

Ohio State To Halt Concessions Sales



In what could be accurately referred to as a concessions concession, Ohio State is closing down concessions sales at all university sporting events, beginning with the women's basketball team's matchup against Illinois on Jan. 6. Fans will not be permitted to bring their own food or drink into venues, though water will be made available.

The change is part of a university response to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, with cases jumping sharply within Ohio in recent days. Other Big Ten programs - Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State and Rutgers - have moved to require a negative COVID test or vaccination cards for entrance to sporting events, but Ohio law prevents the state school to make a similar move, prompting this decision.

The goal of the policy is to keep masks in place, as required both by the university and by a Columbus city mandate.

This move was no surprise to men's head basketball coach Chris Holtmann, whose team missed three games with COVID issues within its program in the last month, but his frustration with the pandemic writ large remains.

"If you read the tea leaves, you kind of got the sense that some of this was coming, that more policies would be coming," Holtmann said. "In some ways, it can be a frustrating thing, and yet at the same time, you just hope that the numbers continue to go down. And that we're able to get back to a regular environment at home. But I know our university officials and our medical staff are working to make sure that safety is (the priority)."

Ohio State's first home men's basketball game under the new rules is slated for Sunday at 5:30 p.m. against Northwestern, which holds an 8-3 record fresh off a close loss to Michigan State and will square off with Penn State on Jan. 5.