

the game

Men's basketball vs. Wisconsin

Tipoff at 9:37 p.m. today

Follow the game

TV CBS
Radio WJIM (1240-AM)
and WMMQ (94.9-FM)

Players to watch

MSU Sophomore guard Kalin Lucas and freshman forward Draymond Green have averaged 11.5 points a game through two games in the NCAA Tournament. Kansas Sherron Collins and Cole Aldrich have scored nearly 44 percent of the Jawhawks' points this season.

In the paint

Eight different Spartans have scored in double-figures in the first two games of the tournament, with six players averaging nine points or better.

BEHIND the scenes

The MSU scout team doesn't get all the credit or glory, but their role is crucial to the success of the team



Sophomore guard Mike Kebler goes for a layup during Thursday's open practice at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. NICK DENTANARO/THE STATE NEWS

Who's who this week?

Before each game, the scout team for the MSU men's basketball team is assigned a player on the opposing team to emulate. Here's a list of who played who in preparation for tonight's game against Kansas:

Mike Kebler/Korie Lucious — Sherron Collins
Austin Thornton — Brady Morningstar/Tyrel Reed
Isiah Dahman — Mario Little/Tyshaw Taylor
Draymond Green — Marcus Morris/Markieff Morris
Tom Herzog — Cole Aldrich

SOURCE: THE STATE NEWS

By Cash Kruth THE STATE NEWS

Eight seasons after the MSU men's basketball team won the national championship, the days of preparation leading up to the 2000 title game are still firmly etched in Brian Gregory's mind. The former MSU assistant coach remembers the Spartans had "two or three" walk-throughs and a practice on Sunday, followed by a light shoot-around Monday morning. Gregory, now the head coach at Dayton, also remembers there was to be one last walk-through prior to the team dinner that Monday evening. It never happened.

"The scout team was getting ready to do one more walk-through in the hotel room before dinner, and they were ready to go, but Mateen (Cleaves) and Morris (Peterson) came to (MSU head coach Tom Izzo) and told Tom they didn't need to do it," said Gregory, who coached at MSU from 1990-95 and from 1999-2003. "The scout team, in less than two days — in less than the prepared time — had done such a good job playing as Florida that those guys didn't think they needed to go over it any

more. Tom asked them if they were sure and they said that they were, so Tom said, 'OK, let's go eat.'"

'The best scout team in the country'

This year, there's an ongoing joke on the MSU men's basketball team that its scout team runs upcoming opponents' plays better than its opponents do. Sometimes it's actually true. "At times I think they really do," said MSU assistant coach Mark Montgomery, who called MSU's

scout team the best in the country. "We might not have the athletes that other teams have, but just running their sets or doing exactly what they do, at times we've walked away saying our scout team ... (ran) similar plays better than the opposing team." For proof, look no further than MSU's game against Robert Morris last Friday in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

In the week leading up to the

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For updates on the men's and women's basketball NCAA Tournament games, visit www.stateneews.com.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Team prepares for Sweet 16, focuses on defense

By Joseph Terry THE STATE NEWS

The MSU women's basketball team got one last practice in Wednesday before it left for Berkeley, Calif., to meet Iowa State in the Sweet 16 on Saturday.

The Cyclones, who are 26-8 on the season and finished in third place in the Big 12 with an 11-5 conference record, are very guard-oriented and remind the Spartans a lot of Middle Ten-

nessee State, the team MSU beat in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

"You can see that (the 3-point shot) is a big part of their offense; it's 42 percent of their offense," head coach Suzy Merchant said. "The difference is these guys are amazing at getting them off screens. It's a totally different attack than Middle Tennessee State. Their stuff comes off great screens and rescues and they're very heady, very smart players. It can

become a pinball machine out there if you let yourself."

Similar to Middle Tennessee, the Cyclones average hitting more than eight 3-pointers per game and are shooting 35.1 percent from behind the arc. "We know Iowa State can put it on the floor a bit more (than Middle Tennessee)," sophomore forward Cetera Washington said. "So, we'll have to guard the dribble drive but also take away their three ball — that'll be huge."

More online...

For a video of Suzy Merchant and the players talking about going to the Sweet 16, visit stateneews.com.

The Spartans defended Middle Tennessee's offensive attack fairly well, holding the Blue Raiders to only five threes and 29.4 percent shooting from behind the arc. MSU is seventh in the nation in 3-point defense and tied for third in total defense, allowing opponents to only shoot 34.2

percent from the field.

The Spartans have ridden their strong defense into the NCAA Tournament, holding Middle Tennessee to 40 percent shooting for the game and Duke to only 26.9 percent shooting, often bothering the opposing teams with their distinct size advantage inside.

A key for that defense in the tournament has been MSU junior center Allyssa DeHaan, who has been monster defensively around the basket, with 10 blocks in the last two games and countless more effected shots, using her height to keep opponents out of the paint.

"I haven't seen another 6-foot-0 kid on the roster yet in the nation," DeHaan said. "So it is a little bit of

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