



Monday, April 8, 2024

UCONN HUSKIES VS. PURDUE BOILMAKERS

Game Time: 09:20 pm ET

Watch: TBS

Selection: UCONN - 6 (-120)

Anyone who has read my write ups and selections for many of Uconn's tournament runs the last 2 seasons, are well aware that the Wizard has not gotten off the gravy train. We've cashed each and every time. I must admit that I haven't bet the Huskies in all 11 previous tournament games, but instead have picked my spots. What has been clearly illustrated is that Uconn has covered in all these games and have won by double digits each time. It's mind boggling to think that has been their resume the last 2 NCAA Tournaments, but the truth is in the numbers. If they were to win Monday night, you would have to put the Huskies towards the top of the greatest college basketball teams ever.

The 2 best teams this year are matching up for the grand finale. Both Uconn and Purdue have proven throughout the year that they are the best based on not only their records but the 'eye test' and many metrics. As fans and spectators, we will be treated to the 2 amazons of this sport on the biggest stage for all the marbles. The amazons that are both the 'head of the snake' happen to be both centers-Zack Edey of Purdue and Donovan Klingon of Uconn. Edey plays more minutes than Klingon, but that's because his back up Sampson Johnson is a very good fill in. Edey is Edey and there is no such substitute on their squad. Both teams have very good guard play (Branden Smith for Purdue was awful Saturday against NC State), but I do expect a far better performance Monday or they well get blown out. Both squads are solid defensively. The edge goes to Uconn as far as the Huskies having the better bench. I also give the coaching advantage to Uconn's maestro Dan Hurley.

Both teams are on a mission, but a different one. Uconn is the defending National Champion and wants a repeat. Purdue got bounced out by 16 seed Fairleigh Dickinson in the first round last year and are looking to pull off a similar feat which Virginia did in 2019 after being the first team ever to lose to a 16th seed the year before.

Strong motivation is there for both squads, but I feel that Uconn is clearly the better team. Hurley is a master at making adjustments in the second half of games which was on full display against Illinois and on Saturday against Alabama. The Crimson Tide shot lights out from the 3 in the first half. Hurley changed his defense up in the second half to take away the 3 point line and Alabama went cold from

there. Against Illinois, the Huskies went on a mind boggling 30-0 run in less than 10 minutes. The points come at you in waves and ultimately tear opposing teams hearts and souls right out of their body. And this has happened with Uconn being below average hitting their 3's. It's their defense that gets their offense rolling and Klingen being a monster at the rim, alerting close range jump shots, and swatting away balls like he is killing cockroaches with his pinkie finger.

I do expect Purdue to battle hard most of the game and is likely to keep it close. If they are to win, their guard play has to be elite, the defense even better and getting Klingen into early foul trouble. Edey will get his, but with Klingen they don't have to double team him, letting the other 4 defend. In the end, I expect Uconn to draw clear of the 6 point spread and it's possible once again they earn a double digit victory and their second National Championship.

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

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