

# Chris Holtmann Radio Show: Ohio State 'Fully Intends' To Play Next Week



While many people dream of a “White Christmas” during the holiday season, Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann dreams of his team hitting the hardwood before the year’s end.

If and when the Buckeyes face New Orleans on Dec. 28, it will have been 17 days since the men’s basketball program played a game. Still, Holtmann said Monday on his weekly radio show that the program “fully intends” to play New Orleans in eight days after a COVID-19 outbreak forced back-to-back game cancellations for the Buckeyes and a pause in team activities.

Ohio State’s first missed game was a CBS Sports Classic matchup with Kentucky. Holtmann spoke with the media just hours before the team was scheduled to leave for Las Vegas. However, the Buckeyes never stepped on the plane as multiple members of the fully-vaccinated program displayed “light symptoms” for the virus.

Holtmann said the Buckeyes would still have played the game shorthanded, but an increase in positive tests caused Ohio State to refrain from making the trip to Nevada.

“Had it been a home game, potentially we would’ve just continued, and if guys had symptoms, we might’ve tested them,” Holtmann said. “The fact that we were traveling to Las Vegas and the fact that if someone had symptoms in Las Vegas, we would’ve had to test them and they would’ve had to stay there for 10 days - ultimately the decision was made, ‘Hey, let’s test everybody on Thursday morning, let’s expedite the results and figure out where to go from there.’ We popped up additional tests, and we just weren’t able to field enough guys to play in a game like that.”

Ohio State will now take a break for Christmas, but Holtmann said the team would return to have two practice sessions on Sunday and another on Monday ahead of the Dec. 28 matchup with New Orleans. He also mentioned that there would be ongoing conversations about how soon players who tested positive in the past week could ramp up their activity level in the meantime.

The Buckeye head coach confirmed his players would return to testing for COVID-19 if they experience virus-related symptoms. Given the program’s vaccination rate and that players and personnel have experienced mild symptoms, Holtmann said it’s possible that players who test positive could be allowed to return sooner moving forward. However, it would depend on a ruling from a Big Ten board of health

professionals.

“I think there’s already some adjustment in terms of if you’re vaccinated and you have limited symptoms, what’s your process to return? I think that’s already going to be looked at to be expedited a little bit if you have limited symptoms and you’re fully vaccinated,” Holtmann said. “I think what most people are seeing is we probably shouldn’t treat this like we did a year-and-a-half ago when it comes to athletes because they’re fully vaccinated.

“But again, we’re all taking the guidance from our medical people, who have been fantastic for us. But they’re always going to err on the side of making sure they are protecting the athletes, which we agree with.”