

Chris Holtmann Addresses Ohio State's Assistant-Coach Vacancy



Ohio State assistant coach Mike Schrage left the Buckeye staff to become the head coach at Elon University, leaving Chris Holtmann with a coaching vacancy for the first time in his tenure in Columbus.

Holtmann insinuated that another one of his assistants — Ryan Pedon or Terry Johnson — nearly took another job, too.

“I mentioned to you guys after the season that I thought potentially we could lose one or two guys, and that almost happened,” Holtmann said. “I’ll leave it at that for now.”

Before addressing the coaching vacancy, Holtmann made a point to congratulate Schrage on his new job.

“Super happy for Mike Schrage and his family,” Holtmann said. “Mike was a tremendous asset for us for a number of years, dating back to Butler. And I’ll you, he was ready for this opportunity. Mike’s a guy that, you know, a couple of years ago when we were looking to hire him, he was really considering whether or not he was going to continue to coach. So really happy for Mike on his move to Elon.

“I think Elon hired a fantastic coach. Amanda, Andrew, Sophie — they’re going to really enjoy the Schrage family. It’s always a little bit bittersweet when you lose a staff member, and we’re super happy for them.”

With the never-ending recruiting cycle in full swing, Holtmann said he wanted to fill the assistant-coach vacancy prior to “the first AAU weekend” at the end of April. Until then, special assistant to the head coach Mike Netti has taken on many of Schrage’s responsibilities on a temporary basis.

Holtmann mentioned Netti and director of player development Scoonie Penn as two candidates for the open role.

“We have a tremendous, tremendous staff that I feel really good about,” Holtmann said. “You have Mike Netti who has been an assistant at a high level, has experience, was at East Carolina, obviously, he and I worked together, so I saw him kind of go through and recruit guys. And he brings a level of experience just being an on-the-floor assistant and on-the-road recruiter.

“And obviously, Scoonie Penn, who has been a tremendous asset for us. I think we all love Scoonie, and we’ve loved having him around and a part of our program. So those two guys are always guys that you’re looking at and evaluating.

“I think I’m looking for someone who can bring a level of experience in recruiting as well as on-the-floor coaching, and who’s showed the ability to do that effectively. So there’s a small pool of guys that I’m considering right now, and those two guys within the staff are part of that.”

While Holtmann is high on Netti and Penn, he could also bring in someone from outside the program. One outsider who has a history with Holtmann and does not currently have a job is Michael Lewis.

Lewis worked with Holtmann on the Butler staff for one season when they were both assistants, and then for two more with Holtmann at the helm. Lewis left to become an assistant coach at Nebraska for Tim Miles. However, since Nebraska’s firing of Miles and hiring of Fred Hoiberg, Lewis is no longer on the staff.

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