

Women's Basketball: Ohio State Checks In At No. 8 In ESPN's Way-Too-Early Top 25



Coming off Ohio State's first appearance in the Elite Eight since 1993, expectations remain high for the Buckeyes when looking ahead to next season.

According to ESPN's Charlie Creme's Way-Too-Early Top 25, Ohio State is the No. 8 team in the country entering next season, trailing No. 7 South Carolina, No. 6 UCLA, No. 5 Indiana, No. 4 Iowa, No. 3 LSU, No. 2 Utah and No. 1 UConn.

With Ohio State returning star freshman Cotie McMahon as well as welcoming back guard Jacy Sheldon for a fifth and final season with the Buckeyes, the expectation is that Ohio State can return to the Elite Eight and potentially go beyond.

"The Big Ten finished this season with three teams ranked in the top 10. It should start 2023-24 that way, too," Creme wrote. "Jacy Sheldon's decision to come back stabilizes the Buckeyes significantly. She will be a leader of a team full of young talent.

"Cotie McMahon was the Big Ten's freshman of the year and looks to be one of the game's next stars," he continued. "Rikki Harris and Taylor Thierry are also talented scorers and playmakers. Taylor Mikesell's shooting and leadership will be missed, but with Sheldon back to lead the press, Ohio State will be a Final Four contender."

Along with the above Big Ten teams, the conference is also joined by No. 12 Maryland, making it four teams from the Big Ten in the Top 25. As for the final AP Top 25 poll of the season, Ohio State landed at No. 12, trailing No. 7 Maryland, No. 3 Iowa and No. 2 Indiana within the conference. Also included in that list was No. 18 Michigan.