

Ohio State Picked to Finish Third in Big Ten Preseason Poll



The media and coaches agree; that it will be another positive year for Ohio State in the Big Ten. The Buckeyes, who bring back star forward Cotie McMahon from a 2023-24 regular season Big Ten champion team, are picked to finish third in the conference in both the coaches and the media poll.

McMahon was the Buckeyes' sole inclusion on the preseason All-Big Ten Team.

McMahon was one of ten players to make the Media's Preseason All-Big Ten Team, including Iowa forward Hannah Stuelke, Iowa guard Lucy Olsen, Maryland guard Shyanne Sellers, Nebraska center Alexis Markowski, UCLA center Lauren Betts, UCLA guard Kiki Rice, USC guard Juju Watkins, USC forward Kiki Iriafe, and Wisconsin forward Serah Williams. Illinois guard Makira Cook made the Coaches all-Big Ten Preseason team but didn't make the team in the Media's list. McMahon was the Big Ten freshman of the year in the 2022/2023 season before making the all-Big Ten First Team in 2023/24; she averaged 14.4 points per game and 6.4 rebounds per game last year.

As a team, the Buckeyes finished the year with a 26-6 record, which included a record of 16-2 in the Big Ten.

Joining the Buckeyes in the preseason poll was USC at 1, UCLA at 2, Maryland at 4 and Indiana at 5. The Trojans started off their 29-6 2023-24 season with a win over Ohio State in both teams' opening game of the season before making it to the Elite Eight, where they lost to women's basketball powerhouse UConn.

Having brought back First-Team All-American guard Juju Watkins, it is no surprise that the Trojans are predicted to finish atop the Big Ten.

Like its cross-town rival USC, UCLA also picked up a key non-conference win over the Buckeyes. The Bruins finished the 2023/24 season with a run to the Sweet 16 while picking up a record of 27-7.

Maryland was a middle-of-the-pack Big Ten team in the regular season and had a 9-9 conference record heading into the Big Ten tournament. It was there that the Terrapins started to play their best basketball, defeating Illinois in round one before dominating Ohio State by 21 points in the next game.

Maryland didn't make it past the semifinals of the Big Ten Tournament and lost in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, but projects to have another good team led by senior guard Shyanne Sellers.

Indiana was a true Big Ten contender a season ago, finishing with a conference record of 15-3. The Hoosiers had an admirable run in the NCAA tournament, where they came very close to taking down eventual national champion South Carolina in the Sweet 16 but lost 79-75.