No. 8 Ohio State, No. 10 Indiana Set To Face Off At Top Of The Big Ten Standings

Two weeks after knocking off Iowa, No. 8 Ohio State will get another shot at one of the top teams in the Big Ten, set to host No. 10 Indiana at noon for an expected large crowd at Value City Arena.

"Indiana's got a great team," Ohio State coach Kevin McGuff said. "I'm really appreciative of the community coming out and supporting us in a big game like that (against Iowa), so it should be an incredible environment."

Entering the contest, both Indiana and Ohio State – as well as the Hawkeyes – have just one loss in conference play, though Iowa has 10 wins while Indiana and Ohio State have just nine. But, with the Buckeyes having already defeated the Hawkeyes, a win would catapult them to first in the conference standings.

It will be no easy task, however, considering that Indiana's only losses this season have come to Stanford and Iowa, and it has won 17 of its last 18 games. And much of that success can be attributed to star forward Mackenzie Holmes.

"It was good that we had to play a great post player tonight (against Wisconsin)," McGuff said on Thursday, "because we're going to play against Mackenzie on Sunday, who's one of the best in the country."

Holmes is averaging 20.5 points and 7.5 rebounds this season on 66.8 percent shooting, which is fourth in the nation and first in the Big Ten. She has scored in double figures in her last seven games against the Buckeyes – including a 26-point outing in Value City Arena last season – though Ohio State did hold her to just 13 points in last season's Big Ten Tournament win over the Hoosiers.

The matchup – likely to be shared between Rebeka Mikulášiková and Eboni Walker, with Taylor Thierry and Cotie McMahon available to rotate to the post if needed – will be of immense important to the Buckeyes not just because of Holmes' ability, but because bigs like Holmes have given Ohio State problems over the years. But it's a duel that the Buckeyes are looking forward to.

"She's just a great player," Walker said. "I think that's a lot of the posts as well in the Big Ten, I think we all have a lot of respect for each other. She's a really smart player, so I'm excited to get the chance

to play against her again."

But even if Ohio State can limit Holmes, the Hoosiers have no shortage of reliable scorers. Four players – including Sara Scalia, Yarden Garson, Sydney Parrish and Chloe Moore-McNeil – average at least 10.0 points per game, with Moore-McNeil totaling 4.5 assists and Parrish adding 5.8 rebounds per contest, creating a unique challenge for Ohio State's defense that has seen improved half-court play as of late.

The big-time matchup between Ohio State and Indiana will tip off at noon, and will be broadcast on FS1.