

Ohio State Head Coach Chris Holtmann Prepares For Matchup At Minnesota



The head coach of the undefeated Ohio State men's basketball team, Chris Holtmann, spoke to members of the media on Dec. 13, just two days before the Buckeyes' road matchup with Minnesota.

With the fact that no Big Ten team had yet won a conference game on the road in mind, the Buckeyes prepared to travel to Minneapolis to break the Big Ten's slump on the road.

- Finals week is always an interesting week to balance academics and preparing for opponents.
- Minnesota has played a really challenging schedule with a lot of games away from home. Their venue is a pretty special place to play.
- They're a different team. Minnesota is a very physical team. Sophomore center Daniel Oturu has been outstanding. Pitt sophomore transfer Marcus Carr is pretty playing well for them.
- As a coach, you're looking at things you feel like maybe you haven't addressed properly. We've looked at some special-situation stuff and end-of-game stuff. We haven't had a lot of practice with that, so we've been trying to work on it. We gave them time off in the beginning of the week because of finals.
- The ability to handle success is often harder than having to deal with adversity. The reality is there hasn't been a Big Ten win on the road this year. You're trying to focus in on the day in front of us. We better have a hungry group.
- Since we began starting sophomore guard Duane Washington, we've just stayed with it and not put much thought into it. Because you're just talking about the first four minutes of the game. You want to get off to a good start, but it's not the be all end all.
- Senior wing Andre Wesson has helped the younger bench players. He connects out there on the floor. He has an ability to connect, particularly defensively. He sees things. That's very important when you're out there with freshmen, because they don't always see things.
- Free throws are about getting to the line more than the opponent. It's been encouraging that they're getting to the line. The addition of junior transfer guard C.J. Walker and freshman guard D.J. Carton, along with junior big man Kaleb Wesson, have done a good job of getting to the line.
- The balance of our offense is an advantage. A guy like freshman forward E.J. Liddell could very possibly be one of, if not our leading scorer in some games come February.
- We've been taking pretty good shots from 3-point range. Those numbers will level off; they won't stay so high. If your numbers are in the high 20s or low 30s, you're probably not a very good

shooter, or you're not taking good shots, or you're in a little slump. We typically don't have bad shooters shooting 3s.

- I don't think I try to spin anything intentionally. It's just my sense and what I feel. We have a lot to improve on. We play in the best league in the country. We've played well at times and we have good players who have performed well, but other teams in this league are really, really good.
- My focus is not on anything other than how we can improve and get better and have good practices. How do we have a good day at practice? I don't spend one moment thinking about rankings. Guys have finals and I know they're stressed; I'm stressed for them.
- We prepared a little bit for Penn State while preparing for North Carolina. We couldn't do too much and dive in too far, but we did a little. It's tough to dive in with an immediate opponent ahead.
- I coached at Minnesota once as an assistant. It's a really unique place to play and environment.
- I think Kaleb Wesson's ability to have really good games with completely different stats is a sign of a really good player. He's impacting the game in more ways this year: rebounding, defense and being more of a perimeter threat offensively.
- I'm very mindful of our conditioning because of the time off we have had.
- First-year assistant coach Jake Diebler does a great job with relationships with our guys. Ryan Pedon and Terry Johnson do a great job as well. Diebler works mainly with the point guards and combo guards. He has a good passion for the game and enthusiasm.

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