

Chief of the 'Noles: Arrington to push FSU

Head Coach Steve Robinson adds trio of prep stars to a team captained by a fifth-year senior

By Alex Myers
Old Gold and Black Reporter

It's been over eight years since Florida State's men's basketball team had its second most successful year in school history, with its trip to the Elite Eight back in 1993. Since then, the school has become almost exclusively synonymous with the words "college football." The football 'Noles have won two national championships in that span (1993 and 1999) and have finished no worse than fifth in the AP poll.

With its football team having a subpar season for their standards, the school is looking for its basketball team to return to its prominence of the early '90s.

Though the team is coming off what appears to be a disappointing season in which they had an overall record of 9-21, and only a 4-12 record in conference, there were some positive signs. First off, the team played the 19th-toughest schedule, according to the Jeff Sagarin rankings.

This schedule included playing seven games against teams ranked in the top 10. This ranking was helped a lot by the fact that Sagarin ranked the ACC as the toughest conference in the nation. Although only Clemson finished with a worse record in the ACC, the team fully understands that the ACC is no average conference and that even as little as four wins can be looked at in a favorable light.

The team and its coaches are especially proud of how the Seminoles finished the season. Although the team



Courtesy of Florida State Media Relations

Senior guard Delvon Arrington led the Seminoles with 11.5 points, 6.3 assists and 1.9 steals per game.

finished up with only a 4-12 record in conference, they were far more competitive during the end of the season by going 3-3 over their last six conference games.

One of these victories came against eventual Final Four participant Maryland. In fact, the Seminoles defeated two NCAA Tournament teams and lost by close margins to two others during the final month of the season. They closed on a high note by winning two of their last three games.

As for the roster, the Seminoles lost only one senior off last year's squad, shooting guard Adrian Crawford. All four other starters are returning, causing the team to change from a very young and inexperienced team last year to a team with a lot of experience this year.

"I think it gives our team a lot of experience, a lot more confidence that I'm back there with the ball, and with our other experienced players, like Antwain Dixon and Monte Cummings," said senior point guard Delvon Arrington.

"I think we were young in past years, but now we're more experienced and I think we're going to be more confident in ourselves and the younger players are going to be more confident in us because we've been through it."

Arrington, is coming off a great season individually. The 5-foot-11 point guard led the team in points per game (11.5), assists per game (6.3), steals per game (1.9), and minutes per game (32.7). He also finished fourth on the team in rebounding with 4.1 per game. Although he is the focal point of the team's offense, the coaches look to the senior to be the leader of the team not just in statistical categories.

"Arrington is the quarterback and the guy that needs to go out and run the show. I don't worry about what he's going to do out on the court because we've seen that," said fifth-year Head Coach Steve Robinson. "I think all the coaches feel confident that there's an experienced guy back there running the team and trying to get people in the right spot."

Arrington will be joined in the backcourt by 6-foot-4 senior guard Monte Cummings. Cummings joined the Seminoles last year after transferring from Southeastern Community College in Burlington, Iowa. In his first season as a Seminole, Cummings was the team's sparkplug off the bench averaging 10.7 points per game in the role as sixth man.

The rest of the starting lineup will consist of three returning starters: 6-foot-7 sophomore forward Michael Joiner (9.3 ppg, 6.0 rpg), 6-foot-5 senior forward Antwain Dixon (8.7 ppg, 5.8 rpg), and 6-foot-10 junior center Nigel Dixon (6.7 ppg, 5.0 rpg).

Nigel Dixon has been getting a lot of attention for his work ethic in the off-season in shedding some excess weight. "Nigel has probably lost close to 100 pounds since he first got on campus," said Robinson. "He's



Courtesy of Florida State Media Relations

Senior forward Antwain Dixon will play a leadership role in Florida State's paint. The 6-foot-5 Dixon, who averaged 8.7 points and 5.8 rebounds per game, will be joined by another Dixon, Nigel, who averaged 6.7 points and 5.0 rebounds.

really worked hard during the offseason to try and make himself a better basketball player, to get himself in the best condition that he could." The coaching staff is hoping that a slimmed down Dixon paired with his height will give the Seminoles a more dominating presence in the middle.

The Seminoles will also usher in a talented class of freshman including three first-team All-State selections; forwards Adam Waleskowski (Kettering, Ohio) and Anthony Richardson (Raleigh), and guard Adrian McPherson (Bradenton, Florida). Richardson was also a McDonald's All-American, and McPherson was named Mr. Basketball for the state of Florida. "They're going to get an opportunity to play," said Robinson referring to the freshmen.

Though the team is very excited about the talented freshman class, they know that their strength lies in their experience and their balance.

"I think we have more athletes than we've had in the past," said Robinson. "One of the biggest things that I think our team has shown through their early practices is that we're pretty balanced in our competition." Indeed, Florida State is building off its strong finish last year and promises to be more competitive throughout the 2001-2002 season.

In the words of Robinson, "Every game we play is going to be a fight."

Florida State Seminoles



Head Coach: Steve Robinson

Career Record: 98-87

Record at FSU: 52-69

2000-01 Record: 9-21

2000-01 ACC Finish: 4-12, Eighth

Returning Starters: 4

2001-2002 Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Cl.	No.	Name	Pos.	Cl.
1	Michael Joiner	F	So.	20	Andrew Wilson	G/F	So.
3	J.D. Bracy	G	So.	23	Marcell Haywood	G	Jr.
4	Antwain Dixon	F	Sr.	30	Monte Cummings	G	Sr.
5	Adrian McPherson	G	Fr.	33	Mike Mathews	F/C	So.
10	Delvon Arrington	G	Sr.	34	Nigel Dixon	C	Jr.
12	Ryan Lowery	G	So.	50	David Anderson	C	Sr.
15	Trevor Harvey	C	Jr.	51	Adam Waleskowski	F	Fr.
				54	Anthony Richardson	F	Fr.