Friday, March 17, 2023

ROUND #1
KANSAS STATE vs. MONTANA STATE

Game Time: 9:40 PM EST
Broadcast: CBS
Game Pick: MONTANA STATE +8

GAME ANALYSIS

On first glance to the bettors who really don't follow college basketball during the year, it would seem how can a team like Kansas State (23-9) from the toughest conference, the Big 12, and a 3 seed, not easily cover the 8-point spread against the 12 seed Montana State (25-9) from the Big Sky conference? The answer is the matchup and other factors which could lead to a much closer game than "meets the eye".

Kansas State has lost 2 in a row, both games away from home. A matter fact, there's quite a disparity between their performances at home where they are a stellar 16-1 but have a poor record of 4-7 in away games.

Montana State has won 8 games in a row and is 13-1 in their last 14 games. They have a stellar away record of 10-5. Obviously facing Kansas State and their coach Jeremy Tang, Big 12 coach of the year, this evening is a big step up in class, but I feel it's a very good matchup for the underdog.

Kansas State does a superb job defending the 3-point line. Montana State does not shoot many 3's which negates the Wildcats strength. The Bobcats rely on driving the basketball and playing more of an interior game where they rely on the 2-point shoot and drawing fouls. They are one of the best foul shooting teams in the country.

Kansas State is one of the worst teams in the country fouling in the paint and that's why I expect Montana State to live at the line as the game progresses. They also are a very good foul shooting team. The Bobcats junior point guard RaeQuan Battle is a stud as well as 6-9 240 Lb. Senior forward Jubrile Bello who is a beast down low.

Last year Montana State won their conference tournament but then they got blown out by Texas Tech in the first round. Their star point guard was a secondary player off the bench last year. In 2022-23, Battle emerged as the "key cog" in their lineup. The Bobcats certainly want to wipe away the stench of last year's beat down.

I expect a hard-fought game throughout, and I would not be surprised if Montana State upsets Kansas State, joining Furman and Princeton as bracket busters Friday evening. Of course, the Bobcats will have to bring their "A" game to the Big Dance, because Kansas State is so well coached and have surprised everyone with their stellar year. But again, it comes down to matchups and this is a favorable one for the 8-point underdog Montana State Bobcats.

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

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