



Ohio State needed five extra minutes of overtime to defeat the pesky Northwestern Wildcats in their Big Ten quarterfinals matchup. Jared Sullinger scored 10 points in the extra period to lift the Buckeyes to a 67-61 victory.

In a game where Ohio State shot a dismal 32% from the field, making just 19 of their 59 field goals and only three of their 15 3-pointers, the Buckeyes had one objective on offense in overtime: get it to Sully. The freshman big-man rewarded the Buckeyes despite the fact that he didn't make a single field goal in the final five minutes. It was his five trips to the line and 10 made free throws that made all the difference.

"Toward the end of the game, [Northwestern] kind of went small, especially in overtime," Sullinger said. "Because they had (John) Shurna guarding me, obviously Shurna has about 60 pounds less than me, we started going to me from there. "

The Buckeyes used Sullinger's size-advantage to outscore Northwestern 15-9 in overtime to secure the six point victory.

It wasn't always that easy for the freshman phenom. Sullinger made just two of his 12 shot

attempts from the field while only getting to the line eight times through regulation. Although he was a monster on the boards, the Wildcats were able to frustrate Sullinger and limit his scoring. That's hard to believe when you look at his numbers as he finished the game with 20 points and 18 rebounds.

Freshman point guard Aaron Craft was instrumental in Ohio State's victory as well. In fact, you could argue that Ohio State would have been lost without their two best freshman. Craft came off the bench and scored 17 points on 6-11 shooting while grabbing seven rebounds. And those numbers don't reflect the incredible defensive intensity he brought to the floor, helping the Buckeyes hold the Wildcats to just 37% shooting from the field.

Thad Matta addressed his team's defense and the play of Craft and Sullinger after the game, "Well, I think that without a doubt our defense saved us today." He later added, "These two guys [Aaron and Jared] obviously did a good job. Jared was huge down the stretch, a couple mismatches down there, and he did a tremendous job."

It was a good thing that Craft and Sullinger stepped up because Ohio State's veterans struggled. Diebler went cold from behind the arch, connecting on just one of his five 3-pointers after coming into the game shooting 17-20 from three point land in Ohio State's final two regular season contests. Lighty only scored twice as many points (8) as he committed fouls (4), and Buford had the worst day of all -- making just three of his 14 shots for 7 points.

That's not the typical production Ohio State gets from the three veterans. As a matter of fact, hardly anything went the way they usually do for Ohio State. Although the Buckeyes outrebounded the Wildcats 41-24, Ohio State as a team only had three assists *the entire game*. That's a credit to the way Northwestern played defense, but it was mainly due to Ohio State's awful shooting numbers. In addition to that, the Buckeyes committed 16 fouls -- a wild departure from the regular season average of just over 10.

With how bad the Buckeyes struggled, Northwestern coach Bill Carmody thought his team played well enough to win, "I think we have a good team, so you'd like to win those games, and you could see it from the guys." Carmody later added, "They came here to win and thought they could, and we were right there."

Quick Hits:

- The Buckeyes shot just 34% from the field in the first half, but were even worse in the second by shooting 26%.
- The two teams combined for just 13 turnovers in the game, which was a Big Ten tournament record despite the game going to overtime.
- John Shurna paced Northwestern for most of the game, scoring a team-high 23 points on 7-13 shooting. Drew Crawford, on the other hand, had a horrible game -- shooting 4-16 for 12 points.
- Lauderdale started for the Buckeyes and played the first five minutes of the game before being replaced by Craft. Lauderdale never made it back in because of the personnel advantage Northwestern had on the perimeter.
- With the win, the Buckeyes reached 30 victories for just the second time in Ohio State history. The first team to do so was Matta's 2006-2007 squad.

Who's Next?

The Buckeyes will take on the fourth seeded Michigan Wolverines on Saturday, March 12. The game will be televised by CBS and will tip-off at 1:40 PM EST.