

Men's Basketball: Ohio State Uses Time Off To Self-Scout



After playing two games in four days to open the season, the Ohio State men's basketball team saw its early-season schedule grind to a near-halt, getting six days off before its third contest against Eastern Illinois on Wednesday.

While the Buckeyes picked up some early-season momentum in the form of a pair of blowout wins over Robert Morris and Charleston Southern, Ohio State was forced to wait nearly a week before hitting the hardwood again. With the time off, senior guard Tanner Holden noted that the Buckeyes spent a significant amount of time looking inward and improving in necessary areas.

"We've really just been working on ourselves," Holden said. "With such a new group, film has been great. We've been able to break down things coaches are telling us, and key points that we've needed to work on. Overall, we're just working on us."

Head coach Chris Holtmann echoed this sentiment, adding that the Buckeyes spent a good chunk of the time off to focus on themselves before setting their eyes toward Eastern Illinois.

"As is the case, most always, particularly earlier in the year, self-scouting becomes really important," Holtmann said. "You're trying to evaluate those areas where you need to improve, and you need to get better, and you're really focusing, especially when you're two, three days out from a game. If you don't clean those up, then eventually you're going to see those surface again."

"For us, that's been a significant part of these last three or four days," Holtmann said. "But, obviously, we've moved into prep for Eastern Illinois."

When it comes to areas of improvement, Holden immediately pointed to key areas on both sides of the floor that have popped up. Across the Buckeyes' first two games, OSU has shown defensive lapses at times — most notably during the second half against Charleston Southern, in which Ohio State only

outscored the Buccaneers 36-34. While defensive miscues have popped up, OSU has also developed a bit of a turnover problem — registering 14 in both contests.

“Offensively, (we’ve worked on) finding great shots and getting the system down even more,” Holden said. “Defensively, just sticking to our principals. The coaches are reiterating all the things they’ve taught over the summer. That’s definitely a big thing that we’re locking in on because we definitely need to improve defensively. We have a lot of talent on the offensive side, but if we can’t get stops, it’s going to be really hard to win games.”

The Buckeyes have also made it a point to focus on the moment rather than looking ahead to the Maui Invitational, which occurs from Nov. 21-23 and will serve as Ohio State’s first true test.

While Eastern Illinois doesn’t provide much of a challenge for the emerging Buckeyes — starting the season a dismal 0-3 while shooting just 33.1 percent as a team — Holtmann emphasized that the current state of college basketball doesn’t allow any team to look past its opponents.

“Look across college basketball right now,” Holtmann said. “It’s the reality, you’ve got to play. These are good teams, hungry teams.”