

Ohio State Seeking To Build Chemistry, Experiment With Lineups On Bahamas Trip



The Ohio State men's basketball team may be spending the next week in the Bahamas, but the focus will not be on relaxing at the beach.

The Buckeyes travel to the Bahamas on Thursday, where they will hold practices and play a pair of exhibition games against the Egyptian and Puerto Rican national teams before returning to Columbus on Aug. 9. Although Ohio State will be challenged by its opponents during the week, head coach Chris Holtmann said the trip is more about getting better and more connected as a team.

"We said, 'Hey just give us the best teams that you have there.' We believe the Egyptian and Puerto Rican national teams will both be really good teams and good measures for us as a group," Holtmann said on Monday. "The trip is obviously not about that. The trip is about the practice time and the chance to play a bunch of different rotations.

"We hope we can come out of this with a group that's closer and spend some time together and have some fun."

Ohio State underwent a roster makeover during the offseason, replacing 10 departures from Team 123. The Buckeyes boast the No. 8 2022 recruiting class, headlined by guards Roddy Gayle Jr., Bruce Thornton and Bowen Hardman, forward Brice Sensabaugh and center Felix Okpara. The Scarlet and Gray also snagged a trio of transfers in guards Isaac Likekele (Oklahoma State) and Sean McNeil (West Virginia) as well as small forward Tanner Holden (Wright State). With the opportunity to travel to the Bahamas, Holtmann seeks to find his key contributors in the 2022 season.

With so many new faces on the roster, Holtmann emphasized the trip's importance from a team-building perspective.

"It's great for your guys to be able to travel, there's some guys that have not ever traveled out of the country," Holtmann said. "To have a chance to go do this is going to be fun and I think we're still trying to get to know each other a little bit here too."

From a basketball standpoint, Holtmann is still trying to find the rotations that he'll lean on during the regular season and mentioned that the Buckeyes will play much deeper during their exhibitions at the Bahamas.

As the Buckeyes will put plenty of work in across the five-day trip, Holtmann said the coaching staff will play with a number of different lineups to see how players will play with one another.

"It's very experimental in a lot of ways. If we had a group that was returning four or five starters or a little more experience then it might be different," Holtmann said. "We're going to tinker with some things. There's only so much you can do in two games and 10 practices but we'll certainly play a variety of lineups."

While the games will be an important phase during their trip, Holtmann's primary focus is on getting valuable practice team with his new-look team. With 10 practices slated for their time in the Bahamas, Holtmann said the makeup of the training sessions will differ a bit from their typical routine.

"They will have a different tempo and overall a different pace and different intensity. But it's still a lot for guys. You're asking guys to go for an hour and 45 minute practice when that's really not what they've done since late March," Holtmann said. "We tried to tailor it and make sure [Quadrian Banks] had them ready to be able to do an hour and a half, hour and 45 minute practice. But the tempo and intensity is different."