

Chris Holtmann Provides Offseason Updates



In an appearance Tuesday evening on 97.1 The Fan, Ohio State men's basketball coach Chris Holtmann gave hosts of The Buckeye Show, Tim Hall and Eric Rieser a number of updates on a hectic offseason. Although he did point out it's not as crazy as it could have been.

"We've had a very stable roster," Holtmann noted. "The average in basketball is five transfers per team. We had one young man, Musa (Jallow), graduate and find a spot elsewhere. We love him and Ibrahima (Diallo), both great kids. So our roster for the most part has been pretty stable, but it's still has been a very busy offseason."

Jallow has left OSU for UNC-Charlotte. Diallo has yet to announce his new home after departing.

One thing that has kept Holtmann busy is the fact that June 1 marks the end of the recruiting dead period.

"June is a time when we (coaches) can now go back out and also have recruits on campus," observed Holtmann. "It's huge. And right now as I'm looking at my desk, I see a number of visits planned in June. I mean, every day is jam-packed with at least one, and in some cases, two visitors – some unofficial visits, some official visits. It's every day, including Sundays in most cases."

He's also busy searching for a replacement for assistant coach Terry Johnson, now that Johnson has moved on to join the staff at Purdue.

"I'm really excited about this opportunity that we have. I've not wanted to rush it. I wanted to go at a pace where I could vet all the candidates personally," Holtmann said. "I'm excited about our candidate pool. It's been a job that there's been incredible demand for it."

He really wants to get that hire right because he admits to still thinking about Ohio State's season-ending loss to Oral Roberts every single day. He also wants to get it right, because he believes the Buckeyes have a demanding schedule waiting them in 2021-22.

"I anticipate, at least I hope, that we'll be able to play in front of a packed house again," said Holtmann. "I think we've got a really exciting home Big Ten slate ahead of us, along with some nonconference games that I'm excited about."

On another scheduling note, Holtmann discussed some speculation regarding who they will square off

against Thanksgiving week when they participate in the Fort Myers Tip-Off. “Obviously, it’s Kentucky, UCLA, or North Carolina. We heard rumblings of one of those teams in particular that we played a couple years ago.”

OSU faced UNC on Dec. 4, 2019, beating the Tarheels 74-49. They also played Kentucky that year, topping the Wildcats by a final score of 71-65.

Whether Ohio State will have E.J. Liddell and Duane Washington in the lineup at that point is unknown, as both have decided to explore the NBA draft process. It will still be several more weeks, according to Holtmann, before the team learns if they will return.

Holtmann does know he will have Malaki Branham available. The incoming freshman was a four-star recruit and Ohio’s Mr. Basketball for 2020-21.

“What a special kid he is,” raved Holtmann. “I think hes a young man that people are really going to love watching and getting to know. He’s kind of a versatile multi-position guard.

“I’m going to have him write a letter or pick up the phone and call Jimmy Jackson, because he really wants to wear Jimmy’s number.”

Jackson wore No. 22 when he played for the Buckeyes, and the number was retired in 2001.

Chris Holtmann – @ChrisHoltmann 5-18-21 <https://t.co/xgp1vq80B1>

— Buckeye Show (@TheBuckeyeShow) May 18, 2021

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