The Ohio State Buckeyes won their second consecutive conference tournament championship on Sunday afternoon, beating the Penn State Nittany Lions 71-60.

The Buckeyes had an easy road to the championship game, taking down Northwestern before handling Michigan on Saturday. It was supposed to get difficult for Ohio State in the title game where they were expected to meet up with Purdue, Wisconsin, or maybe even Michigan State if they got hot. None of those teams survived the surprising Penn State Nittany Lions, who defeated Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan State on their way to the championship game.

The Nittany Lions were able to keep it close in the first half, but things started slipping away from them with about a minute to go before intermission. Momentum was going the way of Penn State before Ohio State scored four quick, unanswered points. Taylor Battle hit two free throws to momentarily stop the bleeding, but with nine seconds on the clock, Ohio State was able to advance the ball and Dielber drilled a 3-pointer over two Penn State defenders.

"It was a huge momentum boost, especially because I thought we defended him pretty well," Battle said of Diebler's shot. "We were scrambling, I was right there in his face, and he just knocked it in. It took the lead from three to six and gave them a little momentum going into the half."

The Buckeyes ended the first half with a 7-2 run and started the second half outscoring Penn State 17-6. Diebler, Sullinger and Buford carried the Buckeyes for most of the day, and after going up by 17 with just under nine minutes to go, Ohio State was never seriously threatened in the game. The fans in attendance, mostly wearing Scarlet and Gray, cheered the Buckeyes on as they took home their league-leading fourth conference tournament championship.

The Buckeyes outplayed Penn State in almost every area of the game. While holding the Nittany Lions to just 39% shooting, the Buckeyes shot just over 50% while connecting on seven 3-pointers. Penn State was (narrowly) outrebounded, but the Buckeyes shared the ball and protected the rim better, registering eight blocks against the Nittany Lions. Outside of Taylor Battle, who had 25 points, five rebounds and two assists -- no Nittany Lion player was consistent enough to give Penn State a chance.

William Buford led the Buckeyes with 18 points on 7-14 shooting, Diebler had 15 points (hitting three triples) and Sullinger added 15 points, 11 rebounds, three assists, three blocks and zero turnovers. Sullinger recorded his third consecutive double-double in the tournament, which is a conference tournament record. After averaging 16 points and 14 rebounds per game this weekend, Sullinger was named the conference tournament MVP. He’s just the second Buckeye freshman to win MVP honors after Mike Conley won it back in 2007.

Sullinger’s teammates had high praise for him after the game."He's just a great teammate to have, very unselfish,” Diebler said. “You know, I can honestly say we probably wouldn't be here without him and how he's performed this year."

And later, David Lighty added, "He can affect the game without scoring. Especially shooting 15 free throws a game. He's knocking those down and getting every rebound that's around him. You really can't stop that."

As the Buckeyes were packing up and getting ready to head back to Columbus, they watched as it was announced that Ohio State was the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA tournament. Reactions were pretty consistent throughout the team, but Lighty offered this, "This is my first time getting the overall No. 1 seed. I hear it's the best way to get to the national championship."

Who’s Next?

The Buckeyes will play the winner of the “play-in game” between Texas-San Antonio and Alabama State on Friday, March 18. Game times and broadcasting information will be released later this week.