

Chris Holtmann Previews No. 23 Ohio State's Matchup With No. 19 Michigan



The No. 23 Ohio State men's basketball team is coming off a decisive 75-54 victory at Nebraska, following an upset win against then-No. 7 Maryland.

The Buckeyes welcome No. 19 Michigan, who was on a five-game winning streak since its Feb. 4 loss to Ohio State before losing to Wisconsin on Feb. 27.

Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann previewed the matchup while speaking with reporters on Feb. 29.

- Terrific opponent that we have a lot of respect for. They had some struggles, but they are playing terrific now.
- First-year head coach Juwan Howard is doing a great job with a veteran group.
- Xavier Simpson [Michigan guard] is one of the best competitors I've ever coached against. I think he's one of the best competitors in all of college basketball.
- The game is sold out, hoping to see our fans out on a Sunday afternoon.
- Kyle Young is doubtful.
- Alonzo Gaffney is still ill.
- Eli Brooks [Michigan guard] is a really good player. They have a lot of depth on the front line and on the perimeter.
- They were missing Isaiah Livers last time. He's a tremendous player. Livers is a significant difference for them.
- Their size and length is a major concern. It's one of the biggest starting lineups I've seen.
- What does freshman forward E.J. Liddell need to do to step up? Good day of practice. Got to be locked into practice and locked in to what we're doing. Really good approach.
- Our staff did Michigan prep before the Nebraska game, but we didn't as a team.
- We stayed the night in Lincoln because of concerns of fatigue with the travel and practices.
- Physical low-scoring game? Last game was a credit to both teams playing tough defense. Our

defense was pretty solid. I'm not sure if it will be another game like that. They are really good offensively, have great length and play hard and together.

- I feel like we've have had some really gold stretches, what makes it more significant is the tough competition it's been against.
- We've done a better job taking care of the ball. Our defensive efficiency has been inconsistent.
- Our captains and leaders have been huge during this stretch.
- The addition of Livers is concerning. Even when they were struggling in the past, I thought they were probably some health and a couple good games from getting on a roll.
- So much about players-led environment. This time of year you don't completely turn it over as coach, but you turn a lot of it over.
- Really glad to have freshman guard DJ Carton back. Excited to have him back in school.

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