

DePaul University Athletics Media Conference

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Chris Holtmann

Rob Manuel

DeWayne Peevy

Press Conference



ROBERT MANUEL: Good morning, everybody. I'm Rob Manuel, the president at DePaul, and I'm excited to be here today.

Chris, you took your time coming out. It made me nervous.

(Laughter.)

But now that you're in the seat, we're good.

For those of you who know, we have been focusing on designing DePaul into the future, what will DePaul be in the next 20 years? And a big piece of that is the athletic tradition that made us who we are today. To be able to be here today to celebrate Chris, his family, and think about what DePaul basketball can be in the future is to think about what the university can be in the future.

I'll give you an example. After the announcement that Chris is going to be the coach, we had 1.7 billion impressions at the university. To give you some balancing act, the last post I had had 1.7 people look at it (laughter). So this is tremendous for DePaul.

It is the front porch, as DeWayne will tell you, to the university, and it doesn't happen by accident. Go back four years to hiring DeWayne and have DeWayne come and talk about the dream big vision, the vision that DePaul, not just DePaul basketball, but DePaul could be great again and be in the place where we're making national waves. It's coming true today.

DeWayne, I'm grateful for your leadership and for making this happen before all the other coaching changes happen in the next couple weeks.

It's a real honor to be here. We have members of our Board of Trustees who are here. We have members of our faculty council, which are deans and faculty, staff council,

cabinet members. Everybody is here to celebrate this moment at the university and to listen to what in the past two hours since the portal has been open what you got.

(Laughter.)

It is a great pleasure to be here. I'm happy you're here to celebrate. And I'm looking forward to the future. Congratulations, Chris.

(Applause.)

DeWAYNE PEEVY: Good morning, everyone. Before we get started, I want to begin by thanking President Rob Manuel for his continued counsel and support throughout this whole process. I also want to thank Gerald Beeson and the DePaul Board of Trustees for their support during this search. Many of our trustees, our campus administrators, our shared governance partners are here today, which is a testament to their support of not only our department, but for this program.

I also want to thank Glenn Sugiyama with DHR Global and my entire staff, especially Taylor Stapleton, for all the behind the scenes work outside of the search process. Without their help, we would not be here today.

I want to thank Coach Matt Brady for his work over the past several weeks serving as interim head coach and providing continuity and continued leadership to our men's basketball program.

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Finally, I want to thank my wife Allison and our kids, Kaitlyn and Braden, for their patience and understanding throughout this process. And also thank you, Allison, for the question and answers that I had to ask each coach.

(Laughter.)

What a great day to be a Blue Demon. Today, after a 50-day search, we are here to officially welcome Chris Holtmann to the DePaul family as our new men's basketball head coach.

(Applause.)

Before I tell you about Chris, I want to pull back the curtain a little bit and talk about the search and how we got to this point. This wasn't a traditional search, as many would expect. From the start, my immediate focus was improving the profile of our vacancy here at DePaul. We had some work to do internally. We had to get our house in order, so to speak, to attract the top talent that we deserve.

I felt strongly that there were four key factors that were critical to getting this right. One, facilities; two, an operating budget to provide a quality student-athlete experience to our young people; three, a salary pool to build a strong coaching and support staff; and, four, NIL. Without those things being in place, you cannot expect an experienced coach with postseason success and a winning resume to consider DePaul.

When we were in this position three years ago, we were one of three Big East schools without a dedicated basketball practice facility. We were last in the Big East in operating budget and salary pool, and NIL was just around the corner.

So what did we do? We got to work, collectively working as a university to get ourselves in a position to address each of these pressing issues. That work was critical in the search process for our next head coach, but also in positioning us to be a contender in this great league. You have all heard me say this before. It's not enough for us to just be in the Big East Conference, we must compete night in and night out. We must make big runs in the Big East Tournament, and we must get back into the NCAA Tournament.

Make no mistake, the path forward is not going to be easy. Therefore, we needed a leader with a strong work ethic, a passion for teaching developing, not just the young men in our program, but the assistant coaches and staff as well.

I'm energized like never before about the future of this program. I'm ready to continue to put in the work,

alongside Coach Holtmann, to return this program to national prominence. I will always dream big and continue our pursuit of DePaul being Chicago's team again.

This isn't a selfish goal. I really want this for all of our DePaul students, our faculty, our staff, our alumni, our donors and our fans. It's time to get back to being the true front porch of this great university. We must use this program as a vehicle to increase our national exposure for DePaul University.

Now pivoting to Coach Holtmann. I'm so proud to welcome Chris, his wife Lori, their daughter Nora to Chicago and this Blue Demon family. Chris' track record as a head coach at high major programs demonstrated commitment to excellence on and off the court and NCAA postseason experience made him the perfect hire for DePaul.

Chris is a native of Nicholasville, Kentucky, just outside of Lexington. He brings 25 years of experience to Lincoln Park, including 13 as head coach. He had an exceptional stretch of eight straight NCAA postseasons, including five recently at Ohio State, which includes the season paused by COVID-19.

Chris is a two-time Naismith National Coach of the Year award finalist and a three time Conference Coach of the Year, including in the Big East conference in 2017 while at Butler.

He unmistakably shares our values, our vision for DePaul men's basketball, recognizes our vision for the resources required to compete at a high level, and is eager to return our program to being Chicago's team again.

With that, I want to officially welcome Chris Holtmann to DePaul by presenting him with a Number 1 jersey, marking the first day of our new era of DePaul basketball.

(Applause.)

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Thank you, DeWayne. Good morning, everyone.

It is great to be here. It is great to be here. Our family is so excited. My little nephew Mack, who I'll introduce in a minute, came up from Jackson, Mississippi, with my brother, and he kept saying over and over on the plane flight here, Dad, we are not going to miss the press conference, right? We're not going to miss the press conference. So little Mack is not missing the press conference.

I got a lot of people I want to thank here to begin with. Obviously I want to thank DeWayne, President Rob, for



their conversations. I'll get to that in a minute. But just the -- the Board of Trustees for the opportunity to lead this program. I want to thank Glenn Sugiyama and DHR Global and my agent Bret Just for navigating all that goes into the discussions and the entire process.

I just was incredibly impressed throughout the entire process, and it was a short conversation through most of these times, a few days, maybe a week, but I was extremely impressed with DeWayne and President Rob's vision throughout this program. I really was. They were clear and consistent with what they expect and what they want out of this program. At the end of the day, that was really a deciding factor for myself and our family.

Coaching is not just a profession, it's really a way of life. Just like being a President or an AD or others, it can be a hard position at times. Because of that, you really need a strong family. So I just want to touch on a couple of introductions here, people that are so important to me in this room here.

I want to introduce my wife Lori, 25 years as a coach's wife. It's like 50 years really.

(Laughter.)

That is a long time. That is a long time. She's been by my side every step of the way. We've had some incredibly special moments. We've had some wonderful kids that we've had a chance to coach, one of who is here today, Joey Lane, back with his family, beautiful family back there. It really is a way of life, and she is an incredible coach's wife.

My daughter Nora, who is starting her freshman year in high school, so we're navigating all that right now, incredible schools in and around Chicago. We can't wait to find the right opportunity, the right place to live, and the right school for her.

My brother John Michael, who I mentioned came up all the way from Jackson, Mississippi. He's in commercial real estate, and my nephew Mack, as well as our parents, John and Patty Holtmann and Steve and Phyllis Bedi, and all of our friends and family who are watching here today. We love you guys and appreciate all of your support.

This is a really exciting time for us. I grew up watching college basketball in the '80s and '90s is really when I fell in love with college basketball. During that time, I had a chance to watch Ray and Joey Meyer lead this program to 9 out of 10 NCAA Tournaments in the '80s, and I had a chance to watch players that I became very familiar with, special talents who wore the DePaul uniform, guys like

George Mikan and Mark Aguirre throughout the years and decades, Terry Cummings, Wilson Chandler, recent guys, Tommy Kleinschmidt as well, Max Strus, and so many others that just brought great pride to this university with the way they played on the floor.

I had a chance to spend a great night last night on a Zoom with former players and alumni who really care about this place and care about the vision of this place. It was really great to hear from all the special talents that have worn this uniform.

College basketball has changed dramatically. Everyone that's in this room probably understands the landscape of college athletics has changed dramatically since those times, the '70s and '80s, but the qualities that make up a successful program have not changed: Talented players playing for something bigger than themselves willing to make sacrifices, players who are committed to have a real love and passion to play the game, university alignment from top to bottom and support, and good old fashioned hard work. They were what made successful programs in the past, and they remain what makes successful programs today.

I'm really excited about us getting back to that time and those moments.

We're hard at work right now. I have a staff member here, Jack Owens, who we are hard at work putting together the kind of team, staff, and program, and really hitting the ground running. We want this program to be something that all of you who care about this university and this place take great pride in, and we are hard at work making that happen.

It's been a lot of hours here in the last couple days, but if there's one thing that I've heard over and over, it's that this city, this state, this city can't wait for this program to be special again, and they are so ready to rally around this program. That makes us really excited because this really is our program.

One of the things that I've always enjoyed leading a program is making it really a collaborative effort with former players with alumni and boosters and professors. Make this a collaborative effort. Our doors are open to all of our former players. We love to see them at practice. We love to have them around. Our doors will always be open to professors, the places we've been at. We've always had an open door policy and continue to do that because this really is our program.

This place, I've learned, has so many exciting things to offer -- a world class education in a world class city with a



clear mission of service to the community, proud and successful alumni, outstanding athletic programs, what I believe is one of the very best basketball conferences in college basketball, and as I mentioned, a real hunger for relevance in today's ever-changing college sports climate.

I'll be honest, as I went through this process, there were people who I care about, who care about me, who said are you ready for this? Are you ready for the challenges of rebuilding this program? Are you ready to jump in? Almost as a word of caution.

And while I thought about some of the challenges and while I recognize there are always going to be difficult days -- there always are when you're trying to compete at the very highest level. In anything you do, there will be difficult days. And as DeWayne said to me in a note yesterday when I arrived, he's ready to help build this brick by brick. I love that. There will be difficult days when you're competing at the highest level.

I see these challenges, we see these challenges, our family, our staff, as great opportunity. Man, great opportunity. We have a great opportunity to fill this arena on a Saturday afternoon. We have great opportunity to recruit outstanding players from an incredible city, a great state, great opportunity to practice in a new state of the art practice facility here in the coming years, great opportunity to hear our names called on Selection Sunday, like so many teams and schools heard their names called yesterday.

For the first time in a couple decades, we will get there. We will get there. And when we do, we'll celebrate together with all those who love and care about this great university.

Let's go, Blue Demons.

(Applause.)

Q. Chris, really quick, how have your past experiences with Butler but also Ohio State and Gardner-Webb repaired you for a moment like this?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: So many ways. In so many ways. I think, when you become a head coach for the first time, you learn on the fly a little bit. I remember some of those days at Gardner-Webb, my first head coaching job, and you're learning so much.

In those jobs, I got them all at different times, but all three of them had struggled the year or two prior. So in many ways, you are coming into a situation that did need some repair or some rebuild. And I think there's no question

there will be some lessons learned because we had a really good start in all those three situations. It took a little bit longer in my first spot, but I think you learn what it takes, the kind of people, which it's always about the people, the kind of people you want to work with when you're starting a rebuild.

Q. DeWayne, can you talk about when you went through this process and then decided to hone in on Chris Holtmann as your lead candidate? Can you talk about any leading attributes that stood out to you from Chris' time at Butler and Ohio State that made you want to pursue him the post towards the end of the search?

DeWAYNE PEEVY: Thank you. I don't even think I told Chris this, but I think the first time I started kind of watching Chris was actually when I was at Kentucky. Being a Lexington native and the buzz around the success he was having at Butler when he went to Ohio State, people were saying that he could be the next coach.

So my job being a men's basketball administrator at the time, when my coach left, I always had to keep an eye on who would be the next one. So I started watching Ohio State with Chris as the coach in his first couple years and really understanding his style of play, him as a coach, and that piece.

When it came into this search process, obviously as I was trying to figure out who are the targets at the high end, the top talent that I hoped would be interested in a job, I looked at jobs that could be in some transition, whether it was an athletic director leaving or a conference changing, to see if those people, I could kick the tires to see if there was an opportunity there.

So Chris was immediately on that short list who I hoped I could at least talk to to maybe be interested in a job. And as it played out, it afforded me an opportunity to have a conversation earlier than with some other coaches with the timing. Immediately, I felt like that was not just some admiration on my side of it, I thought it was a mutual opportunity that might could present itself as we continued to talk.

I think then you're in that hopeful mode of how it works because wanting to be respectful of the time in transitioning, but also to really talk about the focus of the things that we could deliver because I knew he'd be hearing the other things that are out there because people were basing it on what the past was. So early on, he was somebody that I was really interested in and hoping that we could get to this day.

Q. This will be for Chris or DeWayne. One of the things that seems a little bit different about this job compared to Columbus or Indianapolis or Athens or even some of the other places you've been, is that this is such a big city with so many other professional franchises and collegiate programs and other things happening, that it's easy to not get the oxygen maybe that your program might deserve or might get in another market. Given that this program has struggled for a while, I'd be interested to hear a little bit about how you might want to sell the program beyond just producing a winning team to get more people in this city paying attention and being invested in DePaul again.

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Well, it is different. My first head coaching job had one spotlight in the town. It's a little different now. We've come a long way.

Winning is always, as you mentioned -- I know you're asking for something beyond winning -- but that is something that is most important as we all know.

I do think that cities, fan bases rally around a style of play and players they enjoy watching that play with a certain competitiveness and edge, a passion, an energy. Then I think it's on us. It's incumbent upon our staff and our players and certainly this community, and that's why I'm so excited to work with DeWayne, it's incumbent on all of us to do whatever we can to engage our student population, the alumni, to get the word out.

The other piece I would say is, as we build this, it's really important for me to bring opponents in here in the nonconference as well that are going to be really attractive and create some buzz because I think that's an important thing. I've tried to do that at every stop that I've been at and will continue to do that.

DeWAYNE PEEVY: I'll add to that I think it's important -- even when I decided to come here, it was about the potential and the opportunity that's here. I think the fact that we've had success before. There are DePaul fans that are here that are maybe frustrated that are not even coming to the game, but maybe they're checking the score, maybe they turn the channel off, but they're still here. 85 percent of our alums work here in Chicago.

So the opportunity, what I would consider, to help our team win is still there too. We don't have to go to a point or be an NCAA Tournament team overnight to get fans to come. Even in the last three years in this building we've increased attendance and ticket revenue and going in the opposite direction in the win column. All our first row of season tickets and the courtside seats are already sold out.

So there's affinity here. I just think we need to give something back to allow hope to build, to allow people to lock in on something that they feel better about it. I can feel that happening in this off-season leading into the season.

There's an opportunity for this city to want to help this team get there, and it starts with the staff and the roster we build in a short period of time that could make summertime in Chicago a pretty fun time here leading into the year.

Q. DeWayne, this is now your second hire. Just how much heat or pressure do you feel about getting this one right given that the first one didn't work out?

DeWAYNE PEEVY: I think pressure is a privilege, first of all. That's why I'm here. I have a job because it's tough. If things were easy, they wouldn't need my position. I don't feel any pressure any more than what I put on myself and the opportunity to build a program.

I came here from Kentucky to win, and you take the steps forward, you learn lessons, and you push forward. I think, if you're going to be a true leader, you have to get people around you that can help you accomplish something big. We've done that with our staff and some of the turnover we've had. I've had some of the best coaches in the country, and now adding our tenth head coach to the staff to kind of complete where we need to go.

I don't feel the pressure to win. I mean, that's tough. That's more on Chris. I don't call the plays. I don't make any shots. I get to cheer. I get to entertain. Those are the fun parts. But I believe in this situation, if I'm going to be the value to this university, this is the points where I'm supposed to thrive in.

I believe the trust that President Manuel gave me, Rob told me, hey, go get this done. You have my full support. Also having that from our trustees, and over the course of the last 50 days getting text messages, I believe in you, push forward, we trust you. The pressure in that comes from just wanting to deliver for them. I think that's the biggest thing, if anything.

Since I got here, I've met so many DePaul fans. I'm probably the walking billboard. I wear my brand everywhere I go. Just the stories you hear about people that used to go to games, that grew up going to games, and how many people have come to Wintrust the last two years for the first time ever, that's the pressure that I thrive in to deliver for those people that have deserved this for so long.

So it's time to go to work. We've got a lot to do, but I think, like I said before, it's a privilege to be in this situation because, if you don't have the pressure, then you're irrelevant. Nobody cares. If we're trying to build something that's never been successful, I'm not sure I would be signed up for that.

Q. Congrats, Chris. You're now entering a program that hasn't had much success in nearly two decades. Why do you feel as if you're the right coach for the job? And what makes you different from other coaches that have stepped into the pressure that comes with this job here?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Listen, there's pressure in every job. That's part of the life we chose. So that's part of competitive, high level athletics. So we embrace that, and we're excited about it. As I mentioned, I think it's one of the very best leagues in the country. So there's a pressure to build a roster that can compete at that level.

Our family felt like it was a really good fit, and I think they felt the same. Without the conversations, the really detailed, intense, in some cases, extensive conversation with DeWayne and President Rob and their vision and feeling really good about that, I just think we came to the conclusion that our family did and they did that it was a great fit.

I'm just excited to see how it plays out. I think there's a lot of excitement and energy, as there should be, and we're ready to get to work.

Q. DeWayne, you mentioned NIL as a part of your vision here. Now that you've got your coach in place and with the ever changing landscape that is NIL, I was wondering if you could just shed some light on the efforts in that regard now.

DeWAYNE PEEVY: I think, if you look back just over a year ago is when we had our first collective, and we're in the middle of a losing streak. It's kind of really hard to go out and raise significant dollars while you're in that setting. We're trying to turn that and get some momentum.

Now you go a year later, and at this point where you don't have a coach and you're trying to raise money, it's another challenge. But that was the greatest thing where I feel like DePaul showed up. For me to go out there and talk to supporters, donors, alums -- some that have been disconnected, some that have been around since day one -- and ask them to contribute to something and trusting me enough to know that it will help deliver, it was humbling and motivating. But it allowed us to get to this day.

Now we turn the page to phase 2, where we're doing those same efforts with a coach, I think it's given us another opportunity for people that are coming for because of the excitement because I had a charge to be able to have the tools in place to allow us to hire a head coach. So that's basically what Rob and the Board of Trustees gave me the tools to do the best job I could.

Now this allows Chris to do the same, whether it's support for his staff to put together, obviously the flexibility from a roster standpoint to be able to change DePaul. We've got to look at this as more of a refresh than a rebuild in today's day and age when every student-athlete on every roster in the country could decide to go elsewhere this year for the first time ever.

But I feel that was a big step up, allowing us to change faster, to increase the process. No longer do you got to go out there in the late spring signing period and sign up every freshman that's available, maybe fill in a couple people with junior college rosters and it takes three years to even see where it could go. It could change quickly, and you start setting the culture of what you're going to be in the future pretty quickly.

Q. DeWayne, when you mention NIL, kind of piggy-backing off that with you saying getting the house in order, how important was that for you, and how difficult was that process for you?

DeWAYNE PEEVY: I think the difficulty wasn't the knowing, it's just the time. We made a change, I believe, January 22nd, 23rd was the announcement, we started a new blue grid collective on February 1st. So really basically started fund-raising in a new way on the 7th of February. So if there was any pressure, it was just the time.

I probably in the middle of my sleep could pitch to whoever I was sitting with because I was talking about the same message over and over because people wanted it. It was a great opportunity because, when you're going through it, like I said, it was 50 days of a process that started with the selling of our program phase. It's the same thing that you're talking to the fans and opportunity to know we can make a difference now.

You can wait until we get a coach, but it will be a different coach. Here's the opportunity to impact that. That's a unique thing that I thought was a good place for us is that we were raising money for NIL to help change what we look like from a coaching standpoint because the word was out there that was a negative of what we were before. We had to change that, we had to change the thought of what DePaul was in that sense just like the other four factors I

talked about.

Q. Chris, when you start to look at what you want your staff and roster to look like, have you had the opportunity to talk to any of the current players DePaul has, and do you plan on retaining any of the current players for next year?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Good question. We'll look at that here in the coming days. Literally just got to -- obviously just got to the city yesterday. So plan to meet with all the players here in the next couple days as well as coaching staff.

Q. Chris, what went wrong the last two seasons at Ohio State, and what can you learn from that, and why did it happen?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: You're looking at one of those seasons, they're in the NIT right now as a 20-win season. Roster construction is difficult. What's one thing probably that I learned, it's got to be a little bit older than what we were. We took great strides from starting four freshmen two years ago and now four sophomores this past season. We improved like we anticipated we would improve.

But they were not the consistent NCAA Tournament teams they were of the previous five years.

Q. One of the things you're known for at Ohio State was aggressively scheduling in the nonconference. How challenging do you expect a schedule in year 1 at DePaul?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Not as challenging as in year 2.

(Laughter).

To be honest with you. Or in year 3. It will progressively get more challenging for us.

Now, we're going to have a lot of people that probably want to schedule us, but I think we will progressively get more -- we did that at Ohio State, you're right. We had some tremendous -- we beat two Number 1 teams in the country, one of those was a nonconference game with Duke. Another one was a league game with Michigan State. We had, I believe, 10 top ten wins.

So we're going to do as much as we can to schedule attractive, as I mentioned, opponents here at DePaul, and we plan to do that in pretty short order.

Q. If I'm hearing both of you correctly through this press conference, I'm hearing both of you talk about

the importance of unified institutional alignment from the president through the athletic director through the university community to achieve this shared vision. If I'm understanding, Chris, this is part of what made this position attractive to you. I'm wondering if either of you could be a little bit more specific about what that kind of shared alignment means in practice as a coach. I assume that part of that means a shared understanding of financial and institutional resource commitment, but what else does that mean on a day-to-day basis if everybody is actually on the same page?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: I think it's a great understanding of how different the coaching climate is now than what it was even five years ago, that's important. An understanding in basketball is different than other sports.

So you need an administration that understands some of the differences in college basketball now, even to other sports, and how it's changed and evolved in the last five to seven years, then have a real commitment to look at their institution and their specific needs of the institution and say, okay, how do we address this to maybe improve the overall situation?

That's what was clear to me that DeWayne and President Rob had done really in the last couple years is really assess from top to bottom what are some needs, maybe some things that potentially institutionally are holding back a progress, how do they get addressed, and then moving forward and addressing those.

Certainly some of those are along NIL, upgrades in facilities, but there are other things too that are a part of it.

Q. Chris, I hate to go back to Ohio State for a second, but I just want to get your reaction to Jake Diebler's promotion and the interim tag getting taken away.

CHRIS HOLTMANN: It's a great group of kids. It's obviously a unique thing, but I'm really pulling for them and happy for them.

Q. I was wondering, historically, when DePaul has been really good, always a very strong local presence on the roster. You go back to Dave Corzine, Joe Ponsetto, Terry Cummings, Mark Aguirre, and even more recently the Quentin Richardson teams. Is it possible or necessary in building something here to have a strong local influence on the roster?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: I certainly hope so. I think that's a big part of it. The game, roster build, roster construction is so different than what it was 20, 30 years ago. When you

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look at a Final Four, as we were talking about this last night with our group of DePaul players, past players, the roster -- you look at the Final Four team, you're going to see half that roster is probably from somewhere else, another institution, seven, eight guys. And some of those guys might be in year 1 at their place. It might have been their third school.

So roster construction is very vastly different than what it was, and successful roster construction can be very different. I think there's other ways to look at it, but we would be foolish not to take a really hard look at a place as fertile as Illinois and Chicago in recruiting. It certainly has been a real path to success throughout the history of this program.

Q. I was wondering if you could kind of talk me through how you've changed as a head coach in this NIL era. I know being a head coach three years ago is very different from what it is present day. How have you changed your coaching style?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: I don't think you change how you coach. It changes your recruiting a little bit. The days of being able to potentially get a kid based on relationship alone, I think some of those situations still exist, but it's not as important as what it used to be.

I don't think you -- you can't coach any differently than what you really believe. I've always believed in coaching to my convictions and been most successful when I've done that. But I think it does change in some ways how you recruit, and I think it changes also your outlook.

You used to be able to plan on having a roster that could look very similar from year to year. You can't do that anymore. It really is, hey, this is our roster this year. It could look different next year. We'll adjust. We'll adjust because we need to adjust.

Q. Chris, I'm curious with the portal opening today --

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Is the portal open? I didn't know that. That's a shock.

(Laughter).

Q. What's your message going to be to transfers and obviously recruiting high school transfers to come to DePaul? What's your primary message going to be to them to convince them to come here?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: I think we've got a great opportunity. We just got a tremendous opportunity. Again, we came here as a family because we really do believe in what this

place can be. We really do. I think we have incredible leadership. I'm really excited about this practice facility here in the coming years. This is an incredible basketball arena, and the league is really attractive.

So we've got to share with them our vision. We have plenty of examples of guys we've coached who have had really successful college and NBA careers and are down that path. So we've got to show all of the young men, both via high school and transfer portal, our path to helping them become the best versions of themselves to reach and achieve their potential. I'm confident we'll do that.

But it's also about finding the right group, the right group that wants to be here and wants to be a part and lock arms and rebuild this thing.

Q. What was your reaction when Ohio State made the move in February, and did you expect to be back at work this quickly?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: Those things are always hard. I think for me I really took some time to just decide. I had the blessing of being able to not coach this year if I didn't want to. I potentially considered some media opportunities.

But as I got to know this situation in more detail and had to have conversations -- I've never really been in a situation where I didn't necessarily have to work, but I love to coach, and I love to teach. It's in my DNA. It's part of who I am. Despite the gray hair, I'm still relatively young.

After talking to DeWayne, I said, hey, listen, this is something that I really feel strongly about. It was really balancing those two things. I wasn't out there looking for every opportunity. It was more, hey, if the right opportunity comes along, I'm going to take advantage of it. I felt like this was the right one and certainly do.

Q. Over the course of the past month or within that, you probably had to consider other opportunities that may pop up along the way. Was there one particular point where you knew that the light went on that this was going to happen and this was going to be the right move for you?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: It's an interesting question because this, of the jobs I had taken in the past, the process had been they're really quick typically, two, three days. They happen so -- it's such a compressed time. It's amazing. DeWayne knows. These coaching searches, they're really quick.

This one I had the chance to really spend some time



talking to people that I care about, guys I trust, Big East coaches I went to battle with for years, had a chance to talk with them. Obviously DeWayne was probably like, oh, Coach is calling me again. He's got more questions?

I had a chance to really vet the entire situation. There came a point, I was down in Florida, taking some time and processing and talking to a lot of people. Our family said, hey, this is the right time, this is the right place, and this is the right opportunity for us. At that point, it happened within the next day or two.

Q. Chris, can you elaborate on what your coaching style, playing style the fans can expect to see from you, both offense and defense?

CHRIS HOLTMANN: We should turn it over to a former player. I've got him back there. He can probably answer that better than me. Joey could.

We've had a really highly efficient offense throughout our time at Butler and Ohio State. That's kind of what I think is probably statistically what would be the most striking is we've had really highly efficient offenses, top 15, top 20, a couple years top 5 offenses in efficiency.

I think our team has always been, when we've been at our best right now, we've had really good versatility, versatile pieces, and we've had a team that's really had, I think, a togetherness in how they played on both ends, and that's certainly what I hope we'll see right away in this program.

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