

# Deacs excited about Curtis' arrival

By Jessica Reigle  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

At the beginning of every season in college basketball there are certain things that every player must do for preparation. However, for junior Emon McMillian and sophomore Alisha Mosley, one additional fact is making a big difference.

Not only are they having to adjust to the rigors of a new season, but they also have a new head coach.

With the departure of Karen Freeman last season to the WNBA, Charlene Curtis stepped into this role, taking over a team that finished last season with a disappointing 12-16 record.

McMillian, a 6-1 forward from Greensboro and co-captain of the squad, said of Curtis' arrival, "There has definitely been a period of adjustment and everyone is enthusiastic."

Mosley, a 5-7 guard, had the highest praise for Curtis, who comes to the Deacon bench from a tradition-rich program at the University of Connecticut, where she was an assistant coach.

"I have faith that (Coach Curtis) can push us to our limit and beyond," Mosley said.

McMillian is confident that Curtis' arrival will have an immediate impact on the entire program, which finished in the cellar of the ACC last season.

"We definitely won't be at the bottom of the conference, I can tell you that for sure," McMillian said. "If people expect us to finish last we will definitely surprise them."

To prevent a similar finish this season, both players realize that the basis for a good season begins long before the first exhibition game is played.

Off-season workouts have consisted of a



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**Juniors Emon McMillian (left) and Heidi Coleman (right) will be two of the starters for Charlene Curtis' Demon Deacon squad this season.**

strict regimen of long distance running, sprints and agility work, all of which will help the team become more efficient on the court.

"We've been working hard on conditioning and playing together as a team," Mosley said.

McMillian concurred about the importance of off-season training as a key to success.

"Over the summer I did a lot of individual work and played in summer school," she said.

All the off-season training is needed in a conference that features some of the best teams in the country, including the University of North Carolina. The ACC is tough and the slightest edge a team has over

another can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

"You can never tell in the ACC," McMillian said. "Every team is tough. Anyone can beat anyone on any given night."

"Every team will be a challenge," Mosley said. "It's a highly competitive league."

Mosley hopes to improve on her highly successful freshman campaign last season, which was concluded by being awarded ACC All-Rookie honors.

Mosley began the season as a reserve, making appearances in each of the Deacs first 18 games. For the last ten contests, she earned a spot in the starting lineup, and in eight of those 10 starts she scored in double figures. For the season she averaged 7.0

points and 1.5 assists per game, but in ACC games alone her stats jumped to 8.4 points per game.

Mosley hopes to resume her role as a starter in the Deacon backcourt this season alongside senior Heidi Coleman.

Coach Curtis said of Mosley, "Alisha has experience both at the point and the two-guard positions, so she and Heidi will be interchangeable. She brings experience and confidence to the backcourt."

McMillian is returning for her fourth season as a Demon Deacon. However, after missing the 1995 season following shoulder surgery, McMillian is a redshirt junior. She played in all 28 games for the Deacs last season, six of which she started. For the season, she averaged 3.3 points and 3.9 boards per game but figures to see considerably more action this season as a consistent member of the starting lineup.

"Emon runs the floor extremely well for a player her size," Curtis said. "She has strength and can score either down low or from fifteen feet out."

This season, Emon will not be the only McMillian wearing the gold and black uniforms of Deacon basketball. Her brother, freshman Aron McMillian, was recruited by Head Coach Dave Odom to play for the men's team.

Mosley is very anxious to get this season underway and hopes to learn from last season's mistakes.

"The most important thing is to work hard together and play our hardest every night out," Mosley said. "We're going to surprise everyone."

*Sports Editor Scott Payne contributed to this article.*

# Deacs will be just fine this season

By Scott Payne  
Sports Editor

Yes, Tim Duncan and his 21 points and 15 rebounds per game are now in San Antonio. Yes, only two returning starters are returning from last season's squad, which finished with a 24-7 record. Yes, the only true post player left, sophomore Loren Woods, is surrounded by guards and 6 - 5

small forwards. And yes, the Deacons have six true freshmen on their roster.

So what. I prefer to see the glass that is the '97-'98 basketball season as being half full rather than half empty. All the supposed experts are not giving the Deacs, led by Head Coach Dave Odom, a snowball's chance in the talent-rich Atlantic Coast Conference. The illustrious *Sports Illustrated* magazine picked Maryland and N.C. State to make the field of 64 for the NCAA Championship next March, but not the Deacons.

So what. Preseason polls and who thinks who will go where five months from now are completely meaningless. Right now the Deacons have as good a chance as North Carolina or Duke, who are both ranked in the top ten nationally, at winning the national championship.

Last season the Deacons were loaded with depth, experience and talent, but it could only get them to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Last season everyone had high expectations of the Deacons because of Duncan, expectations that the team was not able to live up to. The only way the Deacs could have fulfilled what was expected of them was to go undefeated and to win the national championship.

The Deacons opened this season with impressive wins over two cream-puff exhibition teams, and it was very obvious that the '97 squad is indeed different from last year's team.

In their first game the Deacs scored 105 points, as they got up and down the floor, fast breaking, shooting three pointers, and utilizing a half-court trap on defense. Last season the Deacs were very methodical in the way they played games, often taking two games to score 100 points.

With Duncan in the pivot last season, everybody knew that he was going to get his points, no matter what the other team did to try and stop him. At times this hurt the Deacs as much as it helped them.

The other players on the team often got caught up in the same notion. At times it seemed that the rest of the team would merely stand around and watch Timmy score point after point.

This season with Duncan now terrorizing the NBA, other players have to step up. This responsibility falls onto the capable shoulders of seniors Tony Rutland, Jerry Braswell and Stephen Goolsby.

This should be an easy task for them. Throughout their collegiate careers they have all shown flashes of brilliance. If they are able to put solid performances together night after night, the Deacons will quickly gain the respect they currently lack.

No one expects the Deacons to make any noise this season. They assume with Duncan gone the Deacs are "rebuilding." Only time will tell, but I'd keep the month of March open on my calendar.

# Young team needs Goolsby's leadership

By Sean Blue  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

Steven Goolsby, a guard who plays some small forward, is one of only three seniors returning from last year's Demon Deacon basketball team.

The 6-4 senior from Marietta, Ga., is a three-year letterman and one of the most accurate shooters on the team. Goolsby was impressive in his first two years as a Demon Deacon shooting 44.1 percent and 45 percent from the field those years. More impressive, however, were his three-point percentages of 45.5 percent and 45.8 percent.

Prior to the beginning of last season, Goolsby underwent arthroscopic surgery on his left knee to repair a torn lateral meniscus. This caused his accuracy to decline and led to a mediocre junior season for the talented player.

He shot a mere 33 percent from the field and 34.1 percent from three-point range.

"My knee feels like 100 percent now," Goolsby said. "Last year, it really slowed me down a lot. I really didn't come back all the way from the surgery. I came back a couple weeks early and it just affected me the whole year."

Besides looking to regain his shooting accuracy, Goolsby also has to take on the role of a team leader. "We have so many freshmen this year, they look to Tony (Rutland), Jerry (Braswell) and me to be the leaders on the squad and point them in the right direction," Goolsby said.

"With so many young players, some of them are going to see some minutes. So, I have to be a positive leader to keep the chemistry of the team going. We definitely need that chemistry and everybody helping out in the leadership role. Last year we didn't have that and it is key to our game. This year we definitely need to have that," Goolsby said.

The graduation of last year's seniors left the Deacons with no experience in the front court.

"It puts a lot of pressure on us," Goolsby said. "With a great player like Timmy (Duncan) gone, it just makes



Carlton Ward/Old Gold and Black

**Senior Steven Goolsby flies to the hoop for an uncontested layup. Rising off the floor like this is clear evidence that Goolsby has recovered from a knee injury that plagued him last season.**

it even more important for everybody else to step up their game and contribute something."

With the loss of three starters and the abundance of freshmen on the team this year, the Deacons are not ranked in the top 25 in any national poll.

"This just gives us incentive to go out and do well and show everybody that we are one of the top teams in the nation," Goolsby said.

"We just have to go out and work that much harder to

prove that. Basically were just trying to work hard and gel together as a team," Goolsby said.

Goolsby is third on the team in games played and career points with 81 games and 338 points.

Even with his decline last year, Goolsby remains first in career three-point percentage (40.0 percent) and third in career field goal percentage (39.6 percent) on the team.

"I definitely have to come in and help with the scoring and be a leader on the floor," Goolsby said.

# Woods enters his second year with some large shoes to fill

By Zach Everson  
Senior Reporter

It must be strange to be 7-1 and still be in somebody else's shadow, but that was the case for sophomore center Loren Woods last year, and, to a lesser extent, it will be the case this year as well.

With you-know-who off in the NBA, Woods is the new and only big man down low for the Deacs. And while no one expects him to erase any memories of last year's starting center, there are high expectations for the former McDonald's All-American.

Woods, however, is realistic about his role on the team. "I'm just going to have to play the way I know how to play and just actually play within the team. If I play within the team then I won't even think about all the other outside things," he said.

Despite the Deacons' second-round loss to Stanford in last year's NCAA tournament, Woods has put his first college season, a year in which he made the ACC all-rookie team, in perspective.

"I think that was probably the best experience I probably could've had—being ranked on a national level all season. I think that losing in the tournament, it kind of gave us like a red light. We know now that this

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Loren Woods  
Sophomore Center

year, just because we're ranked high, or low, we can't give up and we're going to have to fight the whole way," he said.

Now that Woods is four inches taller than his nearest teammate, he realizes that he is going to have to improve on his 6.5 rebounds per game as a starter from last year. "The biggest difference is going to be the rebounding. Niki (Arinze)'s not going to get nearly as many rebounds as Tim (Duncan) got. I'm going to have to support what I did last year and Tim's rebounds."

Woods, however, is less concerned on the offensive side of the ball. Last season he averaged 8.2 points per game as a starter. "We've got so many different lineups that we can pretty much do anything we want on the offensive end. That's one of our strengths," he said.

As the only established big man on the team, Woods will also have to shoulder

more playing time that he did last year, when he started only 11 games. Woods, however, is not concerned about playing more minutes.

"I'm just going to have to play. I'm not going to get much more conditioned now until the end of the season. I'm just going to have to use the endurance that I have and just try to play at the level that I want to play for the whole game. I'm sure that in these early games, before we get to the ACC, I'll probably have more and more minutes every game just to prepare for the ACC," he said.

According to Woods, the biggest difference in his game since this time last year is his confidence.

"I've got more confidence than I had last year, and I guess that's a big key this year. My confidence level has gone up, I'd say about 50 percent," he said.

To prepare for this season, Woods hit the weight room and the courts, although if he added any new moves to his repertoire, he's not telling. "I'm just trying to get stronger and sharpen up all the moves I have now," he said.

While Woods does not have any specific expectations for the team, he hopes the team will play to the best of its ability.

"I know we'll go far," he said.



Carlton Ward/Old Gold and Black

**Sophomore center Loren Woods, who stands 7-1, celebrates after a dunk that ignited the somber Joel Coliseum crowd against Florida State last season.**