

basketball preview



2001-02 technician basketball preview

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state brings new look into 2001-2002 season

with many new players and a new offense, the men's basketball team hopes to turn around a program that has struggled over much of the past decade.

steve thompson

A FRESH LOOK TO THIS YEAR'S N.C. STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL team has brought Wolfpack fans hope of a return to past glories.

While State has a storied tradition — winning national championships in the 1970s and '80s — the Wolfpack has not even reached the NCAA Tournament since the early '90s.

After being bounced in the second round by Oklahoma State in 1991, State basketball sank toward the bottom of the ACC during the tenure of Les Robinson. Under current head coach Herb Sendek, the Wolfpack has made progress — but still no NCAA appearances.

"We know it's been a long time since N.C. State's been in the [NCAA] Tournament. As much as we want to go there for ourselves, we want to go for our fans as well. But it's equally important that we coach for the right reasons and have the interests of our players at the forefront."

When State was last in the Big Dance, freshman Julius Hodge was an elementary school student growing up in the Bronx, N.Y.

These days, however, Hodge is the preseason ACC Freshman of the Year — headlining one of the top recruiting classes in the school's history.

"The talent level of our freshman class has been well-documented," said Sendek. "But I think the most engaging aspect is their character quotient. They are really good kids — all eager to improve. And I think they all love basketball, which should help that process along."

The success of this year's team will likely depend on how State's youth handle the rigors of the ACC schedule.

In the off-season, the composition of the Wolfpack changed drastically. Graduated are Kenny Inge, Ron Kelley, Damon Thornton and Cornelius Williams — practically the entire frontcourt from the past two years.

After testing the NBA draft waters, sophomore Damien Wilkins was told he could not rejoin State's team. The former McDonald's High School All-American then transferred to Georgia.

The departures have left the Wolfpack with a smaller, faster team that will rely more on a full-court offense. Sendek has used the term "interchangeable parts" to describe the team, as any given player can occupy virtually any position in the lineup.

"It's just going to show everyone's all-around game, get everybody the opportunity to be in a good position to score easy buckets," said junior Cliff Crawford. "It just gives you a great opportunity to use the floor, the

whole floor, as a team."

Last year, State's offense struggled and was near the bottom of the ACC in many categories, including points per game, field-goal shooting and free-throw shooting.

"Last year, I think we were last in the league in free-throw shooting, we didn't finish and put the ball in the basket," said Sendek. "The first couple of years I was at N.C. State, make no mistake about it, we tried to shorten the game. If I could make it a five-minute game, I would have."

"Each year since then, we've played increasingly up-tempo. Last year, we took another step in that direction, although I'm not sure anyone, myself included, felt that way because we had a hard time scoring."

In running the new offense, the Wolfpack returns only three upperclassmen who have received significant playing time while at State. Seniors Anthony Grundy and Archie Miller anchor a team comprised of eight freshmen.



SENIOR ARCHIE MILLER, ONE OF THE NATION'S BEST LONG-RANGE SHOOTERS, WILL HAVE TO LEAD A TEAM WITH EIGHT FRESHMEN. —Joon Ince

No.	PLAYER	Pos.	Ht.	CLASS
0	Michael Bell	F	6-9	R-Fr.
2	Anthony Grundy	G	6-3	Sr.
3	Ilian Evtimov	F	6-7	Fr.
4	Dovonte Edwards	G	6-0	Fr.
5	Brian Keeter	G	6-2	Sr.
11	Archie Miller	G	5-10	R-Sr.
21	Levi Watkins	F	6-7	Fr.
22	Will Roach	F	6-5	R-Fr.
23	Scouter Sherrill	G	6-3	So.
24	Julius Hodge	G	6-6	Fr.
30	Clifford Crawford	G	6-3	Jr.
32	Jordan Collins	C	5-10	Fr.
33	Josh Powell	F	6-9	Fr.
50	Kristian Jensen	C	7-1	R-Jr.
54	Marcus Melvin	F	6-8	So.



AFTER LEARNING THE ROPES LAST SEASON, MARCUS MELVIN STEPS INTO THE LINEUP AS THE WOLFPACK'S MOST EXPERIENCED POST PLAYER. —Jason Lester

Grundy is the team's leading returning scorer, as he averaged 14.6 points per game a year ago. He is also one of the leading defensive players in the conference, evidenced by his mention on the last two ACC All-Defensive teams.

In Miller, the Wolfpack has one of the top three-point shooters in the nation. In fact, Miller was leading the nation in three-point percentage, missing nine games with a stress fracture. He finished the season hitting 57.5 percent of his three-pointers and averaging 9.3 points per game.

During the nine games Miller was not able to play, the Wolfpack offense fell into a rut. Without Miller's long-range ability, opposing teams were able to settle back in a zone. State's offense averaged 69.4 points and shot only 40.5 percent from the floor in those games.

Crawford is the only other returning upperclassman. He spent much of last year as the team's point guard, leading the team in assists with 102. He will likely have similar duties this year.

"We have some older guards," said Sendek. "That's the one experienced part of our team."

"Especially early, they are going to have to shoulder a lot of the responsibility. They're going to have to be a calming influence on the floor. They're going to have to handle ball. We're going to have to rely heavily upon

them."

While the abilities of Grundy, Miller and Crawford are well-documented, it is the potential and uncertainty surrounding the younger players that makes this season one that could either be boom or bust.

Sophomores Marcus Melvin and Scooter Sherrill played sparingly last year, showing flashes of brilliance along with signs of their inexperience. Joining Hodgie in this year's freshman class will be Jordan Collins, Ilian Evtimov, Josh Powell, Levi Watkins and Michael Bell, who redshirted last year.

After starting strong last season by scoring 18 points vs. Charleston Southern and 16 vs. Penn State, Melvin's playing time tapered off as State got into the ACC schedule and used more experienced players.

This year, however, Melvin is the experience in the frontcourt. In State's first exhibition game, Melvin led the team with 26 points. Although he didn't have the same production in its second game, he will definitely be one of State's key interior players.

"We're very different [up front] this year," said Sendek. "The elder statesman this year is Marcus Melvin. Physically, we don't replace seniors with freshmen and come away with the same presence. But we do have a high skill level with our frontcourt players."

Also improved from last year is Sherrill, who spent much of the off-season working on his outside shooting. A McDonald's All-American in high school, Sherrill shot only 37.5 percent from the field and 27.9 percent behind the three-point arc a season ago.

"I worked on everything [this summer], but mostly on my jump shot," said Sherrill. "I was a real streaky shooter last year, and in order to help the team this year, I had to be more consistent, so I worked on that the hardest."

While this year's freshman class is one of the most promising classes in recent memory, Sendek warns against putting lofty expectations on its performance. Two years ago, when Wilkins entered as the No. 1 recruit in the nation, many were surprised when he didn't immediately turn around the program.

"I'm always cautious [in evaluating freshmen]," said Sendek. "Because sometimes we create such mythological expectations for such players that even when they play well and perform well, we leave with a feeling of 'Is that it? I thought this guy was Superman in a cape.'"

Hodge, ranked as the No. 5 freshman in the nation by ESPN.com, is the player many see as this "Superman in a cape." As a senior at St. Raymond's High School, he garnered numerous accolades, including McDonald's High School All-American, first-team Parade All-American, New York's Mr. Basketball and New York Daily News Player of the Year.

"I think I'm a very versatile player," said Hodge. "I can play point guard, shooting guard, small forward, even center if we need it — anywhere coach says. I would

prefer to play point guard, but it really doesn't matter as long as I'm on the court."

The rest of the freshmen will also be looked to for major contributions.

Collins and Powell are two players who add size to the team and have the back-to-the-basket capability seen in the departed frontcourt players.

Although Bell and Watkins also have a lot of height, their games focus more on facing the basket — combining a perimeter game with the ability to slash to the basket.

In Evtimov, the last member of the recruiting class to sign, the Wolfpack has a versatile player who is capable in all aspects of the game.

Rounding out State's lineup is a quartet of walk-ons: senior Brian Keeter, junior Kristian Jensen, freshman Davonte Edwards (who currently plays as a wide receiver on State's football team) and redshirt freshman Will Roach.

State's season begins today with the BGA tournament. The Wolfpack will face Prairie View A&M at 7 p.m. While State doesn't have the most challenging non-conference schedule in the ACC, it does have a number of high profile games — including matchups with Ohio State, Massachusetts, Syracuse and Temple.

In the preseason ACC media poll, State was predicted to finish seventh in the conference. Last year, the Wolfpack finished seventh with a 5-11 mark in league play. The Wolfpack will open the ACC portion of its schedule against Maryland on Dec. 30.



SENIOR ANTHONY GRUNDY WAS THE TEAM'S TOP SCORER DURING THE 2000-01 SEASON, AVERAGING 14.6 POINTS PER GAME. —Jason Lester

pack opens season with balance and power

despite injuries,
the n.c. state women's
basketball team should be
a force in the acc.

jerry moore

AS THE CURTAIN RISES ON A NEW SEASON FOR THE N.C. State women's basketball team, head coach Kay Yow will again direct a talented cast of characters.

The Wolfpack opens the season ranked No. 10 in the nation — returning three starters, including All-ACC performer Carisse Moody, from a team that progressed to the Sweet 16.

In addition, Kaayla Chones makes her comeback after missing last season with an injury, and a quartet of freshmen joins the team to bolster an already deep roster.

But as Yow begins her 27th campaign at the controls of the Pack, she will have to deal with the loss of two of her leading ladies. Together with the Hall of Fame coach, the 2001-02 edition of the Pack must cope with the absence of projected starting guards Terah James and Ivy Gardner.

James, who redshirted last season after undergoing reconstructive knee surgery on her right knee, suffered the second devastating injury of her career in practice on Oct. 31. This time, it was a torn ACL in her left leg.

James desperately wanted to avoid missing her second consecutive season but has decided against trying to play. She underwent surgery on Tuesday and will sit out the entire year. Yow said the school will appeal the NCAA in an effort to get James a sixth year of eligibility.

James was expected to step into the point guard slot vacated by Tynasha Lewis, who was an All-ACC selection four times during her career at State. After last season, Lewis was drafted into the WNBA and played in 29 games for the Houston Comets this summer.

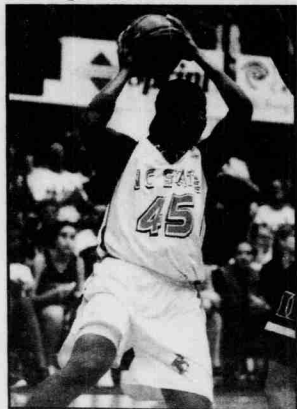
Although James' injury situation is more serious, Gardner also began to experience mysterious knee problems early this season.

Gardner, whom Yow planned to start at shooting guard, wasn't able to maintain a full practice schedule early this season because of recurring pain. She did play limited minutes in State's first exhibition game but underwent arthroscopic surgery on Sunday to have a left knee debridement. She is expected to miss the next three to six weeks, depending on the speed of her recovery.

Gardner, named to the ACC All-Defensive team after last season, was also the Pack's third-leading scorer, averaging 8.1 points per game.

Facing injuries to key players is not a new experience for State, however, which played all of last season without James and Chones.

"We got knocked down pretty hard last year, and we really had to work hard to come back," Yow said. "This year, we've already got some knocks early, but I have a



SENIOR TALISHA SCATES AND THE N.C. STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM ARE READY TO CONTEND FOR THE ACC TITLE. — Jason Loester

lot of trust and confidence that no matter what, this team will find a way to play some great basketball."

On a decidedly more upbeat injury-related note, the Pack has regained the services of Chones, who missed all of last season with a torn quadriceps tendon. Together with returning starter Moody, Chones will provide the Pack's strength down low and will likely lay the foundation for the team's success.

Two years ago, Chones started at center as a freshman, averaging 11.4 points and 7.9 rebounds per game on her way to being chosen as a member of the ACC All-Freshman team. Chones was looking to break out as a sophomore but suffered the injury in preseason practice and was forced to redshirt.

Chones' setback opened the door for Moody to excel, and she took full advantage of the opportunity. Although undersized at center, Moody took control in the post and led the Pack by averaging 14.9 points and 7.1 rebounds per game.

This season, Moody will shift to the power forward spot to make room for Chones at center. The duo gives State a formidable presence around the basket.

Moody, who faced frequent double teams last year,

NO.	PLAYER	POS.	HT.	CLASS
2	Rachel Stockdale	G	5-11	Fr.
10	Liz Bailey	G	5-8	Fr.
12	Terah James	G	5-7	R-So.
14	Nanna Rivers	G	5-8	So.
21	Daphne Hutcherson	G	5-8	Sr.
22	Adeola Olanrewaju	F	6-2	So.
24	Kelly Greathouse	F	6-3	Fr.
30	Kendra Bell	G	5-5	Fr.
31	Amelia Labador	G	5-9	Jr.
32	Ivy Gardner	G	5-9	Jr.
42	Amy Simpson	G/F	6-0	Jr.
44	Carisse Moody	F/C	6-1	Jr.
45	Talisha Scates	F	6-1	Sr.
50	Kaayla Chones	C	6-3	R-So.

welcomes Chones' return.

"I think teams will have to play more honestly around the basket," Moody said. "We'll have that one-two punch. They won't be able to focus the pressure on one particular player."

Yow also believes Moody will find more room to maneuver, both inside and out.

"We'll still be looking to Carisse a lot inside," Yow said. "Carisse can be a dominating force in there. She can also step out and face the basket and put the shots down."

Freshman Kelly Greathouse, ranked as one of the top 10 recruits in the nation, provides back-up inside. The forward from California averaged 21 points and 11 rebounds per game as a senior in high school. She also underwent knee surgery in the off-season but has played two exhibition contests and should be ready for the season opener.

The Pack's interior players will need to get passes in the post, and the injuries to James and Gardner open the door for a slew of eager Pack guards to get more time.

Sophomore Nanna Rivers will assume the starting point guard role. Rivers appeared in 30 games for the Pack as a freshman, and her teammates have noticed her improvement and aggressiveness in practice this season.

"She's grown a lot out there," said forward Talisha Scates. "She's seeing the court a lot better. There's a



AMY SIMPSON, THE TEAM'S TOP RETURNING THREE-POINT SHOOTER, STEPS INTO THE STARTING SMALL FORWARD SLOT. —Dylan Wilson

new level of maturity. She's also penetrating a lot more and finishing around the basket."

Along with Rivers, a trio of backcourt players will see time at the point. Freshman Kendra Bell has played well in practice and exhibitions early this year. Senior Daphne Hutcherson and junior Amelia Labador are both experienced players who started games as State's floor general last season.

Freshman Rachel Stockdale will help the Pack on the perimeter, especially when the team needs a spark from the outside. She has seen extensive court time in the Pack's two exhibition games and could start at shooting guard. Walk-on Liz Bailey rounds out the list of newcomers.

Adeola Olanrewaju adds experience and the versatility to play four positions to the lineup and could start opposite Rivers in the backcourt.

Yow believes Olanrewaju is ready to step into a starting role and would have seen increased playing time even without Gardner's injury. The sophomore has impressed the coach with her improvement since she appeared in all of the Pack's 33 games last season, almost exclusively as a reserve.

"She has really taken her game to another level," Yow said. "She is doing a lot more things. She's scoring, penetrating, going to the boards, running the floor well and really working hard on defense. It would be hard to keep her out of the lineup."

Scates, a senior forward who started 30 games last season, will be Yow's first substitution off the bench. She is a solid defensive player and shot 54.8 percent from the floor last year.

Chones, Moody, Olanrewaju and Scates will give the Pack a menacing front line. Yow feels that each player's unique attributes afford her the flexibility to adapt her lineup to in-game situations.

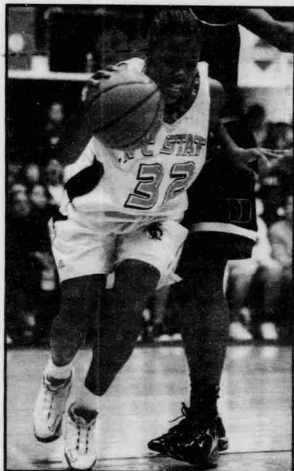
"All four of them have different strengths, but they complement each other very well," Yow said. "Definitely, that front line will be one of our strengths."

Sharp-shooting Amy Simpson will assume the starting small forward spot for the first time in her career. She came off the bench last season and provided the Pack with its best long-range threat.

Simpson is the team's top returning three-point shooter, and teammates claim that she has worked tirelessly on establishing a defensive presence.

Last year, State tackled the fourth-most difficult schedule in the nation, and things won't be much different in the upcoming season. Twenty of the Pack's scheduled opponents advanced to postseason play after last year. Besides playing an always-taxing ACC slate that includes No. 5 Duke and No. 23 Maryland, the Pack will take on No. 2 Tennessee and No. 16 Georgia.

A season ago, State advanced to the ACC Tournament final for the first time since 1991 before



IVY GARDNER, A MEMBER OF THE 2001 ACC ALL-DEFENSIVE TEAM, WILL MISS THE FIRST THREE TO SIX WEEKS OF THE SEASON WITH AN INJURY. —Jason Lester

bowing out to Duke. This year, the Pack will try to return to the title game of the annual Greensboro event, which will be the 25th in conference history.

Yow, who has won 611 games and four ACC titles in her career, is one of three coaches who has been around for all of the tournaments. Debbie Ryan of Virginia and Chris Weller of Maryland are the others.

Even Yow's younger players understand how far the event has come in 25 years.

"It's a really big deal for us," Moody said. "We can definitely see the changes in women's basketball from where it started to now. The game has changed dramatically, and it will continue to grow."

State has appeared in seven consecutive NCAA Tournaments and will likely make it eight straight in 2002. If the season goes well and the Pack earns one of the top four seeds in the East Region, Yow's team could progress to the Final Four without playing outside of Raleigh.

The top four seeds in each region host the opening two rounds, and the East Regional finals will be held at the Entertainment and Sports Arena in March. San Antonio will host the 2002 Final Four.

youth will be served

n.c. state's top-five recruiting class figures to get a lot of playing time this year.

jeremy ashton

AT 10:30 P.M. ON A SUMMER WEEKNIGHT, REYNOLDS Coliseum is supposed to be dead.

The lights should be off in the storied arena that has witnessed so many great moments in the history of N.C. State basketball. The building should be quiet, left alone with the memories of the past.

Yet people who happened to wander by on one of those long summer nights may have seen the glow of lights coming from the "Old Barn." They might have heard the familiar sounds of a basketball being dribbled on the floor. And maybe, just maybe, they could have felt the Wolfpack's past, present and future merging.

The sights and sounds emanating from Reynolds came from the Pack's heralded recruiting class, which spent those late-night sessions with the team's veterans trying to adapt as quickly as possible to the world of college basketball.

"I don't know if I've ever been around a team that we've had to kick out of the gym as much as this group," head coach Herb Sendek said.

Bringing in a group as highly touted as State's fresh-



McDONALD'S HIGH SCHOOL ALL-AMERICAN JULIUS HODGE IS THE MARQUEE MEMBER OF N.C. STATE'S STELLAR FRESHMAN CLASS. — Jason Lester

man class, which was ranked third in the country by Sports Illustrated, creates potential problems with the delicate chemistry of a basketball team. Thus far, however, Julius Hodge, Josh Powell, Levi Watkins, Jordan Collins and Ilian Evtimov have not ceased to impress their coaches and teammates with their work ethic.

"They've got great attitudes about basketball," junior Clifford Crawford said. "They're just good people all around. I like being around those guys, and I like playing with them."

If there's one player who typifies what the class is all about, it's Hodge, a 6-6 McDonald's All-American from the Bronx, N.Y., who was rated fifth in the country among high school seniors by ESPN.com. Hodge is a whiz with the ball, and he can slash to the basket or knock down threes. He's also shown a flair for the dramatic, sending home the game-winning shot in the Red-White Game.

He's the most talented player in a talented class — and he's the hardest working.

"He is one of those magical people that every once in a while you're blessed to be around," Sendek said. "He is a terrific person. He has an aura and an engaging nature that makes you want to be around him, makes you want to be on his team, makes you want to coach him."

At one point in the fall, Sendek said the Pack players were running a routine line drill that they had to complete in a certain amount of time. As Sendek counted down the seconds, Hodge dove head-first across the baseline just to make sure he would finish in time.

"I've always been a hard worker and always tried to work harder than everybody since I was about eight years old," Hodge said. "My brother said, 'You're not going to be anything in this game if you don't work hard and concentrate,' and I've been doing that ever since."

Hodge has been hailed by some as the Pack's best recruit since the legendary David Thompson, a moniker that was also placed on the now-departed Damien Wilkins, Wilkins, the nephew of former NBA star Dominique Wilkins and son of former NBA player Gerald Wilkins, put up reasonable numbers during his two seasons at State but never fulfilled the high expectations placed on him. After scoring 11.7 points per game last season, he tried to enter the NBA Draft and was told by scouts to return to college. Sendek then told him that he wasn't welcome back on the team following several critical comments that he and his father made in the media.

Like Hodge, Wilkins had to bare the burden of



LEVI WATKINS, WHO COULD PLAY EITHER FORWARD POSITION, GIVES THE WOLFPACK ANOTHER VERSATILE THREAT. —Dylan Wilson

being anointed "the savior of N.C. State basketball." But team co-captain Archie Miller sees some key differences between Hodge and Wilkins.

"Wilkins came in with a lot of hype obviously, but I think a lot of his hype came from a lot of family attraction, too, with the name," Miller said. "Julius is coming in solely on his game. He is the real deal."

"If Damien didn't produce, it was always like he was failing the university or something, whereas Julius is a guy on this team that works hard with everybody else. If he doesn't do well, it's our job to pick him up as a freshman, and I don't think the hype will get to him that much."

While Hodge gets a large majority of the press, the rest of the freshmen have talent to burn and the versatility that Sendek has been searching for.

"One of the most engaging aspects of our team right now is our positionless nature," Sendek said. "We have a lot of guys who are interchangeable and versatile, and we've been able to construct a motion-type offense that really takes advantage of that kind of interchangeability."

Powell, who was the first member of the class to sign with State, set nine school records at Riverdale (Ga.) High, including the marks for career scoring and rebounding. As a senior, Powell averaged 22.7 points and 13 rebounds per game and was named the Metro Atlanta Player of the Year.

Powell is a typical example of the versatility that Sendek has tried to bring in with this recruiting class. He has the shooting touch of a guard and can run the floor, but he also has an array of post moves.

"I've been working on [shooting] for a while, just trying to become a versatile player," Powell said. "I'll still be in the post, but I can come out and hit open shots when I'm open, so I had to work on my shot a lot."

In the Red-White Game, Powell showed a penchant for blocking shots, swatting away four, although three were called for goaltending. Even if his timing was off, Powell got the message across.

"He's impressed me the most because, for 6-7, 6-8, he can get off the floor like Vince Carter Jr. out here," sophomore Marcus Melvin said.

Watkins, a 2001 Parade All-American, scored 23.2 points and grabbed 11.2 rebounds per game during his senior year at Rockville (Md.) Montrose Christian High, which was ranked No. 25 in the country in the USA Today Super 25. The 6-7 forward immediately drew some attention in the Red-White Game, hitting 5-of-6 shots, including 2-of-3 three-pointers, for 12 points.

In going along with Sendek's theme of versatility, Watkins could see time at either forward position this year.

"I feel that wherever Coach puts me I can play that position," Watkins said. "The 3 and 4 are my main positions. I probably prefer to play the 3."

Collins, a 6-10, 262-pound center, and Adrian Dantley are the only two players to ever start all four years at DeMatha High for Morgan Wootten, who has also coached players like Sidney Lowe, Danny Ferry and Joe Forte. During his senior year, Collins averaged 15 points and 10.3 rebounds per game, leading DeMatha to a 27-5 record.

Collins, who started the Pack's first exhibition game, fought with weight problems during his time at DeMatha. He spent the off-season working on his conditioning, trimmed 20 pounds and replaced that with muscle.

"It's definitely easier to run down the court," Collins said. "In practices, I feel a lot quicker."

While the other four committed months before the recruiting deadline, Evtimov didn't sign a letter of intent to play at State until the spring. Evtimov was originally thought to be a small part of the class after beginning the year ranked No. 261 in PrepStars.com's rankings. With some impressive performances on the

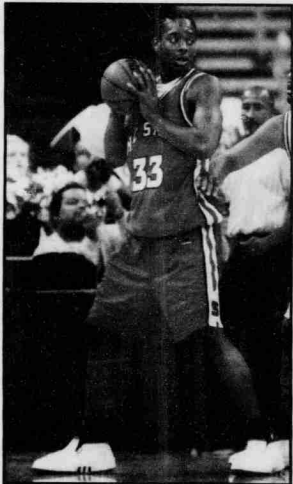
court, he moved into PrepStars' final top 100 listing. "Lian is very versatile," Hodge said. "He can shoot the ball up there with Archie, and he can dribble, pass and really has very good post-up moves. He can play any position."

Evtimov, who averaged 21.5 points, 14 rebounds and 5.2 assists per game as a senior at Winston-Salem Bishop McGuiness High, is the brother of Vasco Evtimov, a former North Carolina player. The younger Evtimov has been able to draw on his brother's experiences to ease the transition to college basketball.

"He's giving me advice all the time and telling me to listen to the coach and do what he wants me to do," Evtimov said. "He'll always be there to support me."

The success or failure of Sendek's sixth season will depend largely on how quickly this group of freshmen he's assembled matures. Critics have pointed to the team's youth as a weakness, but none of the Pack players are looking at it that way.

"I don't think anyone on our team buys that," Miller said. "There's enough talent, and there's enough versatility on the court to compete with anybody."



JOSH POWELL, THE 2001 METRO ATLANTA PLAYER OF THE YEAR, QUICKLY IMPRESSED TEAMMATES WITH HIS LEAPING ABILITY. —Dylan Wilson

the last man

little-used brian keeter is among the most popular players on the men's basketball team.

jimmy ryals

IT'S LATE IN A BLOWOUT WIN FOR N.C. STATE AT THE Entertainment and Sports Arena. The opponent? Doesn't matter. What does matter is the win. As fans in the upper bowls of the arena file out, those seated in the student section break into a refrain that's been heard at the end of every State blowout that's occurred at the ESA.

"Keeter! Keeter! Keeter!"

And where is the object of the crowd's affection? Is Brian Keeter checking into the game? Does the seldom-used senior guard know that he's the most popular man in the arena?

"It's hard not to notice," Keeter said. "I'm pretty shy about it, so I kind of try to hide and not listen to it, but you can't help but hear it."

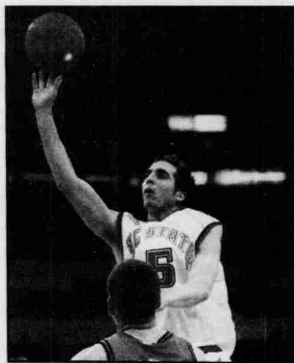
To the average State men's basketball fan, Keeter is a human victory cigar. As Student Wolfpack Club President Chad Flowers puts it, "if he goes in, everybody's going to be happy because, more than likely, we're winning by a lot."

Keeter could have gone elsewhere and seen more playing time. An all-conference and all-region guard who averaged 18 points and seven assists per game his last year at Cary High School, he chose walking on at State over scholarship offers from Division II and smaller Division I schools.

Ultimately, a desire to play for the Wolfpack team he watched on TV growing up and to stay close to his Cary home led him to State. A piece of that home walks the same State campus as Keeter every day. Keeter's father,



KEETER IS A CROWD FAVORITE AT THE ESA. —Jason Lester



FORMER WALK-ON BRIAN KEETER HAS EARNED A SCHOLARSHIP AT N.C. STATE. —Jason Lester

State alumnus Kermit, is a meteorologist with the National Weather Service branch on Centennial Campus.

So, home kept him at State. And then there was basketball.

"I figured I might as well see what I could do coming here and take a chance," Keeter said. "I wanted to see what big-time basketball is like."

The decision has paid off, as Keeter has earned a scholarship for this, his final year with the Wolfpack.

Keeter counts as his personal highlight an off-balance, banked-in three-pointer hit at the buzzer of a game his freshman year against Army; that game was also Keeter's highest scoring performance. He hit 3-of-5 shots for seven points in four minutes.

A communication major, Keeter has averaged 1.6 points per game; he's appeared in 23 career games, starting none. He's hit 56.5 percent of his shots at State, 57.1 percent of his three-point attempts.

Keeter sees himself as a good shooter who does whatever the coaches asks him to do and works to make teammates better.

Head coach Herb Sendek values Keeter's experience.

"[He's] one of our older guys; he knows the ins and outs of the program," Sendek said. "He's just a really good, solid guy to have on our team."

For all his experience, Keeter still hasn't completely adjusted to being so popular among State students.

"[It's] nice to be recognized, but I am shy, so I get embarrassed pretty easily," Keeter said.

chones and moody provide power in the post

n.c. state's combination in the paint should offer opponents quite a headache this season.

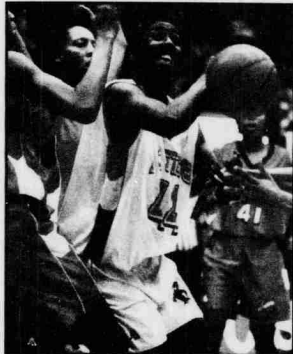
justin sellers

A MAJOR REASON THE N.C. STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL team opens the 2001-02 season ranked No. 10 in the nation is the talents of center Kaayla Chones and forward Carisse Moody.

Last season, Moody provided an inside force for the Wolfpack, and the return of Chones from injury gives the Wolfpack an additional proven low-post threat.

Chones, who earned ACC All-Freshman Team honors two years ago but was forced to sit out all of last season with a torn quadriceps tendon in her left knee, was a consistent player, starting every game as a freshman. She was the team's second leading scorer with 11.4 points per game and at 6-3, she managed to clean the boards as well, averaging 7.9 rebounds a contest. She had a total of seven double-doubles on the season and ranked fifth in rebounds and blocks in the ACC.

After missing last year, Chones was anxious to get back and worked hard in the off-season to prepare for



CARISSIE MOODY BLOSSOMED IN CHONES' ABSENCE LAST SEASON. — Brent Horton

her return to the court.

"It was tough sitting out last year," said Chones. "I didn't want to, but with the shape I was in with my knee, I couldn't play like I wanted to play for the team. Even though I was out, I never gave up on the team.

"In the off-season, I just started working on my game. I learned a lot, and I got to see a lot while I was sitting out, and that's helped me. I think. Even though we've only had exhibition games, I can tell that I've improved on a lot of things, but I still have a long way to go."

With Chones back healthy and playing next to Moody, head coach Kay Yow has one of the best inside games in the conference and maybe even in the country.

Although Moody didn't receive much playing time two years ago as a freshman, she proved to be one of the leaders of last year's team. Last season, Moody led the team in scoring with 14.9 points per game and rebounding with 7.1 boards per contest. She also exhibited her consistency by leading the ACC in field goal shooting at 51.8 percent.

Injuries to a pair of starters and poor play caused the Pack to go 2-6 the first time through last year's conference schedule, but the team bounced back to win seven of its final eight league games.

"I think the biggest thing we did last year was that we overcame a lot of other people's expectations," said Moody. "After they found out that Kaayla and [guard] Terah [James] were going to be red shirting the whole year, a lot of people thought our season was just going to be a fluke. It started out that way, but Coach Yow really got us focused that second half and we had the biggest turnaround in the ACC."

This season will be the first time Chones and Moody will be playing side by side as State starts its quest for a respect.

At the center position, Chones will be Yow's anchor in the middle and a defensive terror to any opponent who dares to drive to the hole. At the same time, because of her speed, Chones can get up and down the court quickly, which will be an advantage on both sides of the ball.

"One thing about Kaayla is that she is very long," said Moody. "On the defensive end, I think a lot of people misjudge her for her length, and she utilizes that a lot, especially blocking. When she has her hands straight up in the air, a lot of people can't shoot over her. It takes a really good jumper to get a shot off on Kaayla.

"On the offensive end, she can pull off some amazing shots, especially when her body is underneath the



AFTER SITTING OUT A YEAR DUE TO INJURY, KAAYLEA CHONES RETURNS TO THE PACK LINEUP. — Kyle Rodgers

basket. That helps out a lot because when your opponents think they have you, you know that really you have them. Kaayla is often in that situation, and with her being so long in her arms and her being left-handed, it just helps her out a lot to be a great offensive threat."

Meanwhile, Moody also provides problems for opponents because she is such a physical player. Although she rarely has a height advantage, she has the knack of getting herself open close to the basket for easy layups. Defensively, her tenacious play makes it hard for opponents to score against her.

"I think Carisse is just so strong," said Chones. "She can pretty much post up anybody and, like she said, she does have a pretty quick first step. She's got a nice-looking outside shot, and she can handle the ball.

"I just think it's going to be hard because if a team tries to double-team one of us, she can just step out. Even if she's inside, they can't double-team us either. She's going to rebound offensively and put it back up. Defensively, her being so strong and taking up space and a physical player, it's going to be hard for people to score against her."

men's acc previews

duke blue devils

HEAD COACH: Mike Krzyzewski
2000-01 RECORD: 35-4, 13-3 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: NCAA Champion
KEY PLAYER: Jason Williams (21.6 ppg, 6.2 apg)
PREDICTED FINISH: 1st

dynasty 101: a lesson in repeating

AS THE SECONDS DISAPPEARED FROM THE CLOCK in the Metrodome on April 2, Jason Williams dribbled the ball, as if in a dream, just waiting for the final buzzer to sound.

Soon, the All-American would join his teammates in celebration, as Duke completed its run to the championship by defeating Arizona 82-72. For the first time since 1992, Duke was the king of college basketball.

Williams has watched that celebration, savoring the feeling of victory nearly 40 or 50 times, he said. It's an inspiration to him, and it motivates the junior Player of the Year candidate to get that feeling back again at the end of this season.

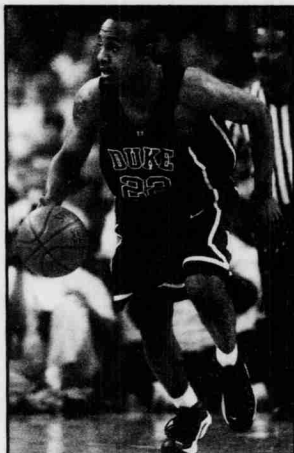
"I have a tape of the last 20 minutes after the game," Williams said. "And seeing the emotion ... that's something that I never want to forget. It's a feeling you can't really describe. I keep watching it because I know that I want to have that feeling again this year. It makes me laugh and cry at the same time, and not many things can do that."

As the preseason No. 1, Duke returns six key contributors from last season. Joining Williams in the Devils' quest to repeat will be fellow juniors Carlos Boozer, Mike Dunleavy and Casey Sanders.

Sophomore Chris Duhon, who will start alongside Williams in the backcourt, is returning after spending the summer leading the U.S. World Championship for Young Men Team to a gold medal in the FIBA World Championship for Young Men Tournament.

Also back is Duke's lone senior, Matt Christensen, who provided coach Mike Krzyzewski and the Devils with quality low-post minutes last season.

Likely to join Williams, Duhon, Dunleavy and Boozer in the starting five will be transfer Daknasy Jones, who sat out last season after coming to Duke from Rutgers. In team practices last season, some analysts viewed Jones as Duke's best player. The 6-6 guard/forward should flourish in Duke's motion offense, especially playing alongside his boyhood pal, Williams.



NATIONAL PLAYER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE JASON WILLIAMS WILL TEAM WITH CHRIS DUHON TO GIVE DUKE ONE OF THE MOST POTENT BACKCOURTS IN THE COUNTRY. —Jason Lester

The talent doesn't stop there.

Daniel Ewing, a silky smooth freshman guard from Missouri City, Texas, was ranked by most recruiting gurus as one of the best shooting guard prospects in the nation. Also looking for minutes will be sharp-shooting junior Nick Horvath, who sat out most of last season with a foot injury.

Perhaps Duke's main obstacle this season will be adapting to life without Shane Battier, who will be remembered as one of Duke's all-time greatest players. Also gone is Nate James, a gritty defender and capable scorer.

"That's a really big loss. You can never replace a Shane Battier," said Boozer. "Not just the player, but also the intangibles that he brought — his voice, his presence. No matter what you did, he was always there to back you up, like a big brother. We have to rely on each other this year a little bit more."

Even with the loss of its emotional and spiritual leader, some believe that the Devils could actually be better this season. It wasn't until Boozer's foot injury last season that Duke found its true strength, which is forcing the tempo with their ultra-quick guards and

forwards.

Dunleavy, whose torrid three-point shooting in last season's final helped earn Duke the championship, should help fill Batter's shoes nicely. And with the addition of Jones, the Devils have yet another talented, quick ball-handler who can score from anywhere.

Then there's the talented backcourt tandem of Williams and Duhon. It could be one of the best combinations of guards on a team in the history of college basketball.

"Our team starts with those two guys; there's no question about that," said Krzyzewski. "I think about how good they could be together all the time. That's exciting to me. They're great players, but they need time together." —Andrew B. Carter

maryland terrapins

HEAD COACH: Gary Williams

2000-01 RECORD: 25-11, 10-6 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: Final Four

KEY PLAYER: Juan Dixon (18.2 ppg, 2.6 spg)

PREDICTED FINISH: 2nd

dixon, baxter ready to run back to final four

HISTORICALLY, EVEN THE BEST MARYLAND BASKETBALL teams have played second fiddle to a particular ACC opponent.

In the '70s, '80s and most recently in the 2001 season, great Terrapin teams have been overshadowed by a particular ACC foe. In last year's first-ever trip to the Final Four, Duke dined the Terps for the third time that year.

With both teams returning a nucleus of players that led their respective teams to the Final Four, the ACC figures to be a two-horse race between Maryland and Duke, and the Terps are more than capable of overtaking the Blue Devils, winners of the last three ACC titles.

The expectations have grown exponentially for the Terps this season, as they find themselves ranked No. 2 in the country in the preseason Associated Press poll.

Trying to lead Maryland out of the enormous Blue Devil shadow will be the inside-outside combination of Juan Dixon and Lonny Baxter, both first-team All-ACC selections a year ago.

Dixon is a wiry guard capable of knocking down a three, creating his own shot or dumping the ball down low to the bulky Baxter, who has a surprisingly soft

touch around the hoop for such a big man.

Despite his thin body structure, Maryland head coach Gary Williams believes Dixon's strength is underrated.

"He is very strong," said Williams. "He doesn't get knocked off the ball very often. He can get it inside, get hit a little bit and still make the shot. A lot of guys at his size can't do that."

Returning to set up both Baxter and Dixon is point guard Steve Blake. Blake, a two-year starter at point guard for the Terps, is easily the ACC's second-best point guard behind Duke's Jason Williams.

Former N.C. State recruiting target Byron Mouton had a successful 2001 season for the Terps after transferring from Tulane. The true definition of a role player, the often-emotional Mouton is a solid defender who will aid Dixon and Baxter in senior leadership roles.

Filling the final spot in Maryland's rotation will be any one of a trio of players. Junior guard Drew Nicholas possesses a deadly three-point shot and adds experience to the Terps' back court. Sophomore Chris Wilcox possesses unlimited potential and showed flashes of brilliance in a limited role last year.

Forward Tahj Holden creates a match-up problem for most teams with his size and excellent shooting



JUNIOR ROGER MASON, VIRGINIA'S LEADING SCORER LAST SEASON, MAY TAKE OVER AT POINT GUARD AFTER DONALD HAND GRADUATED AND MAJESTIC MAPP WAS LOST FOR THE SEASON. —Jason Lester

range. The 6-10 junior is capable of banging in the post with most big men yet is able to step outside and shoot the three.

The Terps also welcome three newcomers who will try and compensate for the loss of Danny Miller (transfer) and Terence Morris (graduation). Perhaps the best of those players will be junior-college transfer Ryan Randle, who comes to the Terps from the same junior college as NBA star and ex-Maryland guard Steve Francis.

While setting the bar so high for some teams can lead to disenchantment and underachievement, Maryland, playing its final season in Cole Field House, seems poised to head back to the Final Four with lofty goals in mind.

"We're definitely a program on the rise," said Dixon. "Hopefully, we can keep it going in the right direction." —Matt Middleton

virginia cavaliers

HEAD COACH: Pete Gillen

2000-01 RECORD: 20-9, 9-7 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: First round of NCAAs

KEY PLAYER: Roger Mason (15.7 ppg, 44.2% 3-pt.)

PREDICTED FINISH: 3rd

cavs searching for leader

RETURNING FOUR STARTERS OFF OF LAST YEAR'S fourth-place ACC team, many would expect a similar style of play from Virginia this year.

Cavalier head coach Pete Gillen is not one who shares that belief, however.

"It's a whole new team I'm coaching," said Gillen. "Even though we've got a lot of the same players, we don't have a lightning-quick point guard to run the show."

With the graduation of point guard Donald Hand and the injury to backup Majestic Mapp's knee, Virginia enters the season in point guard limbo.

"We have a chance to be better, but once again, the point guard is the key position," said Gillen. "Roger Mason's a good player — he can do it — but that hurts our team because you're losing a good scorer."

Coming off a tremendous year for the Cavaliers at shooting guard, Mason will be asked to play the point guard position early in the season. Last year, Mason led the Cavaliers in scoring (15.7 points per game) en route to being named third-team All-ACC and earning a spot on the USA Men's Basketball World University Games team.

Gillen has suggested that Mason will start early in the year to take some pressure off freshman point guard Keith Jenifer, who may take over the point guard duties midway through the season.

Filling in at the two guard will be Adam Hall, a 6-5 senior who has been twice named to the ACC All-Defensive team. Chris Williams and Travis Watson will occupy the forward slots for Virginia. The Cavaliers' center position is up for grabs.

"Our four veterans have all gotten a little bit better," said Gillen. "Chris Williams put on about eight to 10 pounds of muscle. Mason played over at the World University Games in China and was their [third] leading scorer. His confidence is very high now."

One major addition to the Cavaliers will be the 6-9, 265-pound Elton Brown. Brown headlines Virginia's recruiting class and will likely challenge sophomore J.C. Mathis for a starting role.

"We're going to be a little better inside," said Gillen. "We have Elton Brown who can score inside and has good hands, so I think that'll help us a little bit."

Virginia was picked third in the ACC's preseason media poll, behind Duke and Maryland.

"They're definitely better than us," said Gillen. "They're elite teams. We're not at that level. I think we have a chance to be very good, and I think we could beat them on a given day. But they're a cut above us."

Virginia is going to challenge for the ACC title, the Cavaliers will have to improve their play on the road. Last year, Virginia was a paltry 2-6 on the road in the ACC. Virginia also lost in the opening rounds of the ACC and NCAA Tournaments.

"We put in a resolution not to play on the road this year," said Gillen. "The NCAA is checking it out. Right now, it's in committee, but I don't think it'll pass."

—Steve Thompson

north carolina tar heels

HEAD COACH: Matt Doherty

2000-01 RECORD: 26-7, 13-3 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: Sweet 16

KEY PLAYER: Jason Capel (11.4 ppg, 7.3 apg)

PREDICTED FINISH: 4th

tar heels face uphill struggle

WHERE'S JOSEPH FORTE? He's playing in the NBA. Brendan Haywood? Also playing in the pros this season.

Ronald Curry and Julius Peppers? They might not play basketball so they can prepare for a chance to play

in the NFL.

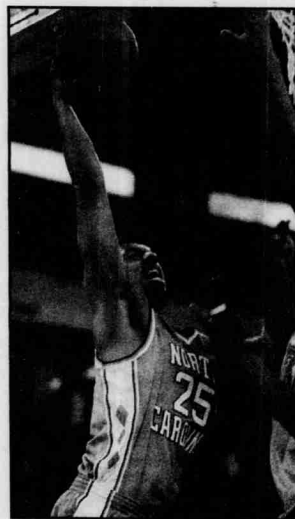
So where does this leave North Carolina? In the hands of Jason Capel and Kris Lang, of course.

"[Being a leader] is something I'm totally enjoying," said Lang. "It's something I'm used to. I love to have people looking up to me because I feel very confident in my game and I can help them out a lot."

Capel and Lang lead a Tar Heel team that has been ranked 19th in both preseason polls, trailing Duke, Maryland and Virginia in the ACC. If the Heels hope to build on last year's ACC regular-season championship, they have some work to do.

"We don't have to talk about it. Coach [Matt] Doherty reminds us about it every day, so that's one way we're going to hear it all the time," said Capel. "I think we all know what people are expecting from us. We know the talent we have, we know the ability we have, and we know what we have to do to be successful."

Lang and Capel, both seniors, are the backbone of a



WITH THE LOSS OF BRENDAN HAYWOOD AND JOSEPH FORTE, JASON CAPEL WILL HAVE TO ASSUME A LEADERSHIP ROLE IF THE TAR HEELS HOPE TO AVOID A SUBPAR SEASON. — Jason Ivester

squad that is short on experience. Capel is a preseason candidate for the Wooden Award and is an All-ACC candidate.

Lang is also an All-ACC and All-America candidate.

If Curry and Peppers do play this season, the Heels' hopes brighten. Curry would probably return and reclaim his spot as the starting point guard, and Peppers could become a starter as opposed to the sixth man, which he has been for the last two seasons.

This year's incoming class features Jawad Williams, Melvin Scott, Jackie Manuel and redshirt freshman Neil Fingleton.

Williams was a highly touted recruit who played in the McDonald's All-American game at Duke last year. Fingleton is listed at 7-5, making him the tallest Heel on the roster by half a foot.

Apparently, the pollsters feel that the loss of Forte and Haywood will be too much to overcome. UNC doesn't seem to be fazed by all the doubters who feel that the Heels are vulnerable this year.

"People are picking us fourth or lower in the league, and I can understand why they're doing that because of everything we've lost and what other teams still have," Doherty said. "That doesn't mean we can't use it for motivation. Our team is going to try to prove people wrong." — Jay Kohler

wake forest demon deacons

HEAD COACH: Skip Prosser

2000-01 RECORD: 19-11, 8-8 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: First round of NCAAs

KEY PLAYER: Josh Howard (13.6 ppg, 2.0 spg)

PREDICTED FINISH: 5th

wake forest speeds into new era

WAKE FOREST STARTED HOT LAST SEASON, CREEPING all the way to No. 4 in the country. To open 2000, the Demon Deacons bolted to a 12-0 record, including a 23-point thumping of No. 8 Virginia and a win over No. 3 Kansas.

But then. Wake lost on the road by a point to 13th-

ranked North Carolina.

Over the next two weeks, the Deacons lost to Georgia Tech, Maryland, Duke and Cincinnati. But most importantly, they lost the swagger and confidence they tried so hard to build. The rest of the year, Wake struggled, ultimately losing in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament by 26 to Butler.

Entering this season, expectations are different than in past years for

Wake. No lowered, by any means, but just different. But then again, most things have changed in Winston-Salem.

For one, Dave Odom, the Deacons' coach since 1990, left town for the head job at South Carolina.

The team is also missing several key components from last season. Robert O'Kelley, a four-year starter and one of Wake's all-time leading scorers, graduated. So too did Josh Shoemaker and Rafael Vidaurreta, two big men who accounted for much of the Deacons' rebounding and overall post presence.

Skip Prosser, hired away from Xavier, is the new boss in Winston-Salem, and if nothing else, the new head man promises to bring an up-tempo style of play to Lawrence Joel Coliseum this season.

"Any time there's a coaching change, there will be some differences," Prosser said. "I've said many times I'm a big Dave Odom fan. I think he was very, very successful at Wake. But I also think there's a hundred ways to do things, and we just do things in different ways in terms of how we want to play. We're going to try to press more, and maybe that'll be a big difference."

Returning to lead Wake will be forwards Josh Howard and Darius Songalia, as well as shooting guard Craig Dawson. Senior point guard Broderick Hicks will also be a key to the team's success.

In Hicks, Howard and Dawson, Prosser inherits three players who can play solid defense, run the court with quickness and finish on offense. Hicks has already made a positive impression on his new coach.

"I've been thrilled with him," Prosser said. "He's been a good leader, and he's bought into everything we're trying to sell. He's done very well so far."

Songalia and Howard should anchor the frontcourt. Howard, a junior, is coming off a season that landed him on the All-ACC second team, as he led the Deacons with 13.6 points per contest.

Songalia, a senior who has made great strides in his career, will provide production as well as leadership to a Wake squad that fits the definition of what a team should be.

"We don't rely on just one player," Songalia said. "Sometimes, even the best players can fail, and right now, when you have five or six guys who can go out there and produce, there's no pressure on any one player. Everybody shares the same responsibility."

If there is one player on Wake's roster capable of

becoming that go-to guy, then Howard is it.

"He's very gifted athletically," Prosser said. "But sometimes athleticism is a curse. He's never really had to work on the nuances of his game because he's always been able to run past guys, jump over guys, but if he wants to become a great player, he's going to have to embrace those little things."

Although it will certainly be strange not to see Odom roaming the Wake sideline, many of the Deacons seem eager to start a new era, a new style and find new successes.

"We're going to play 94 feet of defense," said Hicks. "We're not going to give away freebies, and that's going to create an up-tempo style. But when it comes down to it, you're still playing the same game." —Andrew B. Carter

georgia tech yellow jackets

HEAD COACH: Paul Hewitt

2000-01 RECORD: 17-13, 8-8 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: First round of NCAAs

KEY PLAYER: Tony Akins (14.5 ppg, 4.3 apg)

PREDICTED FINISH: 6th

georgia tech out to continue progression

LAST YEAR, GEORGIA TECH SURPRISED THE ACC by going 17-13 in the regular season and 8-8 in the ACC. First-year head coach Paul Hewitt took the Jackets into the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1996.

During the off-season, however, the team's five seniors departed, including All-ACC first-team player Alvin Jones. Jones and graduated senior Shaun Fein were both among the top 15 scorers in the conference. Tech will still have the potent scoring of guard Tony Akins, however, who has returned for his senior season.

"This is a team that needs to get off to a good start and get our confidence," said Hewitt. "I really like the team, Tony Akins in particular. He's our senior point guard, by far the best player, and he has proven that every day in practice."

"As you look at what he did the second half of last season on, he's been one of the best players in the ACC, and I think he's going to continue with that this year, not just from a statistical standpoint, but just communicating with his teammates on the floor."

Akins will head a team made up of four freshmen, four sophomores and only two seniors.

Senior forward Michael Ienhour was diagnosed



POINT GUARD TONY AKINS AND GEORGIA TECH WILL HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE UP FOR THE PRODUCTION OF FIVE DEPARTED SENIORS, INCLUDING FIRST-TEAM ALL-ACC SELECTION ALVIN JONES. —Jason Lester

with leukemia in October and will be undergoing chemotherapy treatments during the season. Without his presence, the Yellow Jackets' Ed Nelson is the tallest man on the roster, listed as a 6-8 forward. The loss of Jones will definitely have an impact in the paint.

"Now we've got to concentrate a little more on keeping the ball out of the paint," said Nelson. "Instead of posting [Jones] up exclusively, we'll post up a variety of inside guys. Because it's basketball, you've still got to have an inside game, and we're going to have an inside game by committee."

The freshmen that Hewitt has assembled for this year's team are slowly coming into their own. Hewitt realizes, though, that these young players aren't going to become successful overnight.

"As the year goes on, and as they get older — I wish they could get older a lot faster — they're going to show more and more what they can do as basketball players," said Hewitt. "I'm moving a little bit slower, probably two or three days slower than last year, but it's OK as long as the effort level remains high."

Nelson knows this season could be interesting. "Basketball-wise, [the freshmen] have shown flashes of good play, and [they have] shown flashes of being totally lost," Nelson said. —Jay Kohler

florida state seminoles

HEAD COACH: Steve Robinson
2000-01 RECORD: 9-21, 4-12 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: None
KEY PLAYER: Delvon Arrington (11.5 ppg, 4.8 apg)
PREDICTED FINISH: 8th

fsu loaded with depth

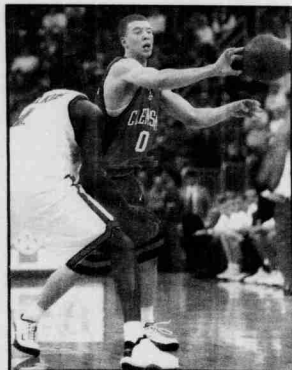
AFTER A DISMAL 2000-01 SEASON, FLORIDA STATE isn't expected to do much in the ACC.

In the ACC's preseason poll, the Seminoles were picked to finish near the bottom of the conference, a notion they are anxious to disprove.

"One of our strengths is depth," said team co-captain Delvon Arrington. "There are not too many people in the ACC that have as much depth as us. I think we can go down the line and throw anyone out there."

The Seminoles have four seniors listed on their roster: Arrington, Antwan Dixon, Monte Cummings and David Anderson.

Arrington, who has started 88 of 89 career games for the Seminoles, became the league's first partial qualifier in men's basketball to gain his fourth year of



TONY STOCKMAN, WHO LED ALL ACC FRESHMEN IN SCORING LAST SEASON, WILL HELP PICK UP THE SLACK FOR THE DEPARTED WILL SOLOMON. —Jason Lester

eligibility back by graduating this summer. At 11.5 points per game last season, Arrington was the first point guard to lead the Seminoles in scoring since George McCloud.

Dixon, another co-captain, is coming off his most productive season, averaging 8.7 points and 5.8 rebounds per game. He also improved his perimeter shooting, knocking down 35.9 percent of his three-point attempts.

Cummings was the Seminoles' top player off the bench last season, averaging 23.1 minutes per game despite getting only one start. He was FSU's third-leading scorer, averaging 10.6 points per game in the reserve role.

With all the veterans on the team, head coach Steve Robinson believes leadership will come in many different ways.

"All those guys have to come in and play at a high level," said Robinson. "Higher level doesn't mean points and rebounds. It means making better decisions, being in the right place at the right time."

Sophomore J.D. Bracey should challenge Cummings for the shooting guard spot. Bracey was forced to sit out last year as a partial qualifier but should add an offensive spark this season.

Robinson has added three freshmen to the mix, including Anthony Richardson, a McDonald's All-American from Leesville Road High in Raleigh.

"I think Anthony is a talented player, and I think he'll definitely have an opportunity to help us out throughout the year," said Robinson.

Although FSU has a relatively soft nonconference schedule, it does open the season against in-state rival Florida. This schedule gives the Seminoles a chance at a winning record, something Robinson hasn't enjoyed the past couple of seasons.

"Those guys are hungry for success and want to have an opportunity to win," said Robinson. —Billy Freeman

clemson tigers

HEAD COACH: Larry Shytt
2000-01 RECORD: 12-19, 2-14 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: None
KEY PLAYER: Tony Stockman (12.0 ppg, 83.6% ft)
PREDICTED FINISH: 9th

pieces of the puzzle

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT HISTORY, THE Clemson men's basketball team will be without a star going into the 2001-02 season after Will Solomon was

drafted into the NBA over the summer.

With the absence of Solomon on the perimeter and Adam Allenspach in the paint, head coach Larry Shytt will be playing puzzle games as he attempts to find the right pieces to fill in the open spots.

After a season plagued with injuries, Ed Scott comes back to the Tiger lineup and will be looked upon to be Clemson's leader on the court. Scott is known for his great ball-handling skills, as well as his tenacious defense.

Joining Scott will be Tony Stockman, who won over Tigers fans after sinking a late three-pointer that helped clinch an upset win over then No. 1 North Carolina last season. Stockman was second on the team in scoring last year, trailing only Solomon. He also led the team in steals (44) and free-throw shooting (83.6 percent) and was a threat from downtown, hitting 75 three-point baskets last season.

Big men Ray Henderson and ACC All-Freshman honoree Chris Hobbs will offer strength in the paint. At 6-8 and 250 pounds, Henderson is a solid force down low and averaged 5.4 points and 4.8 rebounds a season ago.

Hobbs, however, has shown the most promise and should continue to earn opponents' respect with every game he plays. Last season, he led the conference's freshmen class in rebounding, averaging 6.3 boards a contest. Hobbs also connected on almost 57 percent of his shots on his way to averaging 7.3 points a night.

"I've never been happier with a group of guys," said Shytt. "I've never been more excited about coaching. I've never had more focus or aggressiveness at practice. We'll still get it up and down as fast as we can, but I think because we are a very unpredictable team — five freshmen, three sophomores, three juniors — nobody in the program has been there for two years. That's the most anybody's been there."

"So, because of that, balance or unpredictability are our best two sources right now, and we should be that as a team. We'll play more motion offense, where we rely on each other more than one guy."

The Tigers also feature a talented freshmen class that has been ranked in the top 15 nationally in some polls. Highlighting that class are guard Chy Christie and big man Sharrod Ford, who both played for the United States team in the Global Games over the summer.

Christie exhibited his star potential, averaging 15 points a game while shooting an outstanding 61 percent from behind the arc, and Ford shot 75 percent from the field.

"We've got five freshmen; four of them right now, I'd looked very honestly to play a lot of minutes, if they don't start," said Shytt. "I think our eight underclassmen are as good as any underclassmen in this league right now." —Justin Sellers

women's acc previews

duke blue devils

HEAD COACH: Gail Goetsenkors
2000-01 RECORD: 30-4, 13-3 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: Sweet 16
KEY PLAYER: Alana Beard (17.0 ppg, 3.5 spg)
PREDICTED FINISH: 1st

beard, devils take aim at another title

PERHAPS NEVER IN ACC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HISTORY has such a young team been picked to win the conference.

Then again, the league has probably never seen a young team with as much talent as the Duke Blue Devils.

With only one senior on its roster, Duke was still picked to win the ACC for the third time in four years. The Devils are also ranked in the preseason top five in both the major polls.

"We're a very young team," said Duke head coach Gail Goetsenkors. "We feel as the season progresses, we'll continue to get better and better."

Duke's best all-around player, guard Alana Beard, was named the preseason ACC Player of the Year and, most recently, named a preseason first-team All-American by the Associated Press. Beard will seek to duplicate last year's season, which earned her national Freshman of the Year honors.

At almost 6 feet tall, Beard creates problems with guards who are not strong enough to stop her ability to penetrate. Also a tenacious defender, Beard set the Duke single-season record for steals a year ago as a freshman.

Opposite Beard at guard, Sheana Mosch has some big shoes to fill — those of departed ACC Player of the Year Georgia Schweitzer. Mosch, a deadly shooter from the three-point arc, started all 34 games last year and earned third team All-ACC honors.

The Devils' lone senior, Krista Gingrich, teams with Michele Matyasovsky to further bolster the depth of Duke's guards.

Duke's other highly regarded freshman of the 2000-01 season was forward Iciss Tillis. A member of the ACC All-Freshman team, Tillis started 25 games and is a very athletic shot-blocker. She is expected to garner a majority of the playing time at power forward.

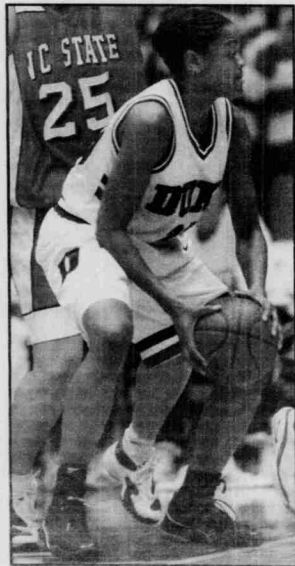
Center Crystal White is expected to start at center.

but early season injuries to her ankle have slowed her off-season development. The 6-5 White and 6-4 Tillis provide the Devils with an intimidating post tandem.

In addition to her on-the-court success last year, Goestenkors also inked a highly touted recruiting class that includes two players who are capable of playing right away. Both Monique Currie and Wynter Whitely were second-team Parade Prep All-Americans.

With such a young, talented squad and another stellar recruiting class on the way, Goestenkors has built a powerful program that rivals that of the men's program at Duke. However, as talented as the Devils are, repeating as champions will not be easy in a tough ACC.

"It's the most balanced [conference] race I can remember," Goestenkors said. "Every team in the conference is improved." — Matt Middleton



SOPHOMORE ALANA BEARD, THE PRESEASON FAVORITE FOR ACC PLAYER OF THE YEAR HONORS, WILL TRY TO CARRY DUKE TO ITS FOURTH ACC REGULAR-SEASON TITLE IN FIVE YEARS. — Jason Lester

north carolina tar heels

HEAD COACH: Sylvia Hatchell
2000-01 RECORD: 15-14, 7-9 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: None
KEY PLAYER: Coretta Brown (15.9 ppg, 4.8 rpg)
PREDICTED FINISH: 2nd

tar heels look for resurgence

FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL team, competing on the court last season without Nikki Teasley was a lot like when a young child is separated from his teddy bear. It just wasn't good.

Sure, the Tar Heels survived. They finished with a winning record at 15-14 overall and played respectably in the ACC, going 7-9. But without Teasley, things just didn't click for Sylvia Hatchell's team like they usually do.

But guess what? Teasley is back. And the Tar Heels should be, too.

"She is back, and she's better than ever," said Hatchell. "I want everybody to remember that the last game she played in, she scored 33 points and was named the MVP of the ACC Tournament."

Teasley, a 6-0 guard, took a leave of absence from the program last season, citing a stress-related illness. Many followers and experts of women's basketball predicted that she would never play for UNC again and instead go directly to the WNBA.

Perhaps that was just wishful thinking by the Heels' opponents.

With the return of Teasley, who averaged 14.6 points and 6.2 assists as a junior, UNC should have the best backcourt in the ACC. Teasley will join junior Coretta Brown, who excelled in Teasley's absence last season, averaging nearly 16 points and seven assists per contest. Brown was named preseason All-ACC this year.

With those two alone, UNC already has a lethal combination of guards. But UNC will also welcome heralded freshman point guard Leah Metcalf, who should make an impact this season and was named the preseason ACC Freshman of the Year.

"I definitely like it this season because I know I can go out and play hard," said Brown. "It's good to know that there's other players who can come in and keep the same tempo."

Joining Metcalf in a very talented freshman class will be guard/forward Nikita Bell, forward Kenya McBee and center Tiffany Tucker.

Hatchell believes that the young players will provide depth and talent to this UNC team.

"We've got an outstanding freshman class," Hatchell said. "They are doing really well. Leah Metcalf has played unbelievably. I'm really excited about the whole freshman class, not just Leah. Nikita Bell and some others are going to be really strong contributors to our team."

The main challenge for the Heels this season will be to overcome their lack of frontcourt depth. Sophomore center Candace Sutton is the lone returning starter from last season, when she dropped 10 points and six rebounds per game.

Bell and junior Jennifer Thomas will be looked upon to augment Sutton in the post, and the Heels hope the two can provide scoring and rebounding.

Another concern is the team's youth. Teasley is the lone senior for Hatchell's crew. The Heels will be gunning for a return to the NCAA Tournament, something the team missed out on last year.

"We're deep, no doubt about that," Hatchell said. "We can play a lot of people, and because of that we'll play a lot of combinations on defense. Last year we couldn't get out there and get after it like I wanted to, and that was frustrating." — Andrea B. Carter

maryland terrapins

HEAD COACH: Chris Weller
2000-01 RECORD: 17-12, 8-8 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: First round of NCAAs
KEY PLAYER: Deedee Warley (13.8 ppg, 6.4 rpg)
PREDICTED FINISH: 4th

terps on the rise

WHILE THE OTHER EIGHT SCHOOLS IN THE ACC feature new faces in their starting lineups, Maryland is the only team in the conference that returns all of its starters for the 2001-02 season.

The Terrapins feature some talented players all around the court that will hopefully help the team build on where it left off. With head coach Chris Weller back at the helm for her 27th season and only 14 wins away from achieving 500 career victories, Maryland will surely look to throw a monkey wrench into N.C. State and Duke's chances of holding down the top spot.

"Obviously, this is going to be a big year for us," said Weller. "We have five seniors, and four of them have been at Maryland all four years. I think what we have going for us is the experience. Everybody has come back in great shape. We're focused on having a year that will allow the players to enjoy everything that we've been working toward."

Leading the way for the Terps is senior Deedee Warley, who will be a strong scoring asset for Weller down in the paint. Warley averaged 13.8 points and 6.4 rebounds a game last year, earning her a spot on the All-ACC third team.

Teaming up with Warley will be center Rosita Melbourne, who at 6-3 adds size under the basket for Maryland. Although her offensive contribution isn't what Weller would like it to be, scoring an average of only 7.6 points a game, Melbourne does a good job of cleaning the boards with nearly six grabs a game.

In the backcourt, the Terps feature three talented players in Marche Strickland, Renneika Razor and Kiki Wimbush. Strickland, who was the team's leader in scoring last season with 13.9 points per game, gives Weller a solid shooter from behind the arc, with a 33.3 percent mark in conference play.

"I've seen a lot more intensity and energy in our practices this year," said Strickland. "Because we have

more players out there, it's more competitive, and that will help us in the games."

Meanwhile, Razor adds an average of 2.31 steals per contest, the fourth-best mark in the conference, and Wimbush, an All-ACC freshman a year ago, adds some much-needed depth.

"We're going to play a much faster-paced game than we've played in the last couple of years," Weller said. "We have more players, so I can make more substitutions. Hopefully, if we can dictate the tempo more, our field-goal percentage will go up dramatically."

—Justin Sellers

clemson tigers

HEAD COACH: Jim Davis

2000-01 RECORD: 21-10, 10-6 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: Second round of NCAA

KEY PLAYER: Chrissy Floyd (16.9 ppg, 1.9 spg)

PREDICTED FINISH: 5th

clemson deals without bathh

AFTER FINISHING FOURTH IN THE ACC LAST YEAR, being ranked 22nd in the nation and advancing to the second round of the NCAA Tournament, hopes are high for this year's Clemson women's basketball team.

How the Tigers deal with the loss of two starters who were two leading rebounders on last year's team, however, will set the tone for the season. Clemson faces life without the potent inside duo of Erin Bath and Naria Fornis, and now the team is uneven when it comes to veterans vs. new blood.

On the experienced end of the spectrum, Chrissy Floyd, a second-team All-ACC performer last year and preseason All-ACC candidate, returns to the backcourt. Floyd and Krystal Scott lead a fairly experienced group of guards with three sophomores — Kanetra Queen, Lakeia Stokes and Julie Aderhold — also returning to the team.

The Tigers will have to find some consistency, however, with some inexperienced post players. Marci Glenney and Heather Crowe, both 5-11 players who are more comfortable facing the basket, return this year.

Sophomore Maggie Slosser is expected to pick up some of the rebounding slack left by the graduation of Bath. Beyond that, Clemson has signed two small forwards, Leah Roper and Khaili Sanders. The Tigers also picked up Lacey Shaffer, Monica Blackmon and Tia Andrew to play the power forward and center positions.

"I need to grow some post players in a hurry," said head coach Jim Davis. "But we've got great depth on the perimeter. Krystal Scott will probably start for the third straight year, which is a good thing. She's very important to have on the court."

The Tigers will also have to deal with Khaili Sanders' torn ACL, which occurred during practice. Sanders will redshirt this season. The loss of another frontcourt player means that Glenney will probably be forced to depend on its guards, especially early in the season.

"We'll probably use a four-guard lineup at some points," said Davis. "That will help our pressing and trapping. The problem with that is that last year we were the next-to-last rebounding team in the ACC, and that is a concern. If we have to play three or four guards, they've got to do a better job rebounding."

After finishing so low on the rebounding scale and losing Bath, rebounding will be a challenge. Glenney, who averaged 4.3 boards per game in ACC play last season, will try to fill the void left by the graduated seniors.

Glenney knows she will probably have to play in the paint against some of the best post players in the ACC.

"It's definitely a possibility," Glenney said. "I had to do it last year. I'm all right with the idea. I've got to be."

Davis is trying to bring his young players up to speed as fast as he can. If he is able to get the newcomers into the loop as soon as possible, Clemson could have another solid season.

"Practice has gone very well so far," said Glenney. "Collectively, as a team, we go at it day in and day out. We're very competitive with each other." — Jay Kohler

florida state seminole

HEAD COACH: Sue Semrau

2000-01 RECORD: 19-12, 9-7 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: Second round of NCAA

KEY PLAYER: April Taylor (15.1 ppg, 3.8 spg)

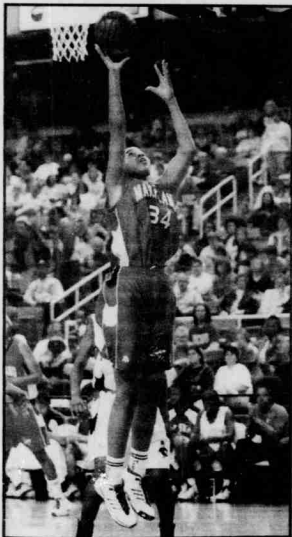
PREDICTED FINISH: 6th

seminole accomplishments

THE FLORIDA STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM HAD its breakout season, and now it wants even more.

Picked to finish eighth in the ACC a year ago, the Seminoles quickly turned into the conference's most surprising team and placed fourth.

Head coach Sue Semrau led her team to a 19-12 record that included nine league wins and an ACC Tournament semifinal appearance. Then the



SENIOR DEEDEE WARLEY IS PART OF A MARYLAND LINEUP THAT RETURNS ALL FIVE STARTERS FROM LAST SEASON'S FIFTH-PLACE TEAM. — Dylan Wilson

Seminoles received their first NCAA Tournament invitation since 1991 and beat Tulane in the first round.

"It was a great feeling of accomplishment," Semrau said. "Right then we could start to see some of the light at the end of the tunnel. It came out of four years of very hard work, and I felt very proud for all the players that helped in our program."

After the season, Semrau was selected as the ACC Women's Coach of the Year, becoming the school's first coach to garner the honor.

"When I first got to Florida State, I had to convince a group of young ladies that they could win," Semrau said. "That's not the case any more. Now we expect to win."

National recognition and high expectations have come with last season's success, however, and the Seminoles will no longer sneak up to grab wins from unsuspecting opponents.

This year, the Seminoles are picked to finish sixth in the ACC, one of the most competitive conferences in the nation.

"I know people do respect Florida State when we go to play," said starting guard April Traylor. "They know we are a team that can win some games. I don't think



SENIOR APRIL TRAYLOR, A THIRD-TEAM ALL-ACC SELECTION, LED FLORIDA STATE TO A DRAMATIC TURN-AROUND LAST YEAR. — Amit Patel

people will overlook us too much."

FSU returns three starters from last year's team, including guards Traylor and Lakesha Springle. Traylor averaged 15.1 points per game and is the squad's top rebounder. The senior guard also led the Seminoles in assists per game, with 3.77, and steals per contest, with 2.42.

Center Katelyn Vujas started all 31 games for FSU last year and will patrol the lane again this season. Tashaika Morris, a sophomore who transferred from national powerhouse Tennessee, figures to get a lot of playing time at the forward position.

This year's squad wants to become the first Seminoles' team to reach the 20-win plateau since 1982. And obviously, a return trip to the NCAA Tournament is at the top of the priority list.

"I wish I could say that we've gone from zero to hero, but I can't say that yet," Semrau said. "We have gone from a bunch of players who worked hard to a bunch of talented players with a vision. We really see clearly now."

FSU opens the season with the Virgin Islands Tournament in St. Thomas this weekend. In addition to playing the rigorous ACC schedule, the Seminoles will also face No. 13 Florida at home on Nov. 29 and will travel for games with Auburn and Indiana later in the season.

"Our motto this year is 'And Then Some,'" Traylor said. "We set a goal last year, and we felt that we reached it. This year, we want to do even more." — Jerry Moore

georgia tech yellow jackets

HEAD COACH: Agnus Berenato

2000-01 RECORD: 14-15, 5-11 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: First round of WNIT

KEY PLAYER: Niesha Butler (15.6 ppg, 3.4 rpg)

PREDICTED FINISH: 7th

jackets ready to dance

COMING OFF TWO STRAIGHT POSTSEASON APPEARANCES in the Women's NIT, Georgia Tech has its fans abuzz about the possibility of the Yellow Jackets taking the next step and gaining an invitation to the real post-season tournament, the NCAA.

In addition to returning a majority of last year's squad that finished 14-15 and lost in the first round of the WNIT to Mississippi State, the Jackets welcome back senior Regina Tate, who sat out all of last year with a stress fracture in her leg after starting 19 games in the 1999-2000 season. Tate will be a timely addition to

Tech's frontcourt, where she will aid the duo of Sonja Malloy and Tamika Boatner in jockeying to control the boards for Tech. Last season, the Jackets were 1-9 when outboarded by their opponent.

"She's one of the best defensive players in the conference, as well as nation," said Tech head coach Agnus Berenato. "She will add instant credibility to our team, both offensively and defensively."

Tech's leading returning scorer, junior Niesha Butler, has been suspended for the first semester of action, and Berenato will reevaluate her status at the end of the semester. Butler was the unanimous ACC Rookie of the Year in 1999 and was a third-team all-league selection last year after averaging 15.6 points per game.

"Niesha, academically, is eligible," said Berenato. "She just violated a team policy within our academic system."

In the meantime, filling the void at the guard position will be senior Milli Martinez, who averaged 13.2 points per game last year to go along with seven rebounds per game, an exceptional number for a guard.

"Milli has really taken her game to the next level," said Berenato. "Her three-point attack will really help our team go to the NCAA tournament."

The Jackets' backcourt remains deep with senior Ashley Ebert and juniors Nina Barlin and Alex Stewart returning to aid Martinez at either off-guard or point guard.

Highlighting Tech's four-player recruiting class is Maya Monroe, who is the daughter of NBA Hall of Famer Earl "The Pearl" Monroe. Monroe was a four-time NBA All-Star and named one of the 50 greatest players in the league in a 1996 ceremony.

"She's got the heart that he had," said Berenato. "She's really great and developing every day." — Matt Middleton

virginia cavaliers

HEAD COACH: Debbie Ryan

2000-01 RECORD: 18-14, 8-8 ACC

2000-01 POSTSEASON: First round of NCAA

KEY PLAYER: Telisha Quarles (11.6 ppg, 55.0% 3-pt.)

PREDICTED FINISH: 8th

cavs' streak in jeopardy

WHEN IT CAME TO WOMEN'S BASKETBALL IN THE ACC a few years ago, the road to the conference title always went through Charlottesville, Va.

That's not the case anymore, as head coach Debbie Ryan returns only two starters from an NCAA Tournament team that went 18-14 last season.

The most noticeable loss for the Cavaliers is considered junior Schuyie LaRue, who decided to try her luck in the pros in Europe. LaRue led Virginia in almost every statistical category last season, averaging 18.1 points and 11.8 rebounds per game.

With forward Marcie Dickson out for the season due to medical issues, the Cavs return only four letterwinners. The junior from Maplewood, N.J., started 15 games and averaged 6.2 points and 2.4 rebounds.

The Cavs' backcourt should be a strong suit, returning both starters from last season, Telisha Quarles and Anna Prillaman.

Quarles, the lone senior on the team, averaged 11.6 points per game last season. She is a threat from anywhere on the floor, connecting on 35 percent of her three-point attempts last season, the fifth-best mark in the ACC.

Prillaman, a 5-10 guard, hit 51.9 percent of her shots from the floor, which translated into 6.2 points per game.

Junior transfer Liz Sahin will add to the depth of the backcourt. Coming off a season in which she averaged 15 points, eight assists and five steals at Palm Beach Community College, Sahin could challenge Quarles and Prillaman for playing time.

Despite their youth, the Cavs are not slack on talent with a freshman class ranked 11th nationally by Blue Star Basketball.

The freshmen are led by 5-11 USA Today All-America guard Bethany LeSueur. The New York Gatorade Player of the Year is ranked 12th overall by Blue Star.

The class also consists of two honorable mention All-Americans, LaTonya Blue and Lynette O'Reggio. Blue, who was ranked 80th by Blue Star, will be able to play either forward or guard and should compete for playing time in the backcourt.

The 6-4 O'Reggio will provide needed height for the mostly small Cavs. She is a true prospect for the center position, averaging five blocks per game during her senior high school season in Laurel, Md.

Jocelyn Logan-Friend and Brandi Teamer also join the Cavs after excellent high school careers.

"It's going to be an interesting year in terms of what I have to work with," Ryan said. "I'm confident that we're not going to do a lot of the things Virginia basketball teams have done in the past because we aren't going to have time to teach it. But what we're going to do, we'll do very well."

Despite the team's youth, there is still plenty of enthusiasm among the Virginia players.

"We're definitely eager," Quarles said. "We're ready to play this year." — *Billy Freeman*

wake forest demon deacons

HEAD COACH: Charlene Curtis
2000-01 RECORD: 11-17, 3-13 ACC
2000-01 POSTSEASON: None
KEY PLAYER: Eafon Hill (11.4 ppg, 5.9 rpg)
PREDICTED FINISH: 9th

deacs ready to move up



GUARD TELISHA QUARLES, VIRGINIA'S LONE SENIOR, WILL HAVE TO ANCHOR A YOUNG TEAM THAT WILL BE WITHOUT STAR SCHUYIE LARUE, WHO LEFT COLLEGE EARLY TO PLAY IN EUROPE. — *Kyle Rodgers*

WAKE FOREST HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN AS A MAJOR hub for women's college basketball.

In the program's 30-year history, Wake has an ACC record of 72-246 (.226) and has advanced to the NCAA Tournament once, making an appearance in 1988.

Since Charlene Curtis took over the program in 1997, the Demon Deacons have shown slight signs of improvement. Last season, Wake upset North Carolina and NCAA Tournament participant Florida State and took top-seeded Duke to overtime in the first round of the ACC Tournament. The end result, however, was still a last-place finish in the ACC.

After four years of slowly trying to bring her team along, Curtis is hoping to start moving up the conference pecking order.

"We have a good group of seniors who were part of my first recruiting class, and they have been through a lot," Curtis said. "Our mission this year is not only to be competitive but to finish the season with more wins than losses. The senior class wants to finish the job they came to Wake Forest to do. They know they've made a difference, but they want it to be truly visible."

If the Deacons expect to build on last year's scattered triumphs and escape the ACC cellar, they will have to find a way to make up for the loss of three key players. Brenda Mock Kirkpatrick, Kristen Shaffer and Olivia Dardy accounted for 49 percent of the team's scoring.

While that trio has moved on, the Deacons can still rely on forward Eafon Hill, an All-ACC Freshman selection a year ago. Hill, who started every game last season, became the first Wake freshman to lead her team in scoring since the 1992-93 season, averaging 11.4 points per game. She also provides a rebounding presence, picking up 5.9 boards per game, the top figure among last year's ACC freshmen.

Aside from their ACC slate, the Deacons have a rematch at home with top-ranked Connecticut. The Huskies slammed Wake 107-52 last year in Storrs, Conn., but Curtis doesn't think the game will be as lopsided this time.

"We're not just bringing them in to showcase them," Curtis said. "We're giving ourselves a chance to beat one of the best teams, and we want to build on that going into our ACC schedule."

That type of attitude is what Curtis is trying to spread to the rest of the team.

"Postseason play period is what we're interested in," Hill said. "We'll have to have a good nonconference and conference record. Having that winning record and making the postseason are the goals." — *Jeremy Ashton*

technician's men's preseason picks

1. Duke
2. Maryland
3. Virginia
4. North Carolina
5. Wake Forest
6. N.C. State
7. Georgia Tech
8. Clemson
9. Florida State

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Jason Williams, Duke
Mike Dunleavy, Duke
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Lonny Baxter, Maryland
Travis Watson, Virginia

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Jeremy Ashton

1. Maryland
2. Duke
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4. Wake Forest
5. Georgia Tech
6. N.C. State
7. North Carolina
8. Clemson
9. Florida State

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Jason Williams, Duke
Chris Duhon, Duke
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Lonny Baxter, Maryland
Roger Mason, Virginia

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Jawad Williams, North Carolina

— Steve Thompson

1. Duke
2. Maryland
3. North Carolina
4. Virginia
5. Wake Forest
6. Georgia Tech
7. N.C. State
8. Clemson
9. Florida State

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Jason Williams, Duke
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Lonny Baxter, Maryland
Carlos Boozer, Duke
Jason Capel, North Carolina

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Jerry Moore

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ALL-ACC TEAM:

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Mike Dunleavy, Duke
Chris Duhon, Duke
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Lonny Baxter, Maryland

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Andrea B. Carter

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2. Maryland
3. Virginia
4. Wake Forest
5. N.C. State
6. North Carolina
7. Georgia Tech
8. Florida State
9. Clemson

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Jason Williams, Duke
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Mike Dunleavy, Duke
Darius Songalia, Wake Forest
Lonny Baxter, Maryland

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Billy Freeman

1. North Carolina
2. Duke
3. Maryland
4. Virginia
5. N.C. State
6. Wake Forest
7. Georgia Tech
8. Clemson
9. Florida State

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Jason Williams, Duke
Jason Capel, North Carolina
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Josh Howard, Wake Forest
Carlos Boozer, Duke

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Jay Kohler

1. Duke
2. Maryland
3. North Carolina
4. Virginia
5. Wake Forest
6. N.C. State
7. Georgia Tech
8. Florida State
9. Clemson

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Jason Williams, Duke
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Lonny Baxter, Maryland
Travis Watson, Virginia
Dahntay Jones, Duke

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Matt Middleton

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2. Maryland
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5. North Carolina
6. Wake Forest
7. Georgia Tech
8. Florida State
9. Clemson

ALL-ACC TEAM:

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Juan Dixon, Maryland
Lonnie Baxter, Maryland
Mike Dunleavy, Duke
Travis Watson, Virginia

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Jimmy Byals

1. Duke
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4. North Carolina
5. N.C. State
6. Georgia Tech
7. Wake Forest
8. Clemson
9. Florida State

ALL-ACC TEAM:

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Mike Dunleavy, Duke
Lonny Baxter, Maryland
Juan Dixon, Maryland
Chris Duhon, Duke

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Jason Williams, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:
Julius Hodge, N.C. State

— Justin Sellers

technician's women's preseason picks

1. Duke
2. N.C. State
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7. Virginia
8. Georgia Tech
9. Wake Forest

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Alana Beard, Duke
Carisse Moody, N.C. State
Nikki Teasley, North Carolina
DeeDee Warley, Maryland
Chrissy Floyd, Clemson

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Alana Beard, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:

Monique Currie, Duke

—Jeremy Ashton

1. N.C. State
2. Duke
3. North Carolina
4. Florida State
5. Maryland
6. Clemson
7. Virginia
8. Georgia Tech
9. Wake Forest

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Alana Beard, Duke
Leah Tibbs, Duke
Carisse Moody, N.C. State
Nikki Teasley, North Carolina
Candace Sutton, N. Carolina

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Alana Beard, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:

Leah Metcalf, North Carolina

—Jery Moore

1. Duke
2. N.C. State
3. Maryland
4. North Carolina
5. Clemson
6. Virginia
7. Florida State
8. Georgia Tech
9. Wake Forest

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Alana Beard, Duke
Nikki Teasley, North Carolina
Chrissy Floyd, Clemson
Carisse Moody, N.C. State
DeeDee Warley, Maryland

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Alana Beard, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:

Monique Currie, Duke

—Steve Thompson

1. Duke
2. N.C. State
3. Clemson
4. Maryland
5. North Carolina
6. Wake Forest
7. Florida State
8. Virginia
9. Georgia Tech

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Alana Beard, Duke
Ivy Gardner, N.C. State
Carisse Moody, N.C. State
Marhe Strickland, Maryland
Chrissy Floyd, Clemson

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Alana Beard, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:

Monique Currie, Duke

—Jay Kohler

1. N.C. State
2. Duke
3. Maryland
4. North Carolina
5. Clemson
6. Florida State
7. Georgia Tech
8. Virginia
9. Wake Forest

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Alana Beard, Duke
Carisse Moody, N.C. State
Coretta Brown, North Carolina
DeeDee Warley, Maryland
Chrissy Floyd, Clemson

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Alana Beard, Duke

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:

Leah Metcalf, North Carolina

—Matt Middleton

1. N.C. State
2. Duke
3. Clemson
4. Florida State
5. Maryland
6. Virginia
7. North Carolina
8. Georgia Tech
9. Wake Forest

ALL-ACC TEAM:

Carisse Moody, N.C. State
Kaayla Chones, N.C. State
Alana Beard, Duke
Nikki Teasley, North Carolina
DeeDee Warley, Maryland

PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Carisse Moody, N.C. State

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:

Rachel Stockdale, N.C. State

—Justin Sellers

men's calendar

women's calendar

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 14	BCA Invitational Patrie View ACM	7 p.m.
Nov. 15	BCA Invitational TBA	TBA
Nov. 16	BCA Invitational TBA	TBA
Nov. 20	James Madison TBA	9 p.m.
Nov. 23	The Citadel	7 p.m.
Nov. 27	ACC-Big Ten Challenge @ Ohio State	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 1	Massachusetts	2:30 p.m.
Dec. 5	Wofford	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 8	@ Syracuse	7 p.m.
Dec. 15	UNC-Asheville	2 p.m.
Dec. 19	Charleston Southern	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 23	@ Houston	8:30 p.m.
Dec. 30	Maryland	6 p.m.
Jan. 3	@ Virginia	2 p.m.
Jan. 8	Florida State	9 p.m.
Jan. 13	Duke	8 p.m.
Jan. 15	@ Clemson	7 p.m.
Jan. 19	@ Georgia Tech	2 p.m.
Jan. 23	@ North Carolina	9 p.m.
Jan. 26	Temple	12 p.m.
Jan. 30	Wake Forest	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 2	@ Maryland	4 p.m.
Feb. 6	Virginia	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	@ Florida State	1 p.m.
Feb. 11	Duke	2 p.m.
Feb. 16	Clemson	4 p.m.
Feb. 20	@ Georgia Tech	9 p.m.
Feb. 24	@ North Carolina	6:30 p.m.
Mar. 2	@ Wake Forest	2 p.m.
Mar. 7-8	ACC Tournament @ Greensboro	TBA

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 16	N.C. State Tournament Radford	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 17	N.C. State Tournament Drake or UAB	TBA
Nov. 20	George Washington @ [ESA]	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 23	@ Indiana	7 p.m.
Nov. 26	Old Dominion	7 p.m.
Nov. 28	Charleston Southern Honda Elite Classic Tennessee	7 p.m.
Dec. 2	@ [Orlando, Fla.]	1 p.m.
Dec. 8	@ Wisconsin	1 p.m.
Dec. 16	Georgia	1 p.m.
Dec. 21	Sunplash Shootout Mississippi State @ [Cancun, Mexico]	4 p.m.
Dec. 22	Sunplash Shootout Pittsburgh @ [Cancun, Mexico]	4 p.m.
Dec. 30	@ Wake Forest	1 p.m.
Jan. 2	Virginia	7 p.m.
Jan. 6	Georgia Tech	2 p.m.
Jan. 10	@ North Carolina	7 p.m.
Jan. 13	Duke	6 p.m.
Jan. 17	@ Florida State	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	@ Clemson	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Maryland	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Wake Forest	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	@ Virginia	12 p.m.
Feb. 7	@ Georgia Tech	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	North Carolina	2 p.m.
Feb. 14	Duke	7 p.m.
Feb. 18	@ Florida State	7 p.m.
Feb. 21	@ Maryland	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 25	Clemson	7 p.m.
Mar. 1-4	ACC Tournament @ [Greensboro]	TBA