

Dawson looking to run over all opponents

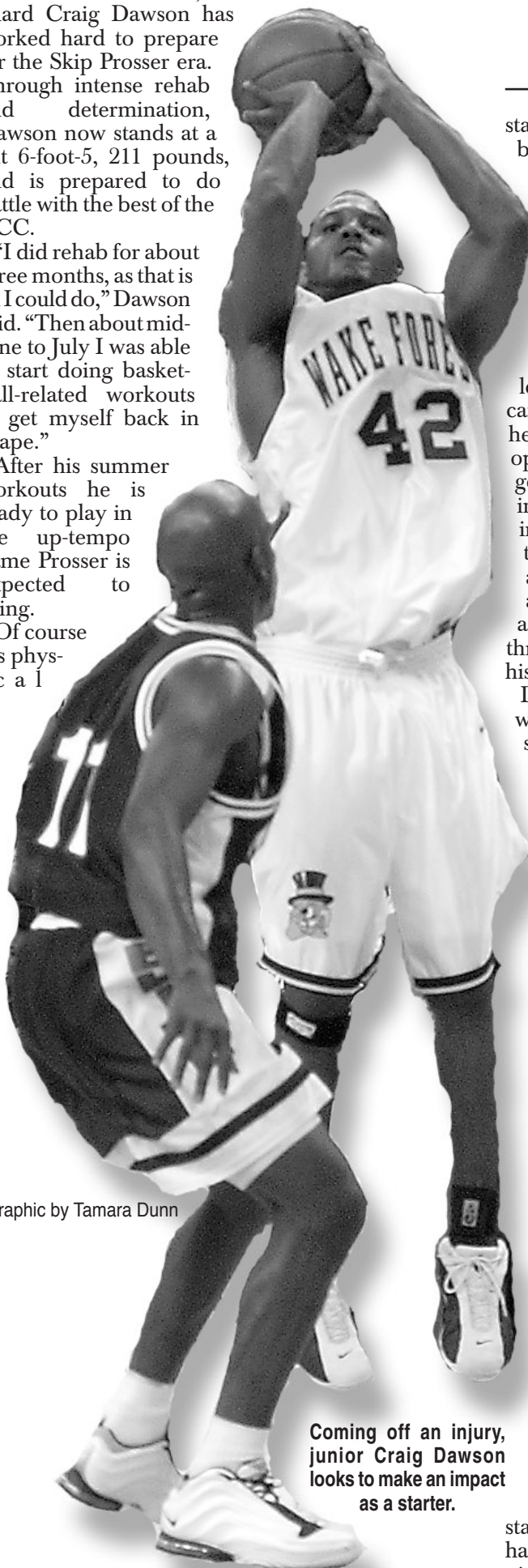
Summer of rehab, installation of new up-tempo style have senior relishing year of opportunity

By Jim Gleitman
Old Gold and Black Reporter

He's baaack...
Knocked out of the Deacs' first-round ACC tournament game against Maryland last year with a dislocated shoulder, senior guard Craig Dawson has worked hard to prepare for the Skip Prosser era. Through intense rehab and determination, Dawson now stands at a cut 6-foot-5, 211 pounds, and is prepared to do battle with the best of the ACC.

"I did rehab for about three months, as that is all I could do," Dawson said. "Then about mid-June to July I was able to start doing basketball-related workouts to get myself back in shape."

After his summer workouts he is ready to play in the up-tempo game Prosser is expected to bring. Of course his physical



Coming off an injury, junior Craig Dawson looks to make an impact as a starter.

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Craig Dawson
Junior

stature is not the only change surrounding the Deacs' basketball program. With the loss of Rafael Vidaurreta and Josh Shoemaker, the Deacs are looking at a smaller lineup, which will provide a faster full-court offense.

"I'm loving it so far," Dawson said. "It's not an easy transition (going from) playing a half-court style of basketball to playing all over the court, but I think it's a challenge we are all looking forward to."

As one of five Demon Deacon seniors, Dawson's leadership will be important in the team's 2001-02 campaign. In addition to these new responsibilities, he will also see more minutes and definitely more opportunities to score, something he has been pretty good at in the past. Last season he had 20 points, including a trio of three-pointers, in the Deacs' thrashing of Kansas. He poured in 23 points, sinking four three-pointers, against a tough Temple team and had a career-high 29 points, going 14-of-26 from the field, against North Carolina. Over his past three years as a Deac he has set up shop behind the arc, sinking 155 three-pointers, good enough for fourth best in school history.

Dawson showed no signs of deviating from his weapon of choice in this year's Black & Gold intra-squad scrimmage, which he turned into his own highlight reel, dropping 43 points in the 30-minute game. He was 16-of-21 from the field, 11-of-14 from behind the arc and was good on his first 11 attempts, including nine consecutive three-pointers. A performance like this does not occur on a consistent basis, but it's obvious Dawson has the capability to put up a lot of points.

"You can't expect to have a night like that every night," Dawson said. "I just want to try and stay consistent and do whatever the coach and my teammates want me to do or know that I am capable of doing."

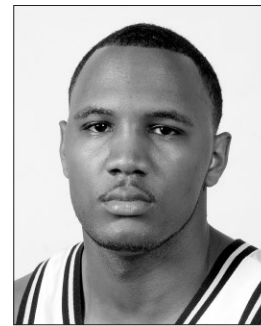
Getting the ball in the hands of Dawson and the team's other marksmen, and doing so within the realm of Prosser's new-look offense, will get the Deacs running and Dawson more involved in the game.

"The faster I get down on transition the more shots I get," Dawson said. "It will be hard for defenses to play with us if we can run like we have been able to run so far in practice. You get a lot of open looks like that and it's very hard to stop, so hopefully we can get open in the games as well."

Obviously there are team goals heading into the regular season tip-off, but Dawson has personal goals as well. One aspect he wants to improve on is his contribution to the team. Last season Dawson only started eight of the 29 games he played in and this is a stat he hopes changes.

"I definitely want to play a bigger role than I did last year," he said. "I want to play a more consistent role, not just trying to come off the bench - maybe starting every game, being more consistent and not having to adjust to different situations every night stepping onto the basketball court."

Craig Dawson



Hometown:
Kinston,
North Carolina
Year: Senior
Height: 6'5"
Weight: 211 lbs.
Position: Guard

2000-01 PPG: 12.5

Going into this season it is understood the Prosser era will provide a team with greater intensity and pressure on their opponents. The five seniors on the team enable an experienced group to step on the court each game. With an up-tempo and full-court style that will feature Dawson's forte, there is no question this team could be exciting to watch. Maybe it's the gummy bears he eats out of superstition before each game, but this man can down right play.

So you think Dawson is excited about the Prosser era and the possibilities for him this up coming season? He's baaack.



Photots by Chris Carlstrom/Old Gold and Black
Junior Craig Dawson looks for the open man against Nike Elite Nov. 2.