

Ohio State Set For NCAA Tournament Run To Begin



The NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament has officially begun, with the First Four played earlier in the week and the round of 64 beginning on Friday, and Ohio State is ready to get things started as the No. 3 seed in the Seattle Regional 3.

"I think just knowing that what we've done all summer had led us to this point," Ohio State guard Taylor Mikesell said Friday. "Trusting who we've become and how we've grown together and showing that on the court."

The Buckeyes will open play on Saturday at The Schottenstein Center, set to host No. 14 James Madison at 1:30 p.m. The winner will go on to face either No. 6 North Carolina or No. 11 St. John's on Monday.

Mikesell is one of several Buckeyes back from last year's squad that made it all the way to the Sweet 16 before falling to Texas, but perhaps the star of this year's team has been freshman forward Cotie McMahon, who will be making her first appearance in the NCAA tournament.

McMahon has averaged 14.7 points per game this season on 51.5 percent shooting, and while it may be her first outing in The Big Dance, head coach Kevin McGuff said she'll stay true to herself approaching this new challenge.

"You know, I could give Cotie a bunch of advice, but she's going to go out there and play the way she's going to play, which is really, really, really hard and as fast as she can up the court," he said.

"That's the great thing about her is she's got such a joy for the game, and she loves to play, and she loves to compete, and she plays so hard," he continued. "My advice to her will be just continue to do the things that you have done to put yourselves and help put this team in this position."

While potential matches up the bracket include the Tarheels or third-seeded UConn and forward Dorka

Juhasz, who transferred to the Huskies after three seasons at Ohio State, McMahon said the Buckeyes are focused on the game in front of them against the upset-minded Dukes.

“(Associate head coach Carla Morrow) told us the other day all these teams are good,” McMahon said. “They obviously wouldn’t be in this tournament if they weren’t, so I’m expecting a lot out of each team we play, and I’m excited. It’s going to be good competition.”