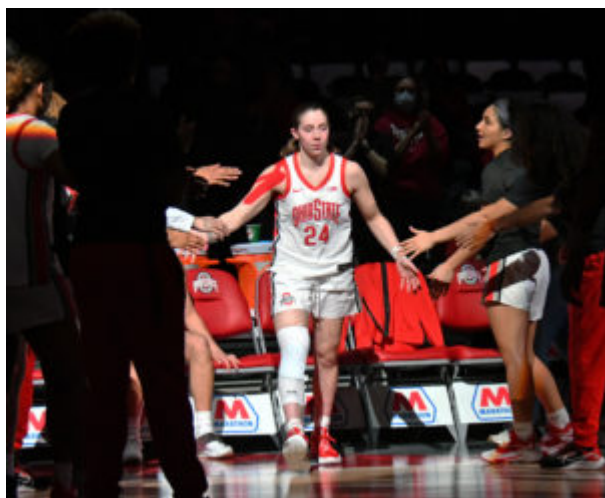


Tournament Run Was “Motivating Factor” In Taylor Mikesell’s Return



Ohio State senior guard Taylor Mikesell spoke Wednesday for the first time since electing to return to the Buckeyes for a fifth season, and she said the team’s run to the Sweet 16 was a motivating factor in her return.

“I think just getting that close and knowing that we had what it takes to win that Sweet 16 game, and then looking even to Stanford, knowing that we were talented enough to play with them, is obviously really motivating,” she said. “I took that into account. (I’m) just looking forward to next year and the returners that we have coming back and what we’re capable of accomplishing.”

Mikesell transferred to Ohio State this past offseason from Oregon and slotted right into the starting lineup, helping lead the Buckeyes to a Big Ten co-championship and the school’s first Sweet 16 appearance in 2017.

She was one of the nation’s best three-point shooters this season, and for that reason, it was in the cards for her to explore declaring for the WNBA Draft, scheduled for April 11. A 47.5 percent shooter from deep would certainly receive plenty of draft consideration, and it made the decision difficult for Mikesell.

“I went back and forth every single day, honestly. I was kind of 50/50, weighed my options a little bit,” she said. “Some days I thought it was best for me to stay, some days, I thought it would be best for me to enter the draft. Once we started the tournament, I wanted to be present for the tournament and not worry about what was going to happen next year, months from now, whatever it was.”

The return will be welcomed in Columbus, as her and soon-to-be senior guard Jacy Sheldon will operate in one of the country’s best backcourts, and that’s before considering junior guard Madison Greene’s expected return.

“I’m incredibly excited to welcome Taylor Mikesell back for another season,” Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said. “She’s obviously a terrific player and an even better person. Looking forward to another impactful season from her.”

Mikesell said the coaching staff was “great” as she contemplated staying or going, and said they wanted her to do what was best for her.

“Them bringing me in here was a blessing for me, just being able to redevelop the love I had for the game and just coming here to be closer to home everything, I think it’s been a great journey,” she said. “I think that was just on par with how they’ve been all year with me. Just super accepting, super willing to help (with) whatever I needed. Once I decided to come back, I called them right away and made it clear that I wanted to come back.”