

NORTHWESTERN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL READY TO BEGIN BIG TEN TOURNAMENT

By Owen Flynn

Head Coach Joe McKeown and his 14 players set in for their first game in the Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament against No. 9-seed Michigan State Spartans on March 7, just four days after narrowly losing their last regular season game against Iowa State. This game finished their regular season with a 9-9 conference record and a 16-13 overall record.

"The first thing that comes to mind when I think of the Big Ten Tournament is that everybody's record is the same again," McKeown said. "Everyone is 0-0, you're starting over from the regular season. Everyone has a fresh start going into the Big Ten Tournament."

However, seeding in the tournament gives the top four seeds, (Maryland, Michigan, Iowa and Rutgers) a small advantage over the rest of the Big Ten Tournament bracket.

"Seeding is obviously a big part of the tournament because some teams have a bye and the top four teams have double byes so that means those teams are getting a lot of rest right now," McKeown said.

Even with the prospect of facing the No. 1-seed Maryland Terrapins if the Wildcats scored a win against the Spartans, McKeown made sure the Wildcats stayed on track.

"You can't look past anybody," McKeown said. "Michigan is a really good team so they are our main focus going into the tournament. We're taking things one at a time. The game against Michigan State is a big game for us. The regular season records are important but also since you're playing one game at a time and if you get beat you go home we're a little more focused than in the regular season."

With over 600 career wins over the past 11 years, McKeown hopes to lead the Wildcats on a successful Big Ten Tournament run to conclude the season.

"The most important thing we need to remember is to stay together, play together, and not get too high or well when things go badly or well," McKeown said. "Also, we need to understand we're playing in the Big Ten in Indianapolis so it should be fun. It's a great opportunity."

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