

Goals Still Ahead Of Ohio State After Winning Outright Big Ten Regular-Season Championship



Ohio State's on-court celebration following the 67-51 win over Michigan on Wednesday - one that secured the outright Big Ten regular-season championship - served as an acknowledgement thus far of what the Buckeyes have been able to accomplish this season.

First things first, a shared conference championship - at least in the eyes of sophomore forward Cotie McMahon - is not a win. A loss against the Wolverines could have put Ohio State in position to share the conference regular-season title with Iowa, something McMahon would not have taken kindly to.

"I don't like sharing and neither does this team, actually," McMahon said. "That's not a win. ... But it felt good to have it just *the* Ohio State."

But that's just one goal Ohio State hoped to achieve this season. The Buckeyes still have the Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament ahead and the NCAA Tournament, where they hope to build on last year's run to the Elite Eight. Winning the Big Ten was a significant accomplishment, but the work continues for Ohio State.

"It doesn't stop here," sophomore forward Cotie McMahon said. "I have two years (left) to grow with this team and the teams coming in. Then we still have a whole other month of basketball (this season). ... I can accomplish so much more being a sophomore with this team, and it's crazy."

Those goals remain ahead of Ohio State because of the work that has been put in since the season began. After beginning the year with a loss to USC and adding a non-conference loss to UCLA in December, the Buckeyes' only loss since then came to Michigan on Dec. 30 - one that has since been avenged with the team's most recent victory.

Now, with just one regular-season game remaining - a big one at Iowa on Sunday, even if the stakes are not as big considering Ohio State already clinched the conference title - the Buckeyes are hoping to carry that momentum into the postseason.

"I'm just really proud of this group," head coach Kevin McGuff said. "We've got great kids, and they've worked extremely hard. As I told them in the locker room, if you looked at where we were when we played our first Big Ten game to where we are today, we've made incredible progress. We've done that because we've got a group that has focused on the right things every day in practice, focused on the next game ahead and that's it."