

# Gene Smith Is 'Really Happy' With Chris Holtmann, OSU MBB



Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith told gathered media on Feb. 16 that while the Buckeyes have yet to discuss a contract extension with men's basketball head coach Chris Holtmann, it's not for a lack of excitement about the program from within the athletic department.

When asked if OSU had explored a potential extension, Smith said they had not yet, but that he's "really happy" with the direction of the program. He alluded to the current time left on Holtmann's contract as well, which carries him through June 30, 2025 as part of the original eight-year deal worth \$3 million annually that Holtmann agreed to ahead of the 2017-18 season.

"I haven't looked at (Chris') contract yet, I think it ends in 2025," Smith said. "At some point, we're going to look at an extension even if we haven't yet. I'm really happy where we are. We strive for championships, there's no question about that. We need to get there and we will. You look at his recruiting and it's off the chain."

Holtmann secured the No. 5 recruiting class for 2022, the best of his career, featuring four players within the top 65 in the 247Sports player composite. He holds a 103-50 record through five seasons in Columbus and is currently leading a 16-6 squad jostling for position at the top of the Big Ten. He's impressed Smith with his on-court coaching acumen as well, as recently as in Ohio State's win over Minnesota on Feb. 14, when the buckeyes stormed to a 70-45 victory behind a ferocious second-half turnaround.

"I love the teaching he does. I'll use (the Minnesota win) as an example," Smith said. "Everybody talked about how ugly the first half was, but my wife played and coached the game so I have a different vantage point. She's drawing stuff up on napkins against that 3-2 zone, so I knew exactly what we needed to do because I was told (by her). I knew what Chris was going to do, and you look at the second half and how players were positioned, spread out and moving, it was his teaching that won that game. The guys are doggone good."

"I feel really good about what he's doing, feel good about his recruiting, his hiring with Tony (Skinn) and at some point, we'll have the contract conversation with him."