



Thursday, March 21, 2024

MOREHEAD STATE EAGLES VS ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI

Game Time: 03:10 pm ET

Watch: TruTV

Selection: Morehead State Eagles +13

Morehead State (MSU) has all the ingredients you look for in an upset in the first round of the Big Dance. They are senior laden and well coached by Preston Spradlin, and this is the best team Spradlin has had in his 8 years at the small KY school. He has led MSU to four consecutive 20+ win seasons, a first in program history.

They play at a very slow pace and are fairly evenly balanced on both sides of the ball, ranking in the top 125 on both adjusted offense and defense.

The Eagles shoot 3's at a top 25 rate nationally. MSU enters this game with 318 three-pointers this season, a school single-season record. MSU is one of just 22 D1 teams to hit 300+ triples this year! They have steady point guard play in Drew Thelwell, who will be difficult for Illinois to defend. Their OVC player of the year Riley Minix will also be a serious problem and potential mismatch for Illinois. The Eagles don't have a lot of depth, but their guys are used to playing a lot of minutes and don't rely on just 1 or 2 guys. Minix is one of four current Eagles along with Kalil Thomas, Jordan Lathon, Mark Freeman [not active this year] to have at least 1,000 career collegiate points.

On the defensive side, Morehead is top 10 nationally in FG percentage allowed. They have elite transition defense points allowed, which again is very important in this particular matchup. We expect MSU to limit Illinois in transition which they are very good at. Morehead is also proficient on the glass which is important against Illinois. Eddie Ricks III (39), Dieonte Miles (36) and Riley Minix (35) all had 35 or more blocked shots this year, marking the first time in program history with three players with 35+ blocks in the same season.

This Illinois team reminds us of Iowa in 2022 who ran through the Big 10 tourney with Keegan Murry starting but then ended up losing in the first round to a big dog in Richmond. Take the underrated Eagles to play big in this game for coach Spradlin!

If a single game you purchased does not win based on the point spread, you will receive the next equivalent game FREE OF CHARGE.

Any questions or comments can be sent to: wiz@wizardraceandsports.com

Follow me on Twitter at: [The Wizard@WizardPicks](https://twitter.com/TheWizard@WizardPicks)

THE WIZARD® and THE WIZARD Design are registered service marks of Wizard Race and Sports, INC. © 2024 Wizard Race and Sports, INC.
Republication, retransmission or dissemination of the contents is prohibited.