

Men's Basketball Head Coach Chris Holtmann Discusses Purdue, E.J. Liddell Absence in Tuesday Zoom Call



Ohio State men's basketball head coach Chris Holtmann spoke to the media over Zoom Tuesday to talk about the start of the Buckeyes' Big Ten slate: a Wednesday night matchup against Purdue, as well as where sophomore forward E.J. Liddell is in his recovery.

- Holtmann said the team is excited to jump into what he calls a busy week with three games in a seven-day span.
- He said "time will tell" how prepared Ohio State is for the incoming conference schedule. "I think we'll find out soon enough."
- Said the offensive flow was a problem against Cleveland State, but was happy about the lack of turnovers. "We're doing a great job taking care of the ball."
- Holtmann on where the team is looking to improve: "It's a long list of things that we're constantly trying to focus on getting better at."
- On Purdue, Holtmann said he thinks the Boilermakers are a good team, and also said that they have lost some key guys since the impressive NCAA Tournament run two seasons ago.
- Holtmann complimented the team's shooting and preseason all-conference forward Trevion Williams as areas where Purdue has impressed.
- Said that forward Seth Towns is practicing and that Liddell is progressing and being evaluated on a daily basis.
- On new freshman guard Meechie Johnson, Holtmann said he needs to get up to the college level, both health-wise and physically, to get ready for game action. "He's going to play," but needs to make sure his health is where it needs to be.
- Holtmann said that the team may be depending on more youth than he expected to early on, but has also said he has been impressed with how his team has dealt with adversity through the opening slate.
- On why Purdue always seems to have a player that is always well over seven foot, Holtmann said it has really become an identity for head coach Matt Painter's team.
- Holtmann said it's been difficult to figure out rotations due to the small sample game size and that Liddell's illness has made it even more difficult.
- On Jimmy Sotos, who was initially going to sit out this season before getting immediate eligibility: "I think we felt good about his shooting and his touch." Holtmann also said that it can be difficult

going from a starter at Bucknell to a player coming off the bench.

- More on Sotos: “He’s going to continue to be an asset in terms of coming off the bench and providing support for us.”
- Holtmann said starting is more discussed by media than the team, but that Ohio State is likely to continue shifting around its starting lineup a lot.
- On that, Holtmann said he likes the confidence from Justin Ahrens on the offensive side of the ball, which led to his start against Cleveland State.
- Holtmann said he thinks Justice Sueing needs to be a little more assertive, especially with Liddell out.
- Involving the Liddell absence, Holtmann said the team will learn a lot about its front court depth against Purdue with the sophomore forward missing time.

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