After finding themselves in a position they rarely get into, the Ohio State Buckeyes had to dig deep in order to overcome Michigan's six point second half lead. An 11-2 run fueled Ohio State's comeback as the Buckeyes won their 23rd straight game 62-53.

The Buckeyes (23-0) used strong performances from Jared Sullinger and William Buford in the second half to carry them to victory. Sullinger was the game's best player, scoring 19 points while grabbing 15 rebounds, but Buford's 13 points were pivotal to Ohio State's success.

"Every shot I shoot, I expect it to go in.," Buford said after the game. "It just went down in the second half."

As Buford hinted, the Buckeyes were able to close strong -- but the first 30 minutes of game time didn't go so well for Ohio State. After racing out to a 7-0 lead, the Buckeyes slowed offensively while making uncharacteristic mistakes on defense. After forcing Michigan to miss five of their first six shots, the Wolverines found their stroke and connected on six of their next seven to tie the game at 14. The two teams traded buckets before Michigan took the lead for the first time 20-19. The Buckeyes turned the ball over 10 times in the first half, which is just under their average for an entire game this season. This resulted in eight fast-break points for Michigan and the Wolverines were able to take a 26-23 lead into halftime.

The 23 points Ohio State managed in the first half were a season low for the Buckeyes. Outside of Sullinger, who had eight points in the first half, and John Diebler who had nine, the Buckeyes didn't have anything going offensively. Every other Buckeye not named Sullinger or Diebler shot

a dismal 3-14 from the field, creating one of the sloppiest 20 minutes of basketball Ohio State has played this season.

“Honestly, I give Michigan a lot of credit,” Ohio State coach Thad Matta said. “We were not as sharp as we needed to be in the first half. We gave up turnovers that lead to easy baskets. It’s unacceptable. “

If he was looking for a different tone to be set to start the second half, Thad Matta was probably disappointed. The Buckeyes turned the ball over on their first two possessions of the half and missed their first shot (and their first free throw attempt). The poor stretch helped Michigan build their six point lead, but Buford hit two consecutive 3-pointers to tie the game at 30.

Ohio State became aggressive on offense, attacking the hoop while racking up fouls on Michigan defenders. The Wolverines had picked up six fouls in just over five minutes of play in the second half, putting Ohio State on the line early and often. The free-throw differential would play a huge role in this game as the Buckeyes shot 21 freebies in the second half compared to just four for Michigan.

“When you’re guarding the length and quickness they have, and Jared Sullinger, it’s hard to guard without fouling," Michigan coach John Beilien said. "You’re looking at the number one team in the country, it’s incredible." He later added, "[Sullinger] is hard to guard and you can get to foul trouble. We traditionally do not get to the foul line lots as a team but we get there more than four times.”

The Buckeyes began to wear down on Michigan and cut down on the mistakes they were making earlier in the game. After the first two turnovers of the second half, the Buckeyes only coughed it up once more before the end of regulation. After scoring just 23 points in the first half, the Buckeyes woke up and scored 39 in the second. Most of the credit is due to Sullinger and Buford, but the team as a whole seemed to really kick it in gear.

Sullinger echoed that sentiment after the game, “In the second half, we just took our intensity to another level. We know that it’s Michigan and they were going to give their toughest game.” He later added, “We knew about the rivalry, and we just had to take it to another level.”

That boost gave Ohio State just enough to push past their biggest rival, and the 65-57 victory gives Ohio State a perfect 10-0 conference record. At 23-0 overall, this year's Ohio State team now has the second best start for a basketball team in school history.

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes will travel to Minnesota on Sunday, February 6 to play the Golden Gophers. The game will be carried by ESPN and will tip-off at 2:00 PM EST.

Follow David on Twitter @ davidreg412