

Bobcats re-sign Okafor

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Charlotte Bobcats General Manager Rod Higgins announced last week that the team has re-signed restricted free agent forward/center Emeka Okafor to a multi-year deal. Per team policy, terms of the deal were not disclosed.

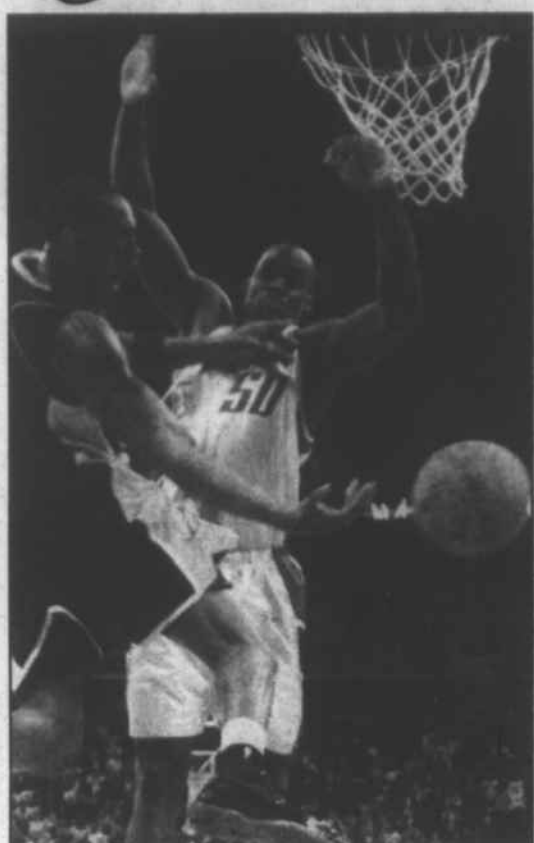
"It was important for us to get a deal done," Higgins said. "Securing Emeka demonstrates that Bob Johnson and the rest of our ownership group are committed to building a winning franchise in Charlotte. Any time you have a player who consistently ranks among the NBA's best in rebounding and shot blocking, you want to keep a guy like that around."

The second overall pick in the 2004 NBA Draft, Okafor earned 2004-05 NBA Rookie of the Year honors, becoming just the third player from an expansion team to win the award. The 6-10 Okafor has played in 248 games over four seasons with the Bobcats, averaging 14.3 points, 10.8 rebounds and 2.0 blocked shots.

"This is a great opportunity for me to continue my NBA career with the franchise that selected me back in 2004," Okafor said. "The Bobcats and the entire Charlotte community embraced me from day one, and it's exciting to enter this season with a Hall of Fame coach and teammates who are committed to winning."

Okafor is one of only four NBA players to average a double-double in each of the last four seasons, along with Tim Duncan, Dwight Howard and Steve Nash. He is the Bobcats all-time leader in rebounds, blocked shots and double-doubles, and ranks second in scoring, field goal percentage and minutes played. Okafor will enter the 2008-09 season with active-franchise-record streaks of 93 consecutive games played and 92 consecutive games started.

Okafor averaged 13.8 points, 10.7 rebounds and 1.7 blocked shots during the 2007-08 season, while shooting a career-high .535 from the field and playing all 82 games for the first time in his career. Okafor ranked sixth in the NBA in rebounding, tied for 10th in both blocked shots and double-doubles and



The Bobcats were able to re-sign Emeka Okafor, the club's first draft pick.

12th in field goal percentage. He was one of 13 players in the NBA to average a double-double for the season.

After becoming the first draft pick in Bobcats history, Okafor averaged 15.1 points and 10.9 rebounds in 2004-05, leading all rookies in both categories. One of 11 NBA players to average a double-double for the season, he ranked third in the league in offensive rebounds, fourth in rebounds and double-doubles and 14th in blocks. Okafor was a three-time winner of the Eastern Conference Rookie of the Month award en route to Rookie of the Year honors.

Hill

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Keep leaving yourself those 15 to 20 yard chip shots.

If you're better at 90 to 120 yards, then that's where you should try to leave your approach shot to the green. In life, why would you take on a job that you know you're incapable of doing? You're just setting yourself up to be fired. Be realistic and choose something that you can excel at. Realize too that patience, practice and commitment can improve your chances in both situations.

Golf is a game that requires absolute positive thoughts. If you have a six-inch putt but think that you can't make it, you probably won't. And, negativity comes in a lot of obscure ways. For instance, a friend of mine says, "I don't want to miss this putt on the right side, so, I can't putt the ball too far right." Look at how negative that thought is. Needless to say, he won't miss it on the right side but he probably will miss on the left side. Either way, he's likely to miss the putt.

I played with a guy at Tanglewood the final day of the Forsyth and he was a ball of negativity. I tried to console him by telling him that no matter what he does, he shouldn't get too upset about it because he doesn't know what the other guys in his flight are doing. You can't control what anybody else does but you should be able to control what you do. Being positive about every thought gives you the best chance to realize positive results. You can't get too high when you make an eagle or birdie and you can't get too low when you make a double or triple bogey. A lot like life. Don't get too down on yourself when you make a mistake. Ask for forgiveness and move on. Life like golf is a series of peaks and valleys. How well you live your life or play golf depends on how well you handle those peaks and particularly those valleys. Both are unavoidable occurrences. You have to maintain a flat line emotional pattern.

Even though I think I could have scored a lot better I still enjoyed the fellowship and the challenge of the competition. Every time you compete you should learn something about yourself that you can improve on. I saw people

throwing clubs in the lake at Tanglewood, banging clubs on their bags at the Lake and cursing (not me though). Those types of behaviors won't help your score at all.

They don't work well when you're trying to make it in life either.

The Forsyth tournament committee is to be congratulated for their great work in putting on this event for the 60th straight year. I think one of those guys on the committee, John, has been there since day one. He doesn't look a day older than 90. God bless you.

Ernie Pitt is the publisher of The Chronicle and the head of the N.C. Association of Black Publishers. Reach him at erpitt@wschronicle.com.

Parkland's Pollack getting national attention

"Preciate that Mr. Pitt. That's my man. I need to mention Parkland's rising senior girls basketball standout

J'Mia Pollack.

She was invited to play in the Summertime Invitational Tournament last week in Las Vegas. The July 25-27 event was hosted and directed by longtime boys' event coordinator Joe Keller of Phenom Basketball Inc.

The event was tabbed as the first-ever elite girls camp for Phenom 150. The camp had talented players from California to South Dakota. Pollack was chosen to play in the camp's all-star game, which was made up of 40 of the camp's 160 players.

Pollack, who made the starting lineup for the Red squad really impressed a lot of the scouts and coordinators. They noted that she was a slick 6-1 left-hander with a smooth style of play. Shout out to Pollack for doing her thing. There's no doubt she's well on her way to some big things. Check her out this year.

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Makaila Roberts stretches ahead of the pack during a hurdle race.

Tri-City

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Additionally, Roberts finished fifth in the Sub-Midget girls 80 meter hurdles and eighth in the Sub-Midget girls high jump.

Ashlei Clodfelter, a rising senior at North Davidson high school captured Tri-City's second gold medal by out-throwing the competition in the Young Women's (17-18 year old) javelin competition. Clodfelter had temporarily been bumped into second place during the competition before unleashing a throw of 118'8". Despite being one of the shorter competitors, Clodfelter combined her sprinting speed, strength and high level of skill to beat the competition. One of her competitors commented as they were walking to the awards ceremony: "Did that little girl just beat all of us?" According to the final scores, Clodfelter did just that.

Charles Lindsay (Parkland, '07) finished second in the Young Men's 400m hurdles. After having only the fifth fastest time going into the finals, Lindsay upset the field by employing an attacking style hurdling technique to earn a silver medal.

Tri-City's youth boys (13-14 year old) earned a trip to the podium by placing sixth in the 4x800 meter relay. The team of Perry Cabean, Steve Stowe, Emmanuel Patton and Nick Colebaugh ran a nice time of 9:01. Stowe ran a personal best split and passed the baton to Colebaugh, who kept the sixth place position as five teams finished under 9:00.



Here, Ashlei Clodfelter performs the long jump event.

"This was one of the fastest fields ever in AAU", said Cabean. "Last year, 9:01 might have won it."

Ila Mumford showed the rest of the nation that she is a force to be reckoned with. Mumford finished seventh in the Sub-Midget girls long jump with a leap of 13'10". Mumford, who is coached by North Forsyth's Alan Rice and mom Michelle Mumford, jumped to her personal best during this competition.

The talented Bryce Sherman finished seventh in

the Young Men's 100m with a time of 10.87 and concluded his outstanding career as a Tri-City athlete. Also, Denard "Hurricane" Williams, Jr. finished seventh in the Sub-Bantam boys (9 year old) high jump by clearing the bar at 3'6". The victory gave the young and talented athlete his first All-American honor.

Note: Select details from the meet and quotes were provided by Tri City Relays coach Perry Cabean.

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