

# Cal men's basketball team loses but doesn't go quietly

By Jeff Faraudo  
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NEW YORK — Cal wasn't searching for a moral victory after Friday's 76-70 loss to Ohio State in the third-place game of the Coaches vs. Cancer tournament at Madison Square Garden.

It was more like it was looking for a road map for the rest of the season.

Down 52-28 with 151/2 minutes left and on the verge of being embarrassed for the second straight day, the Golden Bears refused to let it happen.

A technical foul against coach Mike Montgomery and a fiery sideline players meeting moments later triggered a change in the game's tenor and made it a contest. The Bears will lose their No. 13 national ranking next week, but they salvaged their self-respect.

"They knocked us on our heels," Ohio State coach Thad Matta said. "You've got to give them credit, they did not go away."

Led by Jerome Randle's 26 points and a career night by reserve forward Omondi Amoke, the Bears chiseled 18 points off the deficit, outscoring the No. 15 Buckeyes 42-24 the rest of the way.

"If we can learn how hard we have to play ... you're going to give yourself a chance to compete," Montgomery said.

This was not going to be a reprise of Thursday night's 95-73 pounding by Syracuse.

Cal had scored six straight points to pull within 52-34 when Jorge Gutierrez stole the ball from Evan Turner and was fouled. Montgomery barked at the official anyway and got a "T." During the ensuing timeout, Randle and fellow senior Jamal Boykin called together their teammates.

"They said Coach did that for us, it's our turn now to show him that we're going to step it up, and regardless of the outcome, all we can do is play hard," said Amoke, who had 11 points and 15 rebounds, both career highs. "We're on a national stage, and we didn't want to come out and get embarrassed like that."

Still without two key ailing players — Theo Robertson (foot) and Harper Kamp (knee) — the Bears once again were physically manhandled early in the game. The night after having nine shots blocked, they had 11 more swatted, seven of them by forward Dallas Lauderdale.

"We'd get the ball at the basket point blank and get it blocked, which is deflating," Montgomery said.

It wasn't good news, either, that Ohio State (3-1) used a zone all night, just as Syracuse did.

"I was shocked we played against 80 minutes of zone. That blows me away," Montgomery said. "We didn't play against man at all. Maybe we won't again."

The Bears' increased defensive intensity created opportunities in scrambled-court situations in the second half. But Cal also went after the Ohio State defense more aggressively.

Randle scored 20 second-half points, and Amoke attacked the rim and chased down most of the shots he missed to get another chance.

"He was like a Charles Barkley or (Dennis) Rodman out there today," Boykin said of the 6-foot-6 sophomore.

Cal never got closer than six points, thanks mostly to Turner, the only Buckeyes player to score a field goal in the final 15 minutes. He finished with 26 points, 14 rebounds and six assists.

The Bears next play Tuesday at home against Jacksonville, but they don't know when Robertson and Kamp will return. But they may have figured out how to approach every game.

"I told the guys — and I don't know how else to handle it — if we play our hardest, we have to accept the results," Montgomery said.

OHIO ST. 76,  
CAL 70 NEXT GAME: Tuesday, vs. Jacksonville, 7:30  
p.m.