

Ohio State Junior Guard Bruce Thornton Named To Preseason All-Big Ten Team



Ohio State junior guard Bruce Thornton earned some notable preseason recognition on Tuesday when he was named to the 10-member preseason All-Big Ten team as voted on by the media.

Thornton is the lone Buckeye to be represented on the list. He is coming off a strong sophomore campaign in which he served as the unquestioned team leader of the 2023-24 team both on and off the court, leading the team with 15.7 points, 4.8 assists and 1.2 steals per game while also adding 3.7 rebounds and shooting 42.7 percent from the field, 33.3 percent from three and 85.0 percent from the free-throw line across a team-high 33.7 minutes per contest.

Thornton was also one of the more efficient point guards in the nation last season, ranking second among all Division I players with a 4.0 assist-to-turnover ratio. He became just the third player in program history with more than 100 assists and fewer than 50 turnovers in a season, joining Brandon Fuss-Cheatham in 2004-05 (100 assists, 38 turnovers) and Shannon Scott in 2012-13 (142 assists, 45 turnovers).

Each of these stats earned him third-team All-Big Ten honors from the media and honorable mention honors among the coaches, one of two Buckeyes last season to earn postseason honors along with now-Toronto Raptors forward Jamison Battle (honorable mention All-Big Ten).

But Thornton made perhaps the biggest impact on the team last season with his leadership, where he made it a point as team captain to offer support and guidance to his teammates in the weeks after former Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann was fired and Jake Diebler was elevated into the interim role. Diebler mentioned last year that Thornton's leadership was critical to the team's end-of-season success last year, and it is a trait that the junior will look to continue to have in 2024-25, where he will likely be named team captain for the third season in a row.

Thornton is expected to have another successful season in 2024-25 alongside a new cast of characters

in the backcourt that includes South Carolina transfer and former Buckeye Meechie Johnson, San Diego State transfer Micah Parrish and true freshman John Mobley Jr., among others.

Thornton shares the preseason All-Big Ten honors with Rutgers true freshmen guards Ace Baldwin Jr. and Dylan Harper; Indiana center Oumar Ballo; Northwestern guard Brooks Barnhizer; Minnesota forward Dawson Garcia; Washington forward Great Osobor; Iowa forward Payton Sandfort; Purdue guard Braden Smith and Oregon guard Jackson Shelstad.

Smith, the only unanimous preseason all-conference selection, was also named Preseason Big Ten Player of the Year. He hopes to keep the postseason version of that award in West Lafayette, Ind., for the third consecutive season, with now-Memphis Grizzlies center Zach Edey taking home that award after the 2022-23 and 2023-24 campaigns, respectively.