

# 2010-11 Big Ten men's basketball previews: Wisconsin (premium)

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*HawkeyeDrive.com*

The Big Ten kicks off its 2010-11 men's college basketball season next week, so this week, *HawkeyeDrive.com* will give you rundowns on all 11 conference teams. Today, we'll showcase [Northwestern](#) and Wisconsin. The Badgers will only play Iowa once this season, with the meeting taking place on Feb. 9 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

While I think Wisconsin is a team that will have some major questions to answer as it goes through the 2010-11 season, I still see the Badgers finishing in the top half of the Big Ten and making yet another appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

Wisconsin lost two very important pieces from last year's squad in guards Trevon Hughes and Jason Bohannon, and the jury is still out on who fills those voids and provides the Badgers with some production.

In fact, there are only four players on the current Wisconsin roster that have any sort of starting experience.

Fortunately for the Badgers, one of those four guys is a 6-1 guard in junior Jordan Taylor, so the backcourt isn't completely new. Taylor had the Big Ten's best assist-to-turnover ratio last season, which was 3.03 (he had 118 assists to just 39 turnovers). He also averaged 10 points per contest. If Wisconsin is going to contend again for a Big Ten title, then it will need strong play from the point guard spot. With Taylor having started 17 games last season, the Badgers appear

to be in good hands here.

Without a doubt, the strength of this Wisconsin team is inside, and the Badgers' have one of the conference's best post players in senior forward Jon Leuer. Despite missing nine games last season due to a fractured wrist, Leuer still led the Badgers in scoring with 15.4 points per game on 52 percent shooting from the field, as well as in rebounding with 5.8 boards per contest and blocking 32 shots.

This season, the 6-10 forward comes in as a preseason first-team all-Big Ten player. He is the single most important player on the Badgers. If Leuer remains as productive as he has been, Wisconsin will be remain a force to be reckoned with.

His partner in crime inside is senior forward Keaton Nankivil. The 6-8 hometown product shot nearly 50 percent from the field last season while starting every game for the Badgers. Nankivil finished last season with averages of 8.1 points and 4.7 rebounds per game, while also accumulating 45 assists, 35 blocked shots, and 31 steals.

While it hasn't been set in stone by head coach Bo Ryan just yet, the fourth starter will likely be 6-6 senior Tim Jarmusz, who did start 27 of 33 games for Wisconsin a year ago. The two areas of Jarmusz's game that will benefit the Badgers are his outside shooting and ball-handling abilities. The Oshkosh, Wis., native shot 35 percent from 3-point range as a junior and had the fewest turnovers of any player last year.

The most likely candidate to round out Wisconsin's starting lineup is junior Rob Wilson. The Cleveland, Ohio native averaged 12.2 minutes of playing time while appearing in 30 games for the Badgers last season.

A couple of freshmen to keep an eye on for the Badgers this season are 6-10 forward Evan Anderson and 6-1 guard Ben Brust. Anderson was a McDonald's All-American nominee as a senior at

Eau Claire North in Wisconsin, averaging 10 points, 5.6 rebounds and 3.5 blocks per game. Meanwhile, Brust is an Illinois kid who originally committed to Iowa before then-head coach Todd Lickliter was fired and replaced by Fran McCaffery. As a senior in high school, Brust averaged nearly 25 points per game.

One reason I like Wisconsin to be a legit team again this season is because of the size inside, mainly Leuer and Nankivil. The key for the Badgers will be which guards other than Taylor step up and take on the roles left by Hughes and Bohannon.

If that question can be answered right away, then Wisconsin is going to be in better shape than some are giving it credit for. I don't see this team necessarily winning a Big Ten regular season title (Big Ten Tournament is always a possibility though), but I will be shocked if the Badgers aren't dancing again this March. Ryan is a good enough basketball coach that he knows what buttons to push, and I think this team is definitely in good hands.