halftime. Purdue finished the first half shooting just 38% from the field, and if you take away Johnson's five buckets, their shooting percentage dipped to 27%. In addition to the poor shooting, the Boilermakers were outrebounded by the Buckeyes 19-10 through 20 minutes.

As the two teams headed into the locker room, the Buckeyes led the Boilermakers 46-26. The 46 points Ohio State scored was the most Purdue has allowed in the first half of a game all season.

Purdue coach Matt Painter said it best when describing the first half, "They just stole our spirit."

The Buckeyes came out in the second half and completely eliminated the possibility of a Purdue come back. After a quiet first half for Sullinger, the freshman started heating up from all areas of the court by scoring seven quick points through five minutes in the second half. The big man even hit a deep three that sent the near sell-out Value City Arena crowd into a frenzy. The Buckeyes started the second half with a 13-7 run and eventually pushed their lead to 30. It seemed as though Ohio State could do no wrong as they picked apart a usually stellar Purdue defense.

"I liked our mental approach going into the game," Ohio State coach Thad Matta said after the game. "Defense was the key and we did a good job of moving the ball inside and out tonight."

The ball movement was huge for the Buckeyes as they assisted on 20 of their 32 made field

goals. A surprising stat appeared on the box score after the game as John Diebler joined Aaron Craft as the games leading passers. Both guards for Ohio State notched six assists, an overlooked aspect of the game that helped the Buckeyes cruise past the Boilermakers.

After Ohio State's lead swelled to 30, Matta began to substitute freely in order to save the legs of his regular rotation players.

In the end, Ohio State was able to look back at their most impressive win of the season.

"I think it's a big message to send," Craft said when asked about the impression this win should have on the rest of the country. "I think Jared (Sullinger) is a great player but we have to put people around him that can make plays. I think that's a big part of our team, that everyone can make baskets."

Everyone *did* make baskets for the Buckeyes last night. Buford finished with a game high 19 points (shooting 5-6 from the 3-point line), Sullinger was able to score 17 even though Matta pulled him with over 10 minutes left in the game, Diebler and Thomas each had 13 and Lighty capped off the double-digit totals with 10 points. The Buckeyes finished shooting 55% from the field and 57% from the 3-point line.

It's this kind of balance that makes Ohio State a nightmare for opposing teams to game-plan for. And above anything else, the Buckeyes showed that when they're playing their best basketball, it's nearly impossible to beat them.

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes travel to Evanston Illinois on Saturday, January 29 to face-off against the Northwestern Wildcats. The game will tip-off at 6:00 PM EST and will be carried by ESPN2.

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