

Sophomore Guard Bruce Thornton Committed To Program Amid Chris Holtmann Firing



Speaking to the media just two days after the firing of former Ohio State men's basketball head coach Chris Holtmann, sophomore guard Bruce Thornton acknowledged on several occasions that college basketball is a "business," and that the decision to let go of the man that recruited him and his teammates was something that was far out of their control.

"It's a business decision that's higher than all us players and us coaches," Thornton said. "As a young player in this age of college basketball, and how NIL is involved, it's a business. It just is what it is."

Thornton and his teammates have no say over the state of the Buckeyes' coaching staff moving forward — a decision-making process that will be led by incoming athletic director Ross Bjork after the season — but one thing they can control in this business-oriented sport is whether or not they will enter the transfer portal this offseason, an aspect of the game that has been more common in recent years.

While some players may be compelled to leave the program and enter the transfer portal amid this massive change of leadership at Ohio State — something they can even do during the season under the current NCAA transfer portal rules — Thornton has instead stayed committed to the program for the foreseeable future, something he said he felt he had the obligation to do given his status as one of the team's leaders.

"It's just my morals and my values as a player and myself (that prevents me from transferring)" Thornton said. "I just never felt it was okay just to go separate ways, especially being a captain, you have a responsibility. Especially as a man, you just don't quit. You at least finish it out and see what's happening after (the season).

"But during the process, you just don't quit. That's the thing my mom always taught me, just to finish things out. Even if you don't like it, even if it kills me. But at least finish it out, then after that, if you really don't like it, you don't have to go through it anymore. But now, how I explain it to my teammates,

is that I'm not going to go anywhere. I'm going to finish the season out strong...I'm not going to quit on my teammates, not on the coaches, and especially not on Buckeye nation. And all of my teammates are on the same accord, we're going to finish it out the right way, and see what happens."

Thornton added that while it took a while for he and his teammates to process the news of Holtmann's firing, he has made a concerted effort to lead this group and ensure that they are staying focused for the remaining six games of the season. This, in his mind, will give the team the best chance to compete and finish the season strong, something he thinks they are capable of accomplishing.

"I'm just making sure as the captain that everybody is still going to stay the course and still try to finish the season out well," Thornton said. "I feel like we still have things to accomplish, I feel like we still have some goals in plan, especially trying to win this big game on Sunday."

"I'm just trying to let my teammates know that things happen, life happens," he added. "It's really how you move on from it and continue to get better each and every day. I feel like we need to install that confidence back in my teammates that we still have things to finish. We still still have hardware to go get, even though we don't have the best record right now. But I feel like these last few games of the regular season, we can get those, and then in the Big Ten Tournament, anything can happen, especially what happened last year.

"So we just need to keep putting in work, keep trusting the next guy in front of us, keep making the right play and having offensive efficiency. And it will take care of itself."