

Ohio State Head Coach Chris Holtmann Previews Showdown At No. 20 Iowa



The No. 25 Ohio State men's basketball team re-entered the Associated Press Top 25 this week, with a chance to move up in a matchup at No. 20 Iowa.

Head coach Chris Holtmann spoke to members of the media on Feb. 19, just under 30 hours from tip off at Carver Hawkeye Arena in Iowa City, Iowa.

- Really respect this Iowa team. It's the best Iowa team we've played in our three years here. And they were really good last year.
- Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery's got a great system. Playing at Iowa is a different animal. Their crowd is crazy and it's a tough place to play.
- Well-coached, talented group. They've got a lot of really good players who impact the game. Junior center Luka Garza is having a great season. Third-year sophomore guard Connor McCaffery is a really tough kid who has a good idea of what it takes to win.
- How do roles come about? What you go through together influences that.
- You're always in communication with guys. They understand that it's something that's earned. You value what everyone brings. Senior guard Danny Hummer is very valuable. He doesn't play much but he is very important for us.
- Iowa junior center Luka Garza's improvement? He's a year older and in elite shape. He's in incredible shape for a guy his size. He has great touch as well. His motor is what people point to when they watch him that makes him so special.
- Why stick with sophomore guard Luther Muhammad through slump? He was giving us some good things. His shot quality was good even though he was not efficient. He looked a little fatigued to me, which affected his shooting performance. With freshman guard D.J. Carton out, we have three guards playing almost all of the minutes at two positions. His energy defensively did not change, which is the main reason we stuck with him.
- Sophomore wing Justin Ahrens has got the green light whenever he's open. He has taken better ones.
- How are guards adjusting to more minutes and bigger/different roles? Junior guard C.J. Walker is learning our system better. Both guys have struggled at times being as efficient as they'd like to be, and as we'd like them to be, including Luther.

- Sophomore guard Duane Washington's shots are coming at different places. With the exception of post kick-outs, he doesn't get as many catch-and-shoot situations. But I think he likes the ball in his hands.
- Carton will not play. When a player is pulled away for medical reasons, particularly mental health, there is an extensive protocol that has to take place.
- Former Michigan coach John Beilein's quick departure from NBA? It was surprising. John Beilein is an incredible coach. It's going to be an understandable rebuild. I've got plenty of friends who are in the NBA and we have a lot of conversations about the things they enjoy at that level and what they don't like as much.
- Danny Hummer has been outstanding for us. We wanted to add an Ohio kid, and he's been phenomenal for us. He brings an older body and a level of toughness that's really needed for us.

For four free issues of the weekly print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, no card required, sign up at the link here: <http://www.buckeyesports.com/subscribe-4issue-trial/>

[divider line_type="Full Width Line" line_thickness="2" divider_color="default"] [nectar_btn size="jumbo" button_style="regular" button_color_2="Accent-Color" icon_family="none" url="http://www.buckeyesports.com/boards/" text="Join The Conversation"]