

Ohio State Looking To Shore Up Rebounding Effort Ahead Of Big Ten Opener



As Ohio State has shown continual growth during nonconference play, the Buckeyes identified an area in need of a jolt ahead of their Big Ten opener against Rutgers: rebounding.

Although the Buckeyes corral 41.0 rebounds per game, ranking third in the Big Ten, head coach Chris Holtmann is still searching for consistent effort from his team on the glass. As Ohio State is set to square off against Rutgers on Thursday, Holtmann acknowledged the distinct challenges that the Scarlet Knights pose on the boards as coach Steve Pikiell's bunch ranks second in the Big Ten with 41.5 rebounds per game.

"That's one of the challenges in front of us in this particular game, it's the glass, for sure," Holtmann said. "Both offensively and defensively, that is definitely one of the challenges. I'll be interested to see if we can (rebound well) over the course of a number of teams that are going to challenge us on that end.

"Certainly, Rutgers is one of the best offensive rebounding teams we'll play."

The Scarlet Knights are boosted by the rebounding effort of center Clifford Omoruyi, whose 9.8 rebounds per game sits at third in the Big Ten. Omoruyi also battles on the offensive glass, producing 3.3 offensive boards per game while aiding the Scarlet Knights to 14.8 offensive rebounds per contest — the best mark in the Big Ten.

"They do a great job with (Clifford)," Holtmann said. "He's gotten a lot better. He's one of the best bigs in the country, certainly one of the best bigs in the Big Ten."

While Omoruyi is set to give the Buckeyes fits on the glass, Ohio State will likely rely on forward Zed Key — who posts a team-best 8.0 rebounds per game. Key's 3.5 offensive rebounds per game are the second-best mark in the Big Ten.

While Key will need to be at his best when battling with Omoruyi on the glass, Holtmann laid out the reasons why Key is so impactful as a rebounder.

“(He has) long arms and a big body that can wedge rebound,” Holtmann said. “He has a very good feel of getting to the weak side of the glass. Again, he’s going to go against as good of an athlete that he’ll play against all year this Thursday night.”