



NCAA BASKETBALL

FROM ONE OF THE NATIONS TOP SPORTS HANDICAPPER

Friday, March 17, 2023

ROUND #1

INDIANA vs. KENT STATE

Game Time: 9:55 PM EST

Broadcast: TBS

Game Pick: KENT STATE +4.5

GAME ANALYSIS

Kent State, which earned the automatic bid from the Mid-American Conference, is a veteran, battle-tested team with a defense-first mentality. Kent State played a challenging non-conference slate against Gonzaga, Houston and Charleston and lost those three games by a total of 14 points.

Rob Senderoff, a former IU assistant in Bloomington during the Kelvin Sampson era (now coach of the # 1 seed Houston Cougars) coaches the Golden Flashes.

This year's Kent State team is even better than last year's version as Jacobs and Sincere Carry anchor one of the best backcourts nationally at the mid-major level.

Carry was an All-MAC first team selection and Jacobs was a second team pick. Both players made the league's all-defensive team and Jacobs was named the MAC defensive player of the year. The 6-foot-1 Carry began his career at Duquesne, where he played three seasons before transferring to Kent State before last season. He leads the Golden Flashes in scoring at 17.6 points per game and has started each of Kent State's 34 games. Carry also leads Kent State in assists (4.6 per game) and is second in steals (1.7 per game).

Kent State wins with defense. While the Golden Flashes did light up Toledo for 93 points in the MAC championship game, the performance came against an opponent with a defense ranked 291st in the country.

Kent State has forced 544 turnovers this season while committing just 389. That's a differential of 4.5 per game. According to KenPom, the Golden Flashes rank 30th in block percentage and 20th in steal percentage.

The Golden Flashes are not a high-percentage 3-point shooting team (33.6 percent), but have connected on 268 triples this season. Indiana has made only 187 3-pointers this season.

The clear areas for Indiana to take advantage of are the Jackson-Davis matchup, Kent State's Achilles heel is their defensive rebounding and foul shooting. Kent State won't be able to match up with Jackson-Davis straight up and he should be able to manufacture looks at the rim with his size and athleticism. In Kent State's loss at Gonzaga, Drew Timme went for 29 points and 17 rebounds, including seven offensive boards.

I feel in the end that Kent State's elite backcourt and their defense will give Indiana fits. When the Hoosiers struggle this season it's a result of this type of scenario. Playing at a neutral court also helps Kent State as they are a perfect 4-0. Getting 4.5 points is a nice buffer in a game which should be a hard-fought battle from start-to-finish.

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NON-GUARANTEE Charge is applied regardless of the game outcome.

NOTE: The point spread is dependent on the wagering site used and when the game is bet. We wager on EVERY game given out and those tickets will be posted on the web site at the beginning of each week. Each ticket bought will be either \$500 or \$1000.

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