

Michigan Head Coach Dusty May Says Ohio State “Without A Doubt” An NCAA Tournament Team



Image courtesy of Sue Ogrocki/Associated Press

In addition to pleading for an annual home-and-home series with Ohio State following the Wolverines' thrilling 86-83 win over the Buckeyes, Michigan head men's Dusty May devoted some of his time during his postgame press conference at Value City Arena to deliver significant praise to his biggest rival.

After watching his team successfully withstand several valiant Buckeye runs to leave Columbus with a three-point victory, May went out of his way to make a case for Ohio State as an NCAA tournament team, saying that they "without a doubt" belong in the Big Dance this season.

"I think Ohio State's without a doubt an NCAA tournament team," he said. "It was two heavyweights battling it out, going hit for hit, and fortunately we made the plays when we needed to."

May — the former Florida Atlantic head coach who emerged as a final candidate for Ohio State's head coaching vacancy last spring before Diebler was hired on March 17, 2024 — was complimentary of the program Diebler has built this season.

Along with praising the "phenomenal" play of sophomore forward Devin Royal and freshman and junior guards John Mobley Jr. and Bruce Thornton, May lauded the way Ohio State has navigated through their difficult schedule and grown as a team since the beginning of the season, a development that many of his colleagues who have played the Buckeyes this year also have noticed of late.

"It's a lot of fun competing against those guys because we have a lot of respect (for them)," May said. "Like us, they played an incredibly difficult schedule, which has prepared them for Big Ten play. They're a much better team now than they were six weeks ago. A much, much better basketball team,

"I looked at a couple texts from coaches that have played them earlier, and they said, 'Wow, they've improved.' That's probably the most difficult thing to do in today's climate, is to keep a team together, fighting like crazy together, and then have them improve as you go through this long, grueling season of college basketball, especially in the Big Ten Conference."

May's declaration about the Buckeyes seems to be the correct one heading into the final three weeks of regular season play. Ohio State sits as a No. 9 seed in ESPN's latest projected NCAA tournament bracket, set to face off with the two-time defending champion UConn Huskies in the first round in Raleigh, N.C., with a likely matchup against No. 1 seed Duke awaiting the winner.