

Buckeye Freshmen Taison Chatman, Austin Parks To Miss Time This Preseason With Knee, Back Ailments



Ohio State is without the services of two freshmen to start the 2023-24 preseason, with guard Taison Chatman and center Austin Center both dealing with injuries that will require them to miss some time this fall.

Holtmann told reporters at Big Ten Basketball Media Days on Tuesday that Chatman, Ohio State's highest-rated recruit for the 2023 class out of Minneapolis Totino Grace (6-4, 175) will be sidelined for the next four-to-six weeks after undergoing a knee procedure in early October. He added that Parks, a three-star prospect from Saint Marys (Ohio) Memorial (6-9, 240), will also miss time while he deals with back spasms, but he is expected to return to the practice floor before his freshman counterpart.

"It looks like Austin's return will be sooner than Taison, but we expect them both to be back here this season," Holtmann said.

Holtmann, who hinted at some possible ailments affecting his team but declined to expand on the specifics during Ohio State's media day at Value City Arena on Sept. 25, said both Chatman and Parks' injuries could potentially hinder their development and progression as the offseason progresses, putting them behind other first-years Scotty Middleton and Devin Royal as they watch practice from the sidelines. The two freshmen have also been forced to miss time during the summer with the same injuries, which the Buckeyes Coach said can only hurt their chances to make an impact this season.

"Anytime you have an injury, it's going to set you back, and especially when you're a freshman," Holtmann told the media. "It's not their fault. It's out of their control, and I know they're both anxious to get back, really anxious to get back. I know they're hungry to do that."

"Anytime you have an inconsistent summer and an inconsistent preseason, it's going to delay your

development,” he added.

Chatman, the nation’s 39th-best prospect and eighth-best combo guard in the class who helped lead his high school to back-to-back Minnesota 3A state titles in 2022 and 2023, is expected — once healthy — to compete for playing time in a crowded Buckeyes’ backcourt that also features the freshman Middleton, projected starting point guard Bruce Thornton and Baylor transfer and defensive specialist Dale Bonner.

Parks, the nation’s 26th-best center and No. 5 prospect in Ohio who is known as a “throwback big man,” enters his first year at Ohio State behind experienced senior Zed Key and rim-protecting sophomore Felix Okapara on the depth chart. This reality, coupled with the injury, could make it difficult for the Ohio native to see much action for his hometown team this season.