

Conley, Russell To Meet In NBA Play-In Tournament Tuesday



There will be a distinct Buckeye flair during the NBA Play-In Tournament this season.

Former Ohio State guards D'Angelo Russell and Mike Conley will compete against one another in the NBA Play-In Tournament, which kicks off Tuesday on TNT. Russell and Conley are the only former Buckeyes to qualify for postseason play this season, with Russell playing for the Los Angeles Lakers and Conley for the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Earlier this season, Russell and Conley were involved in the same three-team trade which sent Russell from Minnesota to Los Angeles and Conley to Minnesota from the Utah Jazz. Since arriving on their new teams, both players have made an impact.

Since acquiring Russell, the Lakers have gone 12-5 in games he's played in while playing themselves into playoff position, while Russell has added 17.4 points and 6.1 assists per game in his 17 appearances with Los Angeles. On the season as a whole, Russell has posted 17.8 points per game on 46.9 percent shooting.

This is Russell's second stint with the Lakers, as he was selected with the No. 2 overall pick by Los Angeles in 2016 but after issues in the locker room derailed his acclimation process to the NBA, the Lakers traded Russell to the Brooklyn Nets in 2017.

Conley has gone 12-12 in his games with the Timberwolves, helping Minnesota remain in postseason play. Across his 24 games with Minnesota, Conley has averaged 14.0 points and 5.0 assists per game, which is up from his 10.7 points per game in his 43 appearances for Utah this season.

Conley and Russell will take center stage when the Lakers and Timberwolves battle on Tuesday at 10:00 p.m. on TNT. The winner will claim the No. 7 seed in the playoffs and the right to play the Memphis Grizzlies in the first round, while the loser will play the winner of the No. 9 Oklahoma City Thunder and

No. 10 New Orleans Pelicans — who square off on Wednesday — Thursday for the right to play the No. 1 Denver Nuggets in the opening round of the playoffs.