

# Ohio State Senior F Andre Wesson Embraces Leadership Role Among Young Buckeyes

The lone senior on the Ohio State men's basketball team — Andre Wesson —embraced the role of veteran leader during his final offseason.

Although Andre's natural disposition is calm and soft-spoken, he possesses important leadership qualities, such as being a hard worker and a team player.

"I'm more of a laid-back guy," Andre Wesson said. "I mean, every now and then if I have to yell at somebody, I can, but my role is showing you, not more so telling you, but 'Just follow my example.'"

"Trying to go as hard as I can every day, showing guys how to work, that's probably the biggest thing."



Courtesy of OSU athletics.

The Buckeyes welcomed the Big Ten's No. 1 recruiting class and the nation's No. 13 recruiting class, including a trio of top-50 players (DJ Carton, E.J. Liddell and Alonzo Gaffney) and a much-needed center, 7-footer Ibrahima Diallo to spell junior center Kaleb Wesson (Andre's brother and OSU's leading scorer in 2018-19).

With the high ratings, come high expectations. However, Chris Holtmann's squad lacks experience.

Former Florida State transfer, redshirt junior guard C.J. Walker, has the most experience, having played in the Elite Eight with the Seminoles. Kaleb Wesson, Kyle Young and Musa Jallow represent the true juniors on the team, while sophomores Luther Muhammad, Duane Washington Jr. and Justin Ahrens round out the active scholarship players.

After winning games in the NCAA Tournament in each of Holtmann's first two seasons at the helm, Ohio State enters the 2019-2020 seasons with many publications ranking the Buckeyes among the top-25 teams in men's basketball.

Andre Wesson knows he will have to step up as a leader of a young team with lofty goals.

"Just helping the guys out every day," Andre Wesson said. "Bringing the younger guys along, trying to push the team to become the best that we can become."



Courtesy of OSU athletics.

Holtmann expressed confidence in Andre Wesson, who displayed drastic improvement from his

sophomore to junior season. After playing 18.5 minutes per game in 2017-18, the 6-foot-6 forward averaged 30.0 minutes per game as a junior.

Known as a lockdown defender, Andre Wesson had a much better season offensively last year. Improving his scoring average from 2.9 to 8.6 and his rebounding average from 1.8 to 4.1, Andre Wesson emerged as one of the Buckeyes' most valuable players.

"It was definitely a big jump," Andre Wesson said. "I think I handled it well. I could have handled it better but that's what I'm trying to focus on now — trying to increase my role and focus on getting better."

While Andre Wesson's minutes and production went up, he also shot more efficiently from the field while extending his range. After shooting 37.9 percent from the field and 28.6 percent from three as a sophomore, he improved to 43 percent from the field and 33.6 from beyond the arc.

"He's going to be critical for us, Andre is," Holtmann said. "He's a great example of a young man who has just gotten better every year and really provided some great leadership for us last year. We're not in the NCAA tournament without him."

While Holtmann is proud of the strides his lone senior has made, he pushed him to take on a bigger role and become the leader the team needs.

"I think he's got to take the next step as a player and as a leader and we've challenged him in that area," Holtmann said. "I think that is a significant area for us. Listen, we all know that this is a critical summer for us in a lot of ways because we have a young team. I am excited about the fact that we have Andre, who has certainly got some experience and has shown some ability to do some things."



Courtesy of OSU athletics.

The successful Scarlet and Gray squads of the past featured veteran leaders guiding the path through the brutal Big Ten schedule, conference tournament and NCAA tourney. C.J. Jackson, Keita Bates-Diop and Jae'Sean Tate helped lead the Buckeyes to back-to-back Big Dance appearances in the past two seasons.

When asked if he learned from the leadership of his former teammate, Tate, Andre Wesson made it clear that he and Tate are very different people. While he may not be as vocal, Andre leads in his own way.

"J.T. [Tate], he was obviously a great leader, but I mean, me and him — our personalities are really nothing alike," Andre Wesson said. "But trying to have my own style of leadership and showing guys how to work hard. If I do need to say something, I can step up and say something but showing guys how to work. That's probably my biggest leadership thing."

While Andre may not be Tate in terms of being loud, he compares to his former teammate in his relentless work ethic. Aware of the opportunity that is ahead of him, Andre Wesson will lead the young Bucks by example.

"My personality's not like a rah-rah guy," Andre Wesson said. "If I need to, I can do that for the team. But I'm more of a laid-back guy and showing guys how to work, that's the best way I know how to lead."

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