

Ohio State Set To Start Season Against Illinois State On Nov. 25



The Buckeyes have their first opponent for the 2020-21 men's basketball season.

Ohio State will take on Illinois State on Nov. 25 as part of a multi-team event.

"I do think we'll get started on the 25th," Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann said on 97.1 The Fan's Morning Juice. "We've got a game - I guess I might as well go ahead and break news on the Morning Juice. We've scheduled Illinois State. We're going to play what's called an MT, a couple of games there but that's the one that I believe is solidified on the 25th. I don't have a time yet on that but we have had to work on our schedule here and we continue to do that. But that's one that's pretty solidified."

Originally, the Buckeyes were scheduled to start the season in the Battle 4 Atlantis, but the tournament was moved to Sioux Falls, S.D., due to COVID-19 restrictions, and changed to the Crossover Classic.

Holtmann and his squad opted out of the tournament because of the high COVID-19 positivity rate and a recommended 14-day quarantine for people returning from South Dakota.

From what Holtmann said about the matchup with Illinois State in a multi-team event, it appears that Ohio State could add two more opponents to the event, which would give the buckeyes their expected seen nonconference contests. Seven nonconference games, along with a 20-game Big Ten schedule, would give the Scarlet and Gray a 27-game schedule.

Illinois State features a young roster looking to rebound after a 10-21 season last year, including a 5-13 record in the Missouri Valley Conference.

In addition to the presumed multi-team tourney involving Illinois State, the Buckeyes have four other nonconference games on their schedule. Ohio State will take on Morehead State at Value City Arena on Dec. 2, then Alabama A&M on Dec. 5, then Notre Dame in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge game on Dec. 8, and then North Carolina in the CBS Sports Classic in Cleveland on Dec. 19.

The offseason has been tumultuous for Holtmann and his group, with COVID-19 making it difficult to prepare. The Buckeyes have been focusing on controlling what they can control, staying positive with

the start of the season drawing near.

"It is fluid," Holtmann said. "I think college sports right now are fluid, certainly college basketball is fluid and I think really what it trains you to do and prepares you, hopefully, to do is focus on the day, really, and try and discipline yourself to focus on the day and what you can control.

"There's no question that we've talked about our group being, really one word, 'resiliency,' as much as anything here for a while now, because that's going to be required of everybody. You don't know, are you going to play a game or are you going to play with eight players? You just don't know, so you try to focus."

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