

Ohio State Head Coach Chris Holtmann Previews No. 23 Buckeyes Matchup With No. 11 Rutgers



Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann spoke to members of the media via Zoom video conference call Dec. 22, previewing the Buckeyes' matchup with Rutgers at home Dec. 23 and showdown at Northwestern Dec. 26 after their 77-70 victory over UCLA on Dec. 19.

What follows is a bullet-point rundown paraphrasing what Holtmann said Dec. 22:

- Holtmann said forward Seth Towns is not physically ready to play a significant number of minutes after he made his debut for Ohio State against UCLA on Saturday, Dec. 19. He said it will be a game-by-game situation with Towns. It might be a while, not going to put a timeline on it.
- Holtmann talked about that there will be a lot of preparation for the upcoming Rutgers and Northwestern games.
- Holtmann gave significant praise toward Rutgers and how well-coached they are.
- Holtmann said it's unfair to expect the two freshmen to play like they did in the 77-70 win against UCLA every game, but added "they have certainly helped our team."
- Holtmann said junior guard Duane Washington Jr., who is shooting 36.0 percent from the field, has got to improve his efficiency.
- Holtmann said the players voted to play around the holidays a while ago. The program will do as much as they can to provide a Christmas experience for the players. Holtmann said his wife and

others have been working on some stuff for the student-athletes. Difficult to do a lot of things during the pandemic.

- Holtmann said you have a choice through all this and that's to embrace what we're doing here, and we have a great group, a mature group, that has handled all this well.
- Holtmann said the depth of the Big Ten is justifying that they are the best conference in the nation.
- Holtmann said Gene Brown needs to be really good defensively, he's got to rebound the ball for us, he's got to understand what we're doing defensively, he needs to take care of the ball, and be ready when his number is called offensively. He's got to play off others well, and he has done that well.
- Holtmann called Rutgers guard Ron Harper Jr. a "bonafide NBA prospect," referring to him as one of the conference's top talents.
- Holtmann is confident that there will be an NCAA Tournament this year.
- Holtmann said balancing preparation and not being too hard on them during this time "weighs on your mind a lot."
- On the team's success taking care of the ball, Holtmann said it "has clearly" been a strength of the team. He said his previous seasons at Ohio State, it had not been a strength.
- Holtmann did not rule out Ohio State adding a non-conference game to its schedule: "I wouldn't completely close the door on it." He notes there's not many windows remaining to make it happen, though.

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