

Men's Lacrosse: No. 8 Buckeyes Travel To Maryland For Battle With No. 1 Terrapins



Ohio State men's lacrosse will hit the road to face top-ranked Maryland on Saturday afternoon in a battle for first place in the Big Ten.

The No. 8 Buckeyes (8-3, 2-1 Big Ten) trail the No. 1 Terrapins (10-0, 3-0 Big Ten) by one game in the conference standings, making this weekend's contest crucial for determining which program will control its destiny toward winning a Big Ten title.

"Maryland is having a tremendous year," Ohio State head coach Nick Myers said. "They are well-coached. Coach Tillman and his staff are organized, buttoned up and they've seen about every scheme you can imagine thrown at them. Whether it's early slides, slow slides, adjacent slides, crease slides or zone slides, there's no one answer out there to beat them. It's a talented team from front to back."

The Terrapins lead the nation in scoring offense with 18.30 goals per game. They also pace the NCAA in shooting percentage (.400), scoring margin (plus-8.70) and assists per contest (10.70). In its most recent matchup, Maryland defeated then-No. 3 Rutgers, 17-9, in College Park, Md., on April 10.

"They get going downhill in a hurry," Myers said. "You can't become too consumed with trying to have an answer for everything. We prepared this week as we have prepared every week this year. It starts with spending a fair amount of time on ourselves. Coming out of that Johns Hopkins game, there was still meat on that bone in terms of things we can do and things we have control over. That's our primary focus, and then you're as prepared as you can be. Maryland has a group that gives you a lot to think about, but you control what you can control."

That self-determined approach has led to much success for Ohio State in 2022. The Buckeyes rank 10th nationally in scoring offense at 14.36 goals per game, third in man-up offense (.611), ninth in man-down defense (.733) and sixth in face-off percentage (.619).

This season, fifth-year senior Jackson Reid and senior Jack Myers — Ohio State's captains — have been crucial to the team's offense, with Reid contributing 57 points from 26 goals and 31 assists and Myers adding 43 from 29 scores and 14 helpers.

Fifth-year senior Colby Smith leads the Buckeyes with 31 goals, including at least one goal in all 11 games. Fifth-year senior Justin Inacio ranks eighth nationally in the face-off circle with a .613 winning percentage. Inacio also leads the team with 67 ground balls.

Myers said he feels confident his team can upset the Terrapins this weekend. After all, he's done that before as the Buckeyes head coach. On April 22, 2018, Ohio State knocked off No. 1 Maryland 12-10 on the road. In that game, Inacio won 17 face-offs and Reid scored three goals.

"It's a great opportunity for us to play the best team in the country," Myers said. "The No. 2 team isn't even in the backseat right now — Maryland is out in front of everybody. It's a great chance for us to go for it and test ourselves. It's time to compete for another Big Ten win."

Ohio State and Maryland's opening faceoff is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Saturday. The match will be televised on the Big Ten Network with Peter Medhurst and Mark Dixon will be on the call.

MEN'S LACROSSE HAS 48 SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Ohio State held its annual Scholar-Athlete banquet at the Covelli Center on Monday. A record of 46 men's lacrosse players was honored for their academic success, which topped a previous program record of 45. Taji Flynn, Daniel Garone and Matt Mercer were three of 52 student-athletes to carry a perfect 4.0 grade-point average.

BIG HONORS

Reid earned Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week honors for his five-goal, one-assist performance against Johns Hopkins on April 9. He is the fifth Ohio State player to earn one of the conference's weekly awards this season, joining Trent DiCicco, Skylar Wahlund, Inacio and Myers.