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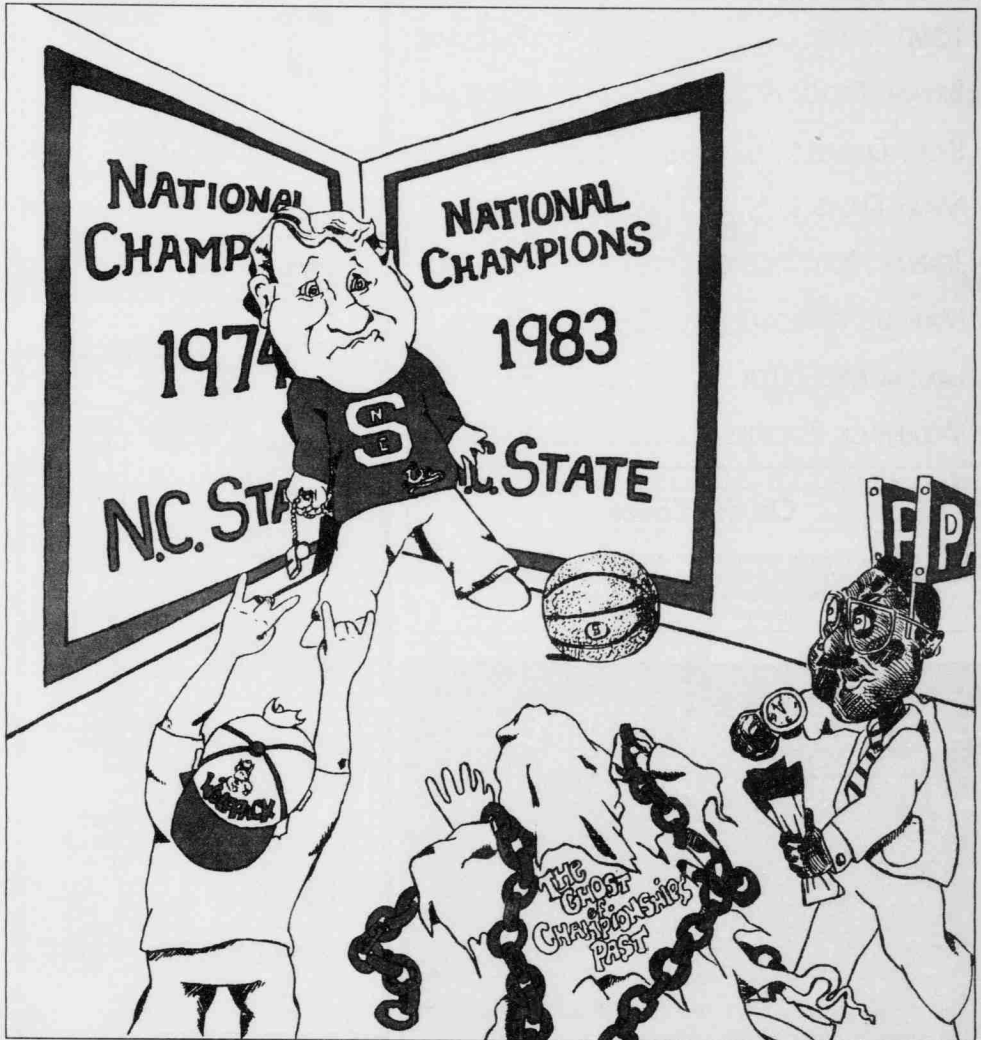


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On the Cover

Les Robinson has issued the ultimatum to himself: turn the program around to its old winning ways soon. He's been under a lot of pressure in his five-year tenure, dealing with fans, boosters, and a storied winning tradition.

Illustration by Roger Doeleman

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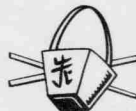
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New season, new attitude for Wolfpack

■ The 1993 and 1994 men's basketball teams are about as different as the two nations they opened their schedules against.

BY OWEN S. GOOD
SPORTS EDITOR

How far is this year's men's basketball team — after its first exhibition game — apart from last year's team at the same time?

A world apart.

"There's just no comparison between Australia and Poland," head coach Les Robinson said, referring to the 1993 and 1994 exhibition openers, respectively.

"It's right: This year's Wolfpack is so different — in terms of confidence, play and experience — from last year's it's like comparing Foster's lager to polish sausage.

For starters, State sends out four seniors, all with significant playing experience, all having seen the worst that the best conference in the nation

can dish out. Since the 1991-1992 year — State's first losing season since the 1970-71 season, the Pack never had more than one senior it could count on by the time its ACC games began.

This season the team can lean on Lakista McCuller, Mark Davis, Bryan Fegins and transfer Ricky Daniels, who have all had big moments in conference play.

"We've got seniors who've been through the wars in the ACC," Fegins said. "And last year was my first year back in a while — I was just getting to know the team last year. With most teams it's not the talent that wins, it's the chemistry, and we've got more chemistry this year."

Fegins spent last year re-acclimating himself to college basketball after losing two years to a gunshot wound and a severe knee injury. Daniels spent his first year with State in 1994 as a junior-college transfer. McCuller and Davis have been together since the beginning — including the character-building

1992-93 season, when they had only six other teammates at times.

Curtis Marshall would make five seniors, but the point guards will likely be redshirted after suffering a severe cut on his right arm.

Regardless of who's leading the charge, many players agree that the team is much more confident heading into this season than it was heading into last year.

"The number one thing seems to be the commitment of the players," said guard Jeremy Hyatt. "The seniors have seen the bad and good, and overcome a lot of adversity, and we're all coming together now with the younger players."

"We've got a new attitude; we've been working hard and concentrating on playing together," Robinson said. "We do not doubt ourselves. This is our year to do what we've got to do, and we've got the personnel to do it."

Aside from the seniors, and solid juniors Todd Fuller and Marcus Wilson, the Wolfpack introduces two highly-touted freshmen. The arrival

of Ishua Benjamin and C.C. Harrison, both guards with a boatload of awards from high school, leaves the team confident and optimistic knowing a successful future could be in the works.

"Any time you bring in new guys who can get the job done certainly adds confidence," McCuller said. "Ishua and C.C. can certainly get the job done."

The two gave good reason for high expectations after their exhibition with the Polish National Team. Benjamin's first assist was an alley-op pass to Wilson; Harrison had a nice transition score off a fast-break pass from Benjamin.

And Benjamin understands his role.

"In the game I'm supposed to get the ball to the open man, get it to the people with the hot hand," Benjamin said. That he did, four times, and almost had another alley-op — but Wilson had Wilson not been fouled on the way up.

"He gave us some good sparks," Robinson said. "You saw the passes

he threw — it wasn't luck."

While State may need luck against conference heavyweights, it can count its skill more often this year. Robinson said the 1994 team made great strides in conference play by winning five ACC games and playing defending national champion North Carolina tight at home. Barring injury to last year's major players, and all return, the Wolfpack should build on that success.

"We made a lot of progress in the league last year," Robinson said. "In December, we weren't a very good team. In January and February we made major progress."

Still, non-conference losses to Davidson, Campbell and Florida Atlantic — and all three should have been victories, no matter how down the team was — stunted the team's growth. This year's slate features Prairie View A&M, Radford and Howard in the early games, but the team should reasonably win all its games before Kansas and be 8-0 before receiving the Jayhawks at home.

Rebuilding continues, but Robinson feels caught up

■ After four disappointing and turbulent seasons, Coach Les Robinson faces the upcoming season with the fewest setbacks since he became coach.

BY AARON MORRISON
STAFF WRITER

Four years after taking over a basketball program seemingly destined for destruction, N.C. State head coach Les Robinson finally feels caught up.

Over his last four seasons, Robinson and his Wolfpack have faced many hardships and setbacks. They have ranged from NCAA probation to major injuries to impact players.

Through it all, Robinson remains positive and can't wait to complete the rebuilding of Wolfpack basketball.

"I feel like we're right now, for the first time, on level ground," Robinson said. "Everything from academic rules, to having a full supplement of scholarships, recruiting, everything."

Robinson's job, when he took it in 1990, was to rebuild the Wolfpack men's basketball program from the ground up, athletically and especially academically.

He has done it academically, but fans want the wins. And he knows it.

"We receive a multitude of letters coming in from people who are more concerned with the academic stature of the university commending us," he said. "People who want to win, but who say, 'We're proud of what you have accomplished.' But I say in the same breath that I know the bottom line is winning games. And that is what we are going to do. We have put ourselves in a posi-

tion to win games and win in the classroom, and that is why this will be the most satisfying job that I have ever been involved in."

For the second-straight year, the Wolfpack basketball team ranks first in average SAT scores in the ACC. Yes, both Duke and North Carolina were included in the list.

Now that Robinson has rebuilt his team academically and set the standard for other programs around the country, he must make his team a national contender on the basketball court.

"We had to go through this painful process to accomplish what we have academically, and we had to accomplish a lot," Robinson said. "Now, we are ready to be successful in both areas. We have regained enormous credibility in the academic world. Now, we want to gain that same credibility once again in the basketball world."

To many fans, the basketball world is what it is all about, and Robinson knows that all too well. In his past four years at State, he has struggled to a 51-67 overall record, with 20 of those wins coming in his first season.

Fans are ready for a turnaround. The NCAA has made that very hard for the Wolfpack.

For example, State had to reduce the coaching staff for a couple of years, reduce scholarships and reduce recruiting time.

Because of those sanctions, recruiting has been a problem. When Robinson and his staff were able to recruit a top 25 player — Chuck Kornejag, for example — he became academically ineligible at N.C. State. However, he would have been eligible to play at any universi-

ty in America, including Duke or Stanford.

Robinson said that is an abnormal circumstance but one that he supported from the beginning. He was, however, unaware of some of the unforeseen circumstances the rule would bring.

"It was something we had to do, but that made our job much tougher," Robinson said. "Had we had that top 25 player along with three or four others, we wouldn't have been going backwards at times."

Those problems along with some other unpredictable events, including injuries both on and off the court, have made Robinson's tenure rocky to say the least.

"I think we could have handled the injuries if we had had the full supplement of scholarships, and we hadn't lost players to academics," Robinson said. "If you are deep in a position and you lose a guy, it's not as bad as if you are three or four deep and two guys flunk out. That's when you're hurting."

Now that freshmen players will be able to get their feet on the ground and get adjusted to college life before they are evaluated — a luxury just acquired this year — Robinson hopes it will take some pressure off of his younger players.

"We have every reason to believe that all our guys will fair well academically," he said, "but we also know that if a freshman on a final exam slips up, he doesn't have that pressure."



Les Robinson makes his point clear to players during practice in Carmichael Gymnasium.

HUNTER MORRIS/STAFF

Fuller solid in the pivot

■ After last year's impressive performance, Todd Fuller hopes to become a leader by improve his team and help the team improve its record.

By RICH O'KEEFE
Staff Writer

It seems a bit ludicrous to recall N.C. State fans and critics who worried last year about losing center Kevin Thompson to the NBA.

If there is one thing State has the fewest worries about, it can rely on this year, it is the center.

Todd Fuller, a 6' 11" junior out of Charlotte in his first season as a full-time starter not only filled Thompson's shoes, he made a name for himself. With the departure of players like Eric Montrosa and Sharonne Wright to the NBA, there is a new crop of emerging dominant centers in the ACC. And Fuller is in company with Maryland's Joe Smith and Duke's Cherokee Parks near the top of the conference.

The only player on the team to start every game last year, Fuller posted team-high averages of 11.8 points and 8.4 rebounds (good for fourth in the ACC). For that, he was a third-team all-ACC selection.

"I have a goal of playing after school is done," Fuller said. "Whether it is overseas, the CBA or the NBA, I don't care right now. I've got two more years left here and that's most important."

Not only is Fuller following up on that statement with his efforts on the court in practice, he is doing it in the classroom. At last check, he has posted more than his share of semesterly 4.0s and has been named Academic All-District.

He has a simple approach to his school work ethic.

"While I'm here, I might as well put in some hard work," Fuller said.

That same hard work is evident in his play. Fuller has been called everything from a throwback to another era to a workhorse.

"I try to limit myself to a few post moves, not try and do too much, and

a mid-range shot," Fuller said of his game. "I don't have any fear of taking it (the jump shot)."

Fuller scored most of his points off shooting moves in the paint and a soft shooting touch from his hook, the free-throw line, and out on the floor when opposing centers wouldn't step out. As far as his offensive game is concerned, don't expect to see a big difference.

"My role really hasn't changed too much in the offense," Fuller said. "Of course I would like to improve in all aspects of my game, but I'm not being asked to do too much differently as far as my game is concerned."

One thing's for sure, many will be looking to Fuller for leadership. He sees his role as being less vocal, but equally important.

"I think there are two types of leaders," Fuller said. "The vocal ones and the leaders by example and hard work. We've got some seniors who are more suited for the first, so I feel it is my job to work hard. I've been there two years now and I know what is going on, so I am expected to contribute more in that area."

The expectations come from his team, as well as the students and fans who support the team.

"There is pressure for us to win more this year, because of the tradition and expectations at N.C. State," Fuller said. "Coach [Les] Robinson is keeping really generic with his goals for now because we are only three weeks into practice. We need to work hard and the rest will take care of itself."

Despite the dismal predictions for the Wolfpack, Fuller feels something can be done about it.

"Preseason polls don't mean anything," Fuller said. "It's the teams that are going together and keep it that will succeed."

"Looking back at last year and the [79-71] home victory against Maryland, it really showed what we are capable of," Fuller added. "If we can play 80 percent of what we did in that first half, we can be as good as anybody."

Bryant Feggins		Senior									
Year	G-GS	FG Pct.	3PT Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	S	BS	TP	Avg.
1990	30-0	.485	.000	.553	75	12	23	10	7	126	4.2
1991	31-31	.535	.000	.783	160	45	51	15	11	413	13.3
1992	Injured										
1993	Injured										
1994	30-23	.491	.400	.600	134	24	60	17	11	275	9.2
Totals	91-55	.512	.167	.660	369	81	134	52	29	814	8.9

Captain and father, Feggins setting example for more than his team

■ A summer full of conditioning, dieting and playing basketball has Bryant Feggins ready for his final season at State.

By KEVIN BREWER
Staff Writer

Last season's comeback wasn't good enough for Bryant Feggins.

Sure, it was a good start. He scored nine points and grabbed five rebounds per game. But it was just the first step. This year has to be another step forward.

In fact, if last year was it — if that was the entire comeback — he would have never come back at all. "My high school coach told me you can't cheat the game," Feggins said. "If I didn't feel like I could do the same things on the court, I would have given up."

This summer, Feggins didn't give up. He knew he was out of shape last season. And he didn't want to come into practice this year in the same shape.

He lifted weights every day, building up to a 350-pound bench press. He stuck to a diet of mostly chicken, fish, pastas, salads and vegetables. He ate at certain times and never late at night.

Now, Feggins has lost about 15

pounds — down to 238 pounds and 12-percent body fat.

He also played in three or four summer leagues, and with former State players Kevin Thompson, Chuck Brown and Colm McCaughey and former Duke player Kevin Strickland.

"It's the first time I've felt good about my game in two years," Feggins said. "I've always felt like I could compete. Last year, it took me half the year to get in shape. This year I'm coming back in shape."

"Sometimes I couldn't go after a rebound because I was tired. I would make a move, but I'd be too tired to finish it. And then I'd have to move down the court and play defense."

Feggins was still feeling the effects of not playing basketball for two seasons. His last season was 1990-91, when he averaged 13 points and five rebounds.

At the beginning of what was supposed to be his junior year, he tore his anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee. One season.

Then on April 25, 1992, he was shot in the right shoulder during a confrontation on North Carolina A&T's campus. Out another season. For a while, he lost the feeling in his right hand.

And he once considered not attempting a comeback at all. He sat

with his mother and told her he didn't want to. Just like that. She walked away from the table.

"She was disappointed," Feggins said. "She couldn't believe I said that."

Feggins credits his mother for his successes. She raised him in a tough neighborhood in Winston-Salem. She tied his shoes and zipped his pants when he couldn't. She'd always been there.

Now Feggins wants to be there. Four months ago, he became a father — something he grew up without. Now chasing his dream, playing professional basketball, involves his daughter Brandi, too.

"I want to be able to give my child the thing I didn't have," Feggins said. "I'd rather be a good man and a good father to my child than an all-star basketball player."

As for the season and this N.C. State team, he is the only connection to a successful past, when the Wolfpack advanced to the NCAA Tournament in 1991. He is easily the oldest player on the team at 24 years.

And he says he will assume a leadership role — but not too much.

"They have to want it for themselves," Feggins said.

Todd Fuller		Junior									
Year	G-GS	FG Pct.	3PT Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	S	BS	TP	Avg.
1992	27-2	.457	.500	.773	57	14	14	10	5	52	5.2
1993	30-29	.482	.000	.753	253	32	42	11	38	155	11.8
Totals	57-32	.475	.167	.759	350	39	57	12	46	496	8.7

■ The senior forward hopes to improve on last year's performance and become a leader for the Wolfpack.

By ANNA MARSHALL
Staff Writer

Entering his second year at N.C. State, Ricky Daniels is ready to push hard for several things. But not for the second-year.

Daniels' playing for State is a dream turned reality, but the senior sees this year as a time to do more than live out a childhood ambition.

"I am going to be more of a leader this year," Daniels said. "It looks like I'll get a lot more minutes, and I'm fighting for a starting position. I just think I'm going to be a better leader."

The 6-foot-ward needs to continue his late-season stride. He broke free

for 20 points off the bench against Florida State in January, and started the final 15 games.

Three games later Daniels joined State's starting lineup. He hit double figures in points four times, and was a three-point threat, finishing 18 of 56 behind the line. He averaged a modest 5.6 points per game last year, but most of that was due to poor performances before his breakout game in January. He averaged 4.5 rebounds a game and was the team's leading rebounder in eight games. His 67 assists were the second-best on the team.

But there is still a lot of room for improvement.

"I'm not too satisfied with last season," Daniels said. "I think if I have a real, real good season, I can look farther on playing ball somewhere. That's what I'm working hard for."

"I think my game is going to pick

up in all areas, defensively and offensively. I'm pretty much working on everything. I think everything has gotten a lot better."

With many milestones in the shadows, Ricky Daniels focuses through the numbers.

Looking forward and letting the past stand on its own, he is concentrating on the days to come.

"I'm working hard for this team, for us to win a lot more games and then for my career after State," Daniels said. "I want to play ball, possibly overseas. If I play well and with a little luck, the NBA."

At Anderson, Daniels averaged 17.3 points, 7 rebounds, 5.6 assists, and 2.3 steals to earn all-conference and all-Region X honors his freshman and sophomore years. As a sophomore, he was recognized as an honorable mention for the JUCO All-America team.

Ricky Daniels		Senior									
Year	G-GS	FG Pct.	3PT Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	S	BS	TP	Avg.
1994	30-15	.388	.321	.579	136	67	50	23	9	168	5.6

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Wilson working to reach the next level

■ Marcus Wilson strives for new levels with his play, while giving of himself to his team and the community.

By MICHAEL TODD
STAFF WRITER

Practicing with the men's basketball team has stretched Marcus Wilson's drive and determination. He wants to see how far it can go. "It's been kinda intense," Wilson said. "I want it to be more intense."

One of the Pack's most athletic players, Wilson drives himself to become better. "I've been trying to work on everything," Wilson said. "The ball handling, shot selection. Everything. I think everything is my weakness. I don't think I have one strong point yet."

Many people could argue with Wilson about that, but no one can deny what he means to this team. A junior swingman, Wilson started 14 games last season. He was the Pack's fifth-leading scorer, averaging just over six points a game. Wilson scored in double figures six times, including a career-best of 16 in a close game at home against North Carolina.

But don't think that Wilson can just score. He was second on the team in blocked shots with 20, fourth in steals with 22 and averaged three rebounds per game last year.

Wilson was named to the all-ACC freshman second team and played with the all-ACC team that toured Canada two years ago.

"That was lots of fun and we faced some really good competition in the games," Wilson said.

Wilson's intensity is also expressed on the practice court with a little bit of trash-talking.

"I've got to be (vocal)," joked Wilson. "You're going to have fun while you are playing. You're going to see it in a game, so you might as well see it in practice."

His talking can be seen as a sign of leadership, something that Wilson has shown plenty of in his basketball career.

Last year, Wilson led the Pack to victory over Oregon State by scoring 14 points on seven of 11 shooting. He also played a key role in other games, with 13 and 12 points in wins over Hawaii and UNC-Asheville, respectively.

But what Wilson may be best known for is his dunking ability. Wilson has been the architect of many of the State Dunks seen in the highlight reels.

"I let it happen," Wilson said about his dunks. "If you think about it, then it won't happen. I try not to think about dunks; it's just part of the game."

In high school, Wilson earned first-team all-state honors by the Greensboro News & Record following his senior year in which he averaged 24.5 points and 6.5 rebounds a game.

As a sophomore, he scored 14 points and pulled down 6.5 rebounds to help his team to a state runner-up finish.

But there is another side to Marcus Wilson that many students don't get to see. Born in Monroe, N.C., he was raised by his grandmother since he was three weeks old.

Wilson is a soft-spoken, polite young man who prefers to avoid attention whenever possible, which isn't easy being a high-profile basketball player.

In his free time, he finds ways to give back to the community. This past summer, Wilson worked at a basketball camp back home. Back in high school, he was the supervisor at his local community gym for two years. Wilson has also been a motivational speaker to youth in the area.

"Talking to young kids is something I've really come to enjoy," Wilson said. "I talk to them about setting goals and believing in themselves."

Jeremy Hyatt

Sophomore

Year	G-GS	F.G Pct.	3PT Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	S	BS	TP	Avg.
1994	29-3	.234	.140	.667	30	37	35	23	8	44	1.5

Hyatt will be needed at point

■ Jeremy Hyatt will be looked to for help at point guard this season.

By MICHAEL PRESTON
STAFF WRITER

With all the talk around campus about "the backcourt of the future," people are beginning to overlook one small detail.

The backcourt of the present. So, when you make the journey to Reynolds Coliseum to watch the Wolfpack this year, don't expect Isha Benjamin to come trotting out when the starting point guard position is announced.

That job will be filled by sophomore Jeremy Hyatt.

"I wasn't expecting it [the starting job], but I was expecting to play and contribute to the team, and help it win," Hyatt said about his new role.

Hyatt only averaged 12 minutes a game last season, but with this year will be different. With Curtis Marshall out for the season, Hyatt is going to be a big contributor, no matter what.

"I'm not really worried about starting or not starting, or anything like that," Hyatt said. "I just want to play and help the team win. Whatever position they put me at I'm going to do the best that I can."

Most of the time, the reason head coach Les Robinson insisted Hyatt

into the game was for defensive reasons. Despite his lack of playing time, he was tied for third on the team in steals with 23. For that, Lindy's ACC Handbook awarded him with an A, the highest mark on the team, for his high stellar play on defense. But defense was never a problem for Hyatt, who had 141 steals in high school.

If there is any concern, it is with his offensive productivity. In the 29 games he appeared in, his shooting percentage was a dismal 23.4, and went down to 14.0 from beyond the three-point stripe. The result was a scoring average of just 1.5 per game. In the off-season, Hyatt addressed the problem in his old stomping grounds.

"I did a lot of shooting at my old high school. I just tried to practice some of the things that I needed to work on, especially my shooting," Hyatt said. "I also worked on my passing, and my ball-handling, but mostly my shooting. I think it's picked up a lot."

Whether or not it has remains to be seen. Hyatt will have to improve on his 21.9 shooting percentage in ACC and on the court for the Pack to be truly successful this season.

However, the pressure for this team to succeed will not be placed on his shoulders alone. That would be a lot to ask from a man whose career high in assists is four. Most

likely, Hyatt will split time at the point with Benjamin, the highly-touted freshman from Concord, N.C. "He'll put on a little show," Hyatt began. "He's got a lot of abilities, he made some nice passes and some nice decisions, but he's young. So, you know, he's a little loose. A little wild. He reminded me a little of me last year."

Versatility is another advantage Hyatt has going for him. While he'll start at the point, his 6' 6" height allowed him to record four blocks against Maryland last year. He can also get in and rebound, and averaged one a game, even with limited playing time.

Most importantly, Hyatt's main objective this year is to contribute to the team's success. He feels like he can help N.C. State reach the expectations that they have set out to achieve.

"One of our goals is to go .500 in the ACC," Hyatt said. "We have to win all the games we're supposed to win, and then go .500 in the conference. If we do that, we'll be where we need to be."

Patience is the key for both Hyatt and the fans this season. He has the talent to be a key player for the Pack, especially while it grooms Benjamin and C.C. Harrison for the future.

But the future has arrived for Jeremy Hyatt.

Davis won't waste final season

■ Mark Davis will get one last shot at a season like the one he had as a freshman, and he's determined to make the most of it.

By JOE GIGLIO
STAFF WRITER

In his back.

Coming senior, Mark Davis is determined to do just that.

After a promising rookie campaign that included 57 three-pointers and a 11.0 scoring average, the 6-5 swingman endured subpar sophomore and junior seasons. "People expect me to produce. I accept that challenge and I'm looking forward to having a break out year," said Davis.

But due to physical and mental distractions, Davis' play was below the standards he had set in his initial season. During his sophomore year, Davis suffered a broken bone in his shooting wrist and last season a strained thumb slowed his physical progress.

Davis doesn't feel his lack of production is solely due to the injuries.

A combination of the injuries, media pressure, and expectations have hindered his psyche.

"There is pressure from myself, my family, my friends and the media. But I'll accept the grief," Davis said.

Davis believes that the past two seasons are unfairly compared to his freshman year.

"In my freshman year, when I played with Tom Gugliotta, he drew double-teams that freed me up for open shots. This past two season's teams could focus more on me and the open shots were not there as often," stated Davis.

Also Davis pointed to the minutes played in the '92 season compared to the last two years. Davis logged 836 minutes in '92 compared to the 467 last year.

In the off-season Davis worked hard to physically prepare for the upcoming season. His workouts included extra hours in the weight room and on the track.

Davis feels he is in "the best shape of my career" and believes the extra effort will pay dividends on the

court.

"I want to help this team win. I'll do whatever it takes, whether it is scoring points or playing defense," said Davis.

Davis believes that his leadership can be a contributing factor to the team.

He said, "As a senior on this team, I feel it is my job to help the younger guys make the transition to the college level."

As for the possibility of being the first class in twenty-five years to fail to reach the postseason, Davis is not worried about that far off in the future.

"We have to take of winning basketball games, and if we do that, the postseason will fall into place," said Davis.

Davis is looking forward to his senior campaign. He is in the best shape of his career, and he is a little older and wiser than when he first got here from Ulica, Miss.

"I wouldn't change anything I've done here," Davis said. "I've enjoyed playing here and I don't regret any success or failures that

Marcus Wilson		Junior									
Year	G-GS	F.G Pct.	3PT Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	S	BS	TP	Avg.
1993	27-7	.357	.350	.552	52	27	43	12	4	110	4.1
1994	30-14	.431	.304	.595	90	31	31	22	20	287	6.2
Totals	57-21	.403	.304	.577	142	58	74	34	24	397	5.2

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Mark Davis

Senior

Year	G-GS	F.G Pct.	3PT Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	TO	S	BS	TP	Avg.
1992	30-29	.461	.413	.542	126	39	52	17	2	329	11.0
1993	23-20	.340	.340	.583	103	48	43	14	6	191	8.3
1994	29-8	.351	.365	.633	229	87	95	31	8	152	5.2
Totals	82-57	.395	.371	.579	458	174	190	62	16	672	8.2

The future is now

■ A host of new players should make an immediate and dramatic impact on the Wolfpack men's team.

By **AARON MORRISON**
STAFF WRITER

The future is here.

They've been called everything from the future of N.C. State basketball to a rebirth of "Fire and Ice." They come in the form of two young guards from North Carolina — 6.5 Ishaia Benjamin and 6-3 C.C. Harrison.

They have been labeled as State's backcourt of the future, but with starting point guard Curtis Marshall out for the season, the future could become the present.

"They're gonna get minutes," State coach Les Robinson said. "But nature will just have to take its course. If their performance in practice is any indication, and usually it is, they will get some quality minutes."

Benjamin hails from Concord, N.C. He comes off a tremendous senior season with Concord High School. In his last year he averaged 20.5 points, 6 assists, 6 rebounds and 5.3 steals per game.

He shot 45.6 percent from the floor and 71.7 percent from the free-throw line as he led the Spartans to the 3-A state semifinals. They lost the game despite Benjamin's 27-point effort.

That great season earned him recognition as a fourth-team Parade Magazine all-American. He was also the leading vote-getter for the AP all-state team, and was named "Mr. Basketball" by the Charlotte Observer. And Dave Bones of Cage Scope rated him the nation's 49th best player.

Harrison arrived in Raleigh via Reidsville, and is coming off a great final season at Reidsville High. Harrison led his team to a perfect 30-0 record and a state championship his senior year. Not only did he lead them there, he won it. In the final two seconds, Harrison buried the game-winning shot to defeat Winston-Salem Parkland.

Ironically, Parkland was the team that ended Benjamin's chances of a state title. Parkland upended Concord in the semifinals.

During the season, Harrison aver-



aged 24.1 points, 5.2 assists and 4.4 steals per game. Harrison lit it up from deep during the season. He was 50 percent from beyond the three-point arc, 52 percent when inside it and 80.6 percent from the free-throw line.

Harrison earned Player of the Year honors in the Triad 3-A Conference. The Associated Press and Greensboro's News and Record called him North Carolina's best player. He was named a McDonald's All-American as well.

Many high hopes ride on the shoulders of these two youngsters, and both coaches and players think they will out just fine.

"The end result is I think we're going to be, we meaning the staff, the fans, the supporters, are going to be very happy with these two young men," Robinson said. "I couldn't be happier with their progress, their attitudes and their work in the classroom."

"They give us a lot of depth in the backcourt," senior guard Lakista McCuller said. "They are two guys who can really be stable in the backcourt and be quality ACC players."

Three additions will also be added to the Wolfpack's frontcourt, and only two of them will have to wait a year. Al Pinkins, 6-6, Jonathan Grissett, 6-7, and 7-foot Steve Norton all transferred to State.

Pinkins hails from Chipola Junior College in Marietta, Ga. He will probably be the only of the three playing this year. Grissett, who came in from Allegany (Md.) Community College, will most likely be redshirted. Norton was at Furman and is



Harrison (left) was the AP's player of the year in 1994. Benjamin is The Charlotte Observer's Mr. Basketball.

ineligible this season because of his transfer. He will play next year as a sophomore.

Pinkins, a junior forward, was named to Blue Chip Illustrated's junior college Dream Team. He averaged 12.4 points and 7.3 rebounds per game. But Grissett had to rebound after both a pre-season and mid-season knee injury.

Pinkins is currently recovering from knee surgery, and Robinson hopes in a few weeks he can make an impact for his team.

"We know what he can do, and he's two or three weeks from being out there," Robinson said. "But I think by mid to late December, he'll be a contributor to this team. People will like him."

Grissett led his team to a 23-7 record and the Region XX Championship last year. He averaged 17.1 points and 6.9 rebounds per game in that campaign, and hit 50 percent from the floor and 70 percent from the line.

"We are redshirting him [Grissett]," Robinson said. "We have seen a lot of good signs. He has many tools and skills."

In the future, Norton will most likely be the "big" man in the middle. He is the Pack's first seven-footer since Chuck Nevis.

"We really like what we see in him," Robinson said. "He'll be right in there with Todd [Fuller] next year. He has three more years after this one."

Lakista McCuller		Senior									
Year	G-OS	FG Pct.	FT Pct.	Reb.	A	T	S	Blk	TP	AW	
1992	27-14	352	325	689	55	45	42	19	3	147	54
1993	27-25	394	341	652	70	63	26	1	278	103	
1994	30-28	417	349	721	80	59	46	25	1	311	104
Totals	84-67	395	341	687	205	162	141	70	5	736	8.8

Kista bent on NCAAs

■ Senior captain Lakista McCuller has accepted his role as a leader and hopes to lead the team to postseason play.

By **JOE GIGLIO**
STAFF WRITER

Teams go only as far as their leaders take them.

And team leader Lakista McCuller, a senior captain, says this year's Wolfpack squad is headed to the postseason.

With the prospect of being the first class in 25 years to never go to the postseason, McCuller plans to do everything possible to have his final team playing in March. In his final campaign, McCuller senses an urgency for the team and its desire to reach NCAA or NIT tournament play.

"We have the talent and the ability to get there, but it's now or never for the seniors," McCuller said.

The flashy 6-3 shooting guard from Andersonville, GA is a lethal outside marksman. He nailed 60 three-point baskets last season and averaged 10.4 points per game. With good ball-handling skills and the ability to take the ball to the hoop, McCuller is a triple threat on offense.

This season McCuller hopes to take his game to new heights.

"I have high expectations for this year," he said. "We can play at the next level if we are physically and mentally strong night in and night out."

During games, it is not unusual to see McCuller hitting threes or making steals. Also, during conditioning at the end of practice, it is not unusual to find McCuller sprint ahead of the rest of the team.

McCuller accepts the hard work that comes with leading, for example.

"Bryant [Eggenius] and I make sure each player is getting the job done on and off the court," McCuller said. "I've accepted the challenge of being a leader."

One of his first tasks is to groom the younger players to fill the void left by the injury to his backcourt mate, Curtis Marshall.

"The loss of Curtis puts more weight on my shoulders," McCuller said. "The younger guys have to step up and try to fill his shoes. They lack the experience, but they have the ability to produce."

In particular, McCuller pointed to sophomore Jeremy Hyatt and freshman Ishaia Benjamin.

"It is a relief," McCuller said. "He makes the people around him better. I definitely think he will help replace Curtis."

Another task McCuller feels is particularly important is getting the team mentally prepared for each game. McCuller felt that last year the Pack had a tendency to play to the level of its competition.

"We played real well in our big games, but we struggled emotionally in others," McCuller said. "If we beat the Davidsons and Florida Atlantic, that is four or five more wins for us. We have to play at the same level each game regardless if they are an ACC opponent or not."

"If we can accomplish that, there is no telling what obstacles we can handle."

This year McCuller believes if the Pack earns respect on the court, then the media and fans will follow.

"People will respect us," he said. "We have got a good squad, and we are coming together as a team."

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Chaplain @ 833-9668

ADVANCE PICK-UP GAMES

There will be three camp-out lines for the following games, with the exception of the Duke and UNC games where there will be four lines. The Coliseum Box Office will distribute tickets at the three outside ticket windows from 7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on the first day and from 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on the second day if tickets remain.



Distribution Dates
December 8
January 17
January 23
January 30
February 13
February 20



Game Dates
Kansas (12/10) & UNC (1/04)
Maryland (01/22)
Clemson (01/28)
Wake Forest (02/01)
Florida State (02/15) & Duke (02/18)
Georgia Tech (02/25)



Duke National Team
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Maryland Eastern Shore
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GAME DAY PICK-UPS

For the following games, the Coliseum Box Office will distribute tickets at windows 3 and 4, beginning two and one half hours before game time and continuing as long as student tickets remain.