

Ohio State's Desire To Shoot More From Deep Met With Inefficiency



While the Ohio State offense has displayed a noted decline in efficiency during its recent losing stretch, in which the Buckeyes have lost 11 of their last 12 games, head coach Chris Holtmann has expressed a desire to see his team increase its three-point shooting output moving forward.

Ohio State hardly relied on its shooting from deep despite showing an ability to hit from range early this season. Prior to the Buckeyes' long losing stretch, Ohio State sat at 12th in the Big Ten in three-point attempts (18.1 per game), even though it shot 35.6 percent — the fifth-best rate in the conference. Despite losing seven of their next eight games, the Buckeyes continued to shoot at a high level, hitting 39.5 percent of threes on 16.1 attempts per game.

Looking for a way to pull the Buckeyes out of their rut following their 86-70 loss to Indiana on Jan. 28, Holtmann said he thought his team needed to shoot more threes to help turn around their offensive struggles. After the Buckeyes took just 14 and 16 attempts against Wisconsin and Michigan, respectively, Holtmann again reiterated that his squad needed to have a quicker trigger in regard to their three-point shooting.

"We need to take more threes, and I've said that to our guys," Holtmann said after OSU's 77-69 loss to Michigan on Feb. 5. "There are certain guys that need to take more threes, Sean (McNeil) needs to take two or three more threes a game."

Ohio State responded to Holtmann's challenge with a pair of adverse outings from deep. In the four games since the loss to Indiana, the Buckeyes have shot 21.9 percent (16 of 73) from three. Ohio State shot just 1 of 14 (7.1 percent) against Northwestern on Thursday, before producing a 20.7 percent (6 of 29) outing against Michigan State on Sunday.

Although the Buckeyes upped their three-point shooting volume against Michigan State, the result was their worst offensive outing of the season. Ohio State registered just 41 points in the loss, its lowest

scoring output since the 1995-96 season. Despite his team's struggles from deep as of late, Holtmann encouraged his players to take more high-percentage looks, rather than rush into shots.

"I do want to shoot more threes, but (against Michigan State) was probably too many," Holtmann acknowledged on Sunday. "We'll make some that we just missed (against the Spartans), I really believe we'll make some that we missed. I believe some of the misses were the byproduct of just the frustration of it being a low-scoring game and us just not adjusting to that."

As the Buckeyes look to revitalize their efficiency from beyond the arc going forward, Holtmann said he'll look at a multitude of options for a quick fix.

"Do I need to look at maybe playing our better shooters more, or looking at a different lineup? I don't know," Holtmann said. "Clearly the space is hard to come by right now against some teams."