

# Holtmann Opens Up About Ejection, Cites Limited Communication With Officials



With less than a minute remaining in the first half of Ohio State's 65-60 loss to Wisconsin on Thursday, Buckeyes forward Justice Sueing went to work on the low block.

Sueing backed down Wisconsin forward Tyler Wahl, using his body to try to create separation from the 6-9 Wahl. As Sueing sent his body into Wahl for the second time, the Badgers forward flailed to the ground, selling the contact just enough to draw a charge on Sueing.

The charge call sent Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann — who felt Wahl had flopped — into a frenzy. Holtmann quickly picked up a technical foul and despite the best efforts of forward Zed Key and his assistant coaches to pull him away from the officials, he was near-immediately assessed another technical foul by John Higgins.

"The first technical was warranted, I deserved the first technical, I don't believe the second one was," Holtmann said after the game. "But, officials are going to do what they want to do and I've got to be more composed in that situation. I wasn't composed and that's on me."

It was Holtmann's second ejection since taking the reins at Ohio State, and marked his first since Feb. 25, 2021, when the Buckeyes fell to Michigan State 71-65.

Holtmann explained that he felt the officials were lacking in their communication with him for the entire first half, and noted that he never got an explanation regarding the charging call and his ejection.

"(I) couldn't talk to them, all night," Holtmann said. "All we want to do as coaches is talk to officials, I couldn't talk to one of them."

Holtmann's pair of technicals resulted in four free throws for guard Connor Essegian, who sunk all four attempts and lifted Wisconsin's lead to 41-27 with 27.7 seconds remaining in the half. The free throws

didn't end up being the difference in the loss, but still played a key role in Ohio State's 65-60 defeat.

Key, who tried to hold Holtmann back after he received his first technical foul, said he felt he needed to step in to try to prevent his coach from getting ejected, but ultimately it ended up being for naught.

"I was just going over there to help stop the tech from happening, but if the ref is going to call it, he's going to call it," Key said. "I just didn't want him to get thrown out and I saw the ref was already fired up."

Key also added that Holtmann's ejection gave the Buckeyes some juice after slogging through a largely lifeless first half, which resulted in a 43-27 deficit heading into the locker room.

"It definitely gave us some extra fire," Key said. "(Isaac Likekele) said 'We've got to pick it up, Holtmann is out there fighting for us.'"

Associate head coach Jake Diebler filled in for Holtmann for the second half, and the Buckeyes whittled an 18-point deficit to as little as two during the frame, but ultimately couldn't get over the hump.

As for Holtmann, he reiterated his gripes with how the moment was handled on both ends but remained steadfast in his opinion that the charging call should have been ruled a flop on Wahl.

"I've got to be better in that situation. I would like to be able to talk to officials, that's all I would ask," Holtmann said. "I've coached hundreds of games and not gotten thrown out. The first technical was warranted. I thought it was a flop, I think the video concluded that it was a flop. They're trying to get that out of the game and they didn't."