

Chris Holtmann Recaps the 2020-21 Season



Ohio State men's basketball coach Chris Holtmann held an interview to share his final thoughts on the 2020-21 season as well as look ahead to what's next for the Buckeyes. Here's a summary of what the OSU head man discussed.

- Holtmann started his comments mourning the passing of Terrence Clarke, the former Kentucky player who died at age 19 in a car accident. "I want to echo our prayers and thoughts continue to be with the family of Terrence Clarke."
- Holtmann also thanked all the Buckeye fans who sent notes or emails of support after the season ended, particularly those who supported E.J. Liddell after Liddell acknowledged receiving threats online.
- Although very disappointed with how last season ended, Holtmann is trying to focus on the positive.
- Terry Johnson's departure for Purdue allows Holtmann to adjust some staff roles, and he is looking forward to doing that, even though he is not going to rush the process of replacing Johnson. He also made clear that he supports Johnson's decision. "I don't just like Terry; I love Terry Johnson." He echoed something he's said before: He hopes Johnson becomes a head coach soon.
- Some of the juggling has already been done, as Jake Diebler will take over Johnson's role as the coordinator of the defense. Holtmann added that the team's struggles on defense a year ago were his responsibility.
- Right now Ohio State is at the scholarship limit.
- Holtmann wants to give Liddell and Duane Washington the very best advice on whether or not to turn pro. They are both currently exploring that possibility.
- When it comes to the this offseason, Holtmann believes that the progress of forward Zed Key and a couple of the team's young guards (whom Holtmann did not name) will be as crucial as anything.
- Asked more about Key, Holtmann said that, yes, extending his range will be important. "I think it's part of his evolution as a player. I think that's eventually going to be a part of his game." However, right now, he wants Key to focus on fitness. "I'm really excited about his growth as a player."
- Holtmann is happy that Key and Meechie Johnson are trying out for the Team USA Basketball Under-19 team. Holtmann said that he had been invited to be an assistant for that team, but it did not work out with his schedule.
- With new rules governing transfers, Holtmann anticipates a high-major program like Ohio State

could lose three to four players a year. He mentioned seeing one team with 13 players in the transfer portal.

- Holtmann said he has been analyzing why the team was so beat up down the stretch last season, trying to find ways they can keep more players healthy.
- He did not get into specifics, but Holtmann said due to COVID-19 protocols, the process of transitioning from the Big Ten Tournament to the NCAA Tournament was challenging, even if it didn't shorten the turnaround time all that much. He said while there was an emotional and physical toll to playing four games in the conference tourney, that's not the reason they lost to Oral Roberts.

