It looked to be smooth sailing for the previously unbeaten Ohio State Buckeyes as they built a 15 point second half lead in Madison against the No. 13 Wisconsin Badgers Saturday afternoon. Wisconsin caught fire behind the arch in mounting an incredible comeback that led to Ohio State's first loss of the season 71-67.

With just over 13 minutes to go in the second half, the Ohio State Buckeyes (24-1) were blitzing the Badgers with a 23-6 run that stretched all the way back to the first half. It was 47-32 when Wisconsin's Jordan Taylor connected on a two point jumper and David Lighty was called for his third foul. With Ohio State's best defender on the bench, the terrific point guard for Wisconsin torched the Buckeyes. Taylor connected on consecutive 3-pointers to cut the lead to seven, and by the time Lighty made it back into the game, Wisconsin had whittled the lead down to five. With momentum clearly on the Badgers side, Taylor completely took over. The Badgers had erased Ohio State's lead in just over five minutes, and after drawing even, Wisconsin continued their run by scoring seven more unanswered points to take a 62-55 advantage. The 22 point swing was too much for Ohio State to overcome.

The star of the game didn't give up when Ohio State went up by 15, "We knew we had a run in us," Taylor said. After scoring just six points in the first half, the Badgers needed Taylor to have a huge second half for them to have a chance. The junior scored 21 points in the second, many of them during that five minute stretch as he finished with a game-high 27.

With a rowdy Wisconsin crowd looking for their second win over an undefeated and top ranked Buckeyes squad this year (the Badger football team handed Ohio State its only loss of the season four months ago), everything from the bounce of the ball to the energy in the building was going Wisconsin's way. When the final buzzer sounded, the fans rushed the court just as they had the football field four months earlier, "There's so many people trying to get closer and closer. It's like suffocating," Wisconsin's Jon Leuer said. "It's fun to celebrate."

It was anything but fun in Ohio State's locker room after the game. The Buckeyes knew they had let one slip from their grasps, but the coaches and players gave credit to a great basketball team in Wisconsin. "They had to play for that stretch damn near perfect to get us and they did," head coach Thad Matta said. "They deserve the credit for that."

Players like Sullinger seem to have taken this game as a lesson and a motivator, "We got a good old piece of humble pie, so we're back hungry. This team wants to get back and practice tonight -- unfortunately, we can't due to NCAA rules."

As the game was coming to a close, Ohio State still had a shot to steal a win. The Buckeyes had closed to within two points of the Badgers after Sullinger connected on consecutive free-throws. Wisconsin had the ball and drained the shot clock when Jordan Taylor passed it to a wide open Mike Bruesewitz at the top of the key. Bruesewitz faked the pass and drilled a 3-pointer that effectively ended the game.

"I shot faked, and then I was thinking about kicking it to Jon because Jon was open," Bruesewitz said. "But they jumped to him and I was like, 'Oh, I guess I'm going to shoot this and knock this down,' "

It was a shot that created a 27 point differential between Ohio State and Wisconsin from behind the 3-point line. The Badgers seemingly couldn't miss from behind the arch and connected on 12 of their 24 attempts. Ohio State was just 3-9.

Good efforts from Buford and Sullinger went to waste with Wisconsin's run. Buford had a team-high 21 points and Sullinger added 19 points and 12 rebounds. Freshman Aaron Craft had a good game offensively, scoring eight points while adding six assists to just two turnovers, but the reserve point guard was abused by Jordan Taylor. Craft repeatedly went under Wisconsin's

ball screens, giving Taylor plenty of room to shoot uncontested 3-pointers.

The game gave Thad Matta plenty to work on going into the final stretch of the regular season. The only thing he and his team can control now is how they react moving forward, "The goal for this basketball team when we set out was not to go undefeated," Matta said. "We'll see our character of how we recover when we come back into practice."

I'm sure the Buckeyes will have March 6 circled on their calendars -- the day the Badgers make their trip to Columbus for the regular season finale.

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes head home to take on the Michigan State Spartans on Tuesday, February 15. The game will tip-off at 9:00 PM EST and will be televised by ESPN.

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