

Jackson State's Lindsey Hunter proves to be A Scoring Machine

▲ Hunter plays like a pro and will be highly recruited by the NBA

Lindsey Hunter made a smooth transition from a high school passer and dribbler into a college scoring machine.

As a senior at Murrah High in Jackson Hunter only scored 225 points in 36 games for a 6.3 average as a point guard.

Now scoring is second natural to the 6-foot-2 senior. Hunter finished his career at JSU as the school's second all-time leading scorer behind former NBA standout Eugene Short with 2,226 points during a three-year career at JSU.

Hunter was fifth in the nation with a 26.7 average, best in the Southwestern Athletic Conference.

He set his school's single-season scoring record with 907 points this past season.

During his career, Hunter scored 2,390 points, including his freshman season at Alcorn State. Hunter scored 40 or more points four times during his career.

It wasn't that Hunter couldn't score, but shots were hard to come by in high school. Hunter played in the same backcourt as James Robinson - now a first-time all-Southeastern Conference selection.

Hunter proved he could score when he had a career-high 20 points in the Mississippi state tournament semifinals. Murrah rallied from a 19-point, second quarter deficit and won 73-66 after Robinson had fouled out. "I always felt like I could score,"

Hunter said. "It is a long way from my high school days. I didn't really keep track of my improvement. I just worked hard everyday. That is the main thing my father tried to instill in me mentally. If you work hard you

Hawaii.

He finished with 48 points and was 11 of 26 from 3-point range against what many experts consider the best backcourt in college basket-

Adonis Korden, who along with Rex Walters form the country's best 1-2 guard tandem. "Anthony Peeler was No. 1. Now he's No. 2."

JSU players realize that Hunter was a big reason the team finished 25-9 and made it to the second round of the National Invitation Tournament.

"To us he was our inspiration," said forward George Wright. "Lindsey was a big part of our team. We know "It was a performance I don't think I ever seen before," Illinois coach Lou Henson said. "He had to create and get his own shots."

Becoming a prolific scorer wasn't easy for Hunter, who credits his father, Lindsey Sr., with instilling in him "a good work ethic."

The elder Hunter, who played college basketball at Bishop College, would tie his son's right hand behind his back and make him dribble with his left hand on a rocky pavement. To improve Hunter's speed, Lindsey Sr., would strap a log to his son's waist and make him pull it.

"He did some weird things," the younger Hunter said. "I thought I was good, but he proved to me that I wasn't. He made me a complete player. I was so slow. Now people think I'm lightning quick. Pulling that log helped my quickness. I used to think he was crazy."

—By Derrick Machone

"Lindsey is no secret to us. He plays a pro style offense."

—Pro Scout Marty Blake

will get something out of it."

And Hunter is certainly reaping the benefits of his hard work.

He was named SWAC Player of the Year and is projected as a potential NBA draft pick.

During the season, several NBA scouts made their way to Jackson to see Hunter perform. He will participate in the Desert Classic April 20-24.

"Lindsey is no secret to us," NBA director of scouting Marty Blake said. "He plays in a pro style offense at Jackson State. In the SWAC he didn't have to worry about zone defenses."

Hunter, almost single-handedly, help JSU upset Kansas in the opening round of the Rainbow Classic in

ball. Even Kansas's best defensive player Darrin Hancock, five inches taller than Hunter, couldn't slow him down.

"I thought we played pretty good defense, it wasn't like he had open 3-pointers," Kansas coach Roy Williams said. "We considered fouling him . . . putting him on the line for two instead of letting him shoot a 3. It's one of the greatest shooting performances I've ever seen."

The 48 points were a career-high and the most ever scored against Kansas. The old record was 43 set last season by former Missouri and current Los Angeles Lakers guard Anthony Peeler.

"Since I've been at Kansas no player has had a game like that against us," said Kansas senior guard

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