

Former Ohio State Guard, Assistant Coach Chris Jent Reportedly Interested In Buckeyes Head Coaching Job



Former Ohio State guard and assistant coach Chris Jent is reportedly interested in filling the men's basketball program's open head coaching vacancy, according to a report published Tuesday by the Columbus Dispatch. It is not clear whether Ohio State and incoming athletic director Ross Bjork see Jent as a potential candidate for the position.

Jent, 54, is currently in his second year as an assistant coach for the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers as well as his 15th season coaching in the association but has a rich history both coaching and playing in Ohio.

The Orange, Calif, native and Sparta (N.J.) High School graduate played for Gary Williams and Randy Ayers' Buckeyes from 1988-1992 and averaged 8.2 points, 3.9 rebounds and 1.4 assists per game, a stint that included two seasons (1989-1992, 1991-1992) where he was an everyday starter. His best year came his senior year in 1991-1992, where he averaged a career-best 12.6 points per game on 49.0 percent shooting and helped lead the Buckeyes to a 26-6 record and a No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament before falling to Michigan in the Elite Eight.

Ayers' efforts with the Buckeyes allowed him to play 10 professional seasons, a career that included brief stints in the NBA with the Houston Rockets in 1993-1994 — who won the NBA championship that season — and the New York Knicks in 1996-1997. He then spent seven years as an NBA assistant coach for the Philadelphia 76ers (2003-2004), Orlando Magic (2004-2005) and the LeBron James-led Cleveland Cavaliers (2006-2011) before returning to Columbus to join head coach Thad Matta's staff from 2011-2013.

In his two seasons as assistant coach, Jent helped Ohio State secure a combined 60-16 record and a Final Four berth in 2011-2012, while he also helped develop well-known Buckeyes such as William Buford, Aaron Craft and Jared Sullinger. Jent spent two seasons in the professional ranks before returning again for his second coaching stint at Ohio State in 2016-17, where he helped guide the Buckeyes to a 17-15 record in Matta's final season leading the program.

Jent, who has spent the last seven seasons back in the NBA with the Atlanta Hawks (2017-2022) and Lakers, has yet to provide an official comment on the matter. Ohio State has yet to indicate official interest in any head coaching candidate since firing former head coach Chris Holtmann on Feb. 14, although currently employed coaches such as Creighton's Greg McDermott, Xavier's Sean Miller, South Carolina's Lamont Paris and Texas A&M's Buzz Williams have emerged in the last week as potential names to watch.