

Ohio State On Brink Of NCAA Tournament After Topping Indiana



The Ohio State men's basketball team might have a spot in the NCAA Tournament. Then again, maybe not.

There are not guarantees yet for the Buckeyes, even after a 79-75 win over Indiana in the second round of the Big Ten tournament at the United Center in Chicago on Thursday afternoon. The Buckeyes now sit at 19-13 overall with at least one more chance to impress the selection committee.

The Buckeyes are set to face No. 1 seed Michigan State at 12:30 p.m. Friday, and a win there would likely put Ohio State into the Big Dance.

"I hope we're (already) in, but if we win tomorrow I feel like we're definitely in," said fifth-year senior guard Keyshawn Woods, who had a team-high 18 points against the Hoosiers. "Just keep bringing the same energy that we had tonight to tomorrow and we'll be good."

Woods was a key piece in extending the Buckeyes' Big Ten tournament run. He shot 9 of 13 from the field and came up with key buckets toward the end of each half. He also turned the ball over just once in a game that was highlighted by giveaways from both sides (17 Indiana, 16 for Ohio State).

As a senior, the graduate transfer was playing to extend his collegiate career. For younger guys like sophomore center Kaleb Wesson, back in the lineup after a three-game suspension, there are plenty of chances still on the horizon. They still want to take advantage now, though, and Wesson admitted the Buckeyes need to keep winning to make the NCAA Tournament.

"We still have wins to win," he said. "We still have a couple more."

Wesson was key in the victory as well, tallying 17 points and 13 rebounds.

Wesson added that the team was focused on beating Indiana, not simply winning in order to earn a tourney berth. That will be the mindset when the Buckeyes face the Spartans as well.

When Friday's contest tips off, it could mark the end of one final run for players like Woods and senior guard C.J. Jackson. Or it could mark the start of a postseason surge for the Buckeyes.

“There’s a look that you get,” head coach Chris Holtmann said in regard to seniors whose careers are winding down, “and it’s like, ‘Hey, I want to keep playing for a while.’ ”

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