

Women's Ice Hockey: No. 2 Ohio State Battles No. 1 Wisconsin This Weekend



While college football and the NFL dominate the weekend for most sports fans, Ohio State women's ice hockey offers an alternative this Saturday and Sunday.

In only the fourth series of the season, the No. 2 Buckeyes (6-0-0) travel to Madison, Wisc., to face the No. 1 Badgers (8-0, 4-0) in a battle between the nation's top teams.

BEFORE THE WEEKEND

Ohio State

Ohio State swept St. Thomas, then-No. 4 Minnesota and Bemidji State in the first six games, claiming the best start in program history and breaking the previous season-opening streak of five games to start the 2012-13 campaign. By beginning the year against three-straight conference opponents, the Buckeyes earned their longest WCHA win streak in program history.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin started its season at Lindenwood, outsourcing the Lions 18-1 in two games. The Badgers then shut out Merrimack twice before claiming two dominant wins against St. Cloud State. Wisconsin faced resistance from Minnesota-Duluth in its last series but overcame two sluggish performances and took its fourth sweep of the year.

TEAM LEADERS

Ohio State

Jenn Gardiner looks poised to continue her early-season success against Wisconsin. After a five-point weekend against Bemidji State, Gardiner won the WCHA Forward of the Week award — the first of her career. She scored back-to-back goals in the first game and added a pair of assists in the second, leading Ohio State to two wins.

Gardiner leads the Buckeyes with seven assists this season and ranks fifth nationally with 1.17 assists per game. She ties Jenna Buglioni for the team lead in points with 11 and is seventh in the country in

points per game with 1.83.

Buglioni scored against all three opponents Ohio State faced in the first six games and ties Gabby Rosenthal for the team lead in goals with five. Rosenthal scored four goals against Bemidji State and netted another in the Buckeyes' season-opening game with St. Thomas.

Four Ohio State players played goalie in the first six games. Andrea Braendli leads the way with four, contributing 230 minutes in net while making 89 saves on 92 shots (.967 percent). Amanda Thiele and Raygan Kirk both have 60 minutes in the crease, with 14 saves and 13 saves, respectively. Quinn Kuntz has 10 minutes and made two stops.

Wisconsin

Makenna Webster leads Wisconsin and the NCAA in points with 21 and claimed seven multi-point games in the first eight matches. She trails only Casey O'Brien in goals, putting away eight shots to O'Brien's 11. Webster also paces the Badgers in assists with 13 while Daryl Watts sits right behind with 12.

Nicole LaMantia earned WCHA Defender of the Week after putting up a multi-point game on Sunday against Minnesota-Duluth. She scored a goal and added an assist to record her 50th career point for Wisconsin.

Kennedy Blair will start at goalie for the Badgers and leads the team with 400 minutes in net. She's saved 115 of 120 possible shots (.958 percent) and will provide a tough challenge for the Ohio State offense.

ALL-TIME SERIES

Ohio State is 17-73-10 (.220) in the all-time series with Wisconsin. However, the matchup is much closer since Nadine Muzerall took over the program six years ago. Since the 2018-19 season, nine of the 16 games were decided by one goal or a shootout.

The Buckeyes and Badgers have met four times in the postseason in the last three years, including Ohio State's first WCHA Final Faceoff championship in 2020 — a game Wisconsin won 4-2.

A PERSONAL NOTE

If you like hockey, you should watch these games. Both teams are exceptionally talented, and you might get a sneak peek at a potential Frozen Four matchup at the end of the year.

HOW TO WATCH

No. 2 Ohio State at No. 1 Wisconsin

Date: Oct. 23/24, 2021

Time: 3 p.m. ET/ 4 p.m. ET

Venue: LaBahn Arena

Watch: Saturday (B1G+) | Sunday (BTN)

Live Stats: Statbroadcast

Game Notes: Ohio State

Rosters: Ohio State | Wisconsin

Season Stats: Ohio State | Wisconsin