

No. 1 Ohio State To Take On No. 5 Indiana In Semifinals



Ohio State will get the chance to avenge one of its five regular-season losses, as the Buckeyes will take on Indiana in the semifinals of the Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament on Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

The Buckeyes got to this point by defeating Michigan State 74-58 on Friday, while Indiana earned wins over Rutgers on Thursday (66-54) and Maryland on Friday (62-51). Indiana handed the Buckeyes a 20-point loss on Dec. 12, 2021, in their only matchup of the regular season, but these teams are in very different spots from where they were nearly three months ago.

The Hoosiers were on top of the conference standings but stumbled in the final weeks due to an injury to star forward Mackenzie Holmes, who torched Ohio State for 30 points on 13-of-19 shooting in their last meeting. The Buckeyes, meanwhile, capitalized on a weak finish from Indiana and Michigan to secure a share of the Big Ten regular-season championship with Iowa.

In that last game, Ohio State had not yet given significant roles to sophomore guard Rikki Harris or freshman forward Taylor Thierry, both of whom have been integral to the Buckeyes who have won 14 of their last 16. Sophomore guard Kateri Poole was still starting at that point as well but has since come off the bench since returning from an injury.

Beyond Holmes' 30 points, the Hoosiers got 21 from guard Grace Berger and 17 from guard Nicole Cardano-Hillary, while the Buckeyes had just two - junior guard Jacy Sheldon (23) and senior guard Taylor Mikesell (15) - hit double digits. Ohio State finished with 17 turnovers that resulted in 26 points for Indiana.

"I think our effort was there," Sheldon said after the loss. "It's those mental mistakes that got us there - those turnovers and some mental states defensively that we can't afford."

Now, with a team that has found its stride in the second half of the season, the Buckeyes could present a new challenge to an Indiana team that has won just three of its last seven and will have played two days in a row before taking on Ohio State. Even so, the Buckeyes will have their hands full with the Hoosiers, who are projected as a four-seed in the NCAA Tournament.

"Indiana, they're so good in the half-court defensively and they're physical and they wear on you, so to

be able to execute in a manner that puts us in a position to get really good shots will be very important against them," head coach Kevin McGuff said.

The winner will go on to face either No. 2 Iowa or No. 6 Nebraska, who upset No. 3 Michigan, in the Big Ten Championship Game on Sunday at 4:00 p.m.