



In the winter of 2006, the Ohio State basketball team made a trip to Gainesville and suffered a 26 point beat down at the hands of the Florida Gators. The return trip was very different for the Buckeyes as they won last night's top 10 matchup 93-75.

Behind the strong performances of Senior David Lighty and freshman Jared Sullinger, the Buckeyes buried the Gators in the second half, outscoring them 55-34 in the final twenty minutes. Both Lighty and Sullinger scored 26 points for the Buckeyes, and their big time performances lifted the team to a huge road victory.

The first half was a seesaw battle as both teams executed well on offense. Florida was feasting in the paint early on, out-rebounding the Buckeyes 17-7, and scoring 24 of their 41 first half points in the paint. Florida's guards were penetrating very well, getting into the lane and creating easy shots for their big men. The Gators shot a surprising 60% from the field in the first twenty minutes, hitting 18 of their 30 shot attempts.

Meanwhile, Ohio State was able to keep pace with the Gators behind the play of Lighty and Sullinger, both of whom reached double digit point totals by halftime. The Buckeyes hit a few

triples and ended the half on a short 6-2 run that pulled the game within three (41-38), but the pace of the game was favoring the Gators. Half time adjustments needed to be made by Ohio State, and they seemingly were as the second half was a completely different story for these two teams.

After trading buckets for the first ten minutes of the second half, the Buckeyes slammed their foot on the gas and never looked back. At the ten minute mark, Ohio State went on 19-7 run, an outburst that lasted six minutes and completely took the wind out of a rowdy O Dome crowd. Lighty and Sullinger were the main scoring threats during the stretch, scoring 15 of the 19 points.

During the offensive onslaught, the Gators were unraveling. Florida committed 11 second half turnovers, mainly because they were forcing things to try and keep pace with the Buckeyes. Gator guard Kenny Boynton hit three second half triples (and five of eight total), but he was the only person consistently producing for Florida down the stretch.

Florida's Chandler Parsons' post-game comments reflected that, ""They started jumping on us... They started hitting some shots. We didn't start executing. We weren't very disciplined on offense."

Ohio State coach Thad Matta talked about the adjustments his team made to turn a close game in the first half into a rout in the second, "We challenged our guys to get in there and rebound the ball better... We just weren't as physical as we needed to be." Lighty agreed with his head coach, "In the second half, we kind of knocked them around a little bit and went after the ball."

Sullinger recorded consecutive double-doubles for the Buckeyes by adding 10 rebounds to his 26 points. Although he struggled at times defensively, the freshman was able put in some serious work on the offensive end. Buford and Diebler had good nights shooting the ball as well, combining for 30 points on 12-22 shooting.

Ohio State's guards also played a key role in the game by neutralizing Florida's full-court press.

Although Craft didn't have a huge huge night statistically, he played a great game by forcing the ball up the court despite several Florida defenders trying to slow down Ohio State's offensive attack. That clearly didn't work as the Buckeyes scored 93 points, and a major reason for that is the work that Craft, Bueford, Lighty and Diebler put in by finding the hole's in the defense.

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes make their way home for a Saturday night matchup against UNC Wilmington. The game will be aired live by the Big Ten Network at 8:00 PM EST.