

No. 2 Ohio State Set For Top-10 Tilt With No. 10 Iowa



No. 2 Ohio State (19-0, 8-0 Big Ten) will face its toughest test of the season so far on Monday, set to host No. 10 Iowa (15-4, 7-1) at Value City Arena at 7 p.m.

While the Buckeyes have already notched several ranked wins on the season – including one over then-No. 5 Tennessee – the Hawkeyes, led by guard Caitlin Clark, are an entirely different animal. Iowa averages 87.9 points per game, with Clark accounting 26.7 of those on 45.9 percent shooting on the field.

Beyond her scoring acumen, Clark is also the team's leading rebounder at 7.6 boards per game and leads the team in assists, dishing out 7.5 per contest. The Hawkeyes have two others averaging double-digit scoring this season, including forwards Monika Czinano (17.9 points per game on 65.1 percent shooting) and McKenna Warnock (11.9 points per game on 51.0 percent shooting).

It will be a significant test for Ohio State's defense, which has held opponents to just 62.9 points per game on 40.5 percent shooting. The Hawkeyes combined to shoot 50.0 percent from the field, which ranks third in the nation.

Ohio State has been able to dispel most teams this season with their full-court press, forcing 23.1 turnovers per game, but the Hawkeyes average just 13.6 turnovers per contest, meaning Iowa is stingier than most with the ball. It could force the Buckeyes to rely more heavily on their half-court defense, something Ohio State did successfully in its 76-67 win over Nebraska on Jan. 14. That outing was an encouraging sign for head coach Kevin McGuff.

"We've won in different ways, especially of late with some of the injuries we've had," he said. "We've had to win differently at times. That's an encouraging sign to know if the game's going a certain way, we can make some adjustments and still put ourselves in a position to be successful."

Ohio State is still expected to be without guard Jacy Sheldon, who is "getting closer" to a potential return for the Buckeyes, but Ohio State will still have the likes of guards Taylor Mikesell and Taylor Thierry as well as forwards Cotie McMahon and Rebeka Mikulášiková as the Buckeyes look to remain undefeated.

The game - which is expected to have a season-high crowd for the Buckeyes - will tip off at 7 p.m., and will be broadcast on ESPN2.