

C. JEMAL HORTON

Veteran Knight is best bet for Bobcats' success

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After signing a new three-year contract with the Bobcats, Knight doesn't expect things to change for him this season - as a leader nor as a statistical contributor.

"I'm still going to play the way I play," Knight said. "The only thing that might change is: I'll probably do more helping off the court, too. I'm not going to just worry about myself and going my own way. I'll help the young guys out as much as possible. But I'll also try to get us going when we need that little push."

Understandably, Felton wants that role, too. He doesn't

care if he's a rookie, and that mentality is part of what will make him a strong player in the NBA one day, perhaps soon.

Felton (12.3 points) was second in scoring during the Bobcats' preseason, compared with Knight's 10.6. But Knight averaged 6.3 assists to Felton's 4.3 and 1.57 steals to Felton's 0.86. But Knight doesn't want to portray a one-on-one competition between Felton and himself.

"Everybody on this team is going to contribute," he said. "The biggest thing isn't starting; it's about being productive when you're on the court."

In fact, Knight appears to

be a big Felton fan.

"I help him out as much as possible," Knight said. "When we're out there playing, if I see something he's doing that I can help with, I'm going to let him know. But he's a great point guard already. There's just some things he'll fine-tune for this (NBA) game, and he'll get better at them. But he came in with a lot of the tools necessary to be good. And he'll be good."

If things go as they should, though, Felton will be a good player who'll be ready to be great.

"Whenever it is Knight turns the team over to him."

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N.C. Central savors West title

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"This has been a special group of guys," head coach Rod Broadway said. "We have good players and they're really good people. They have done everything we've asked them to do, they've worked their butts off. You don't win nine games unless you have a special group of people and special chemistry, and these guys have been unbelievable."

The nine wins ties the 1988 team (9-2-1) for most in school history, but there's more to be done. The '88 team beat rival Winston-Salem State in the first round of the playoffs, and this year's team wants to go further.

"This season, there's only one thing to say - unfinished business," said tailback Greg Pruitt Jr., who ran for 166 yards in the title-

clinching 34-14 win over Johnson C. Smith. "A lot of guys came back from last year, and they were hurt that we were 8-2 and didn't make the playoffs or the championship and we kind of kept that in our heads and never forgot it."

The Eagles didn't. From the season-opening win over Division I-AA N.C. A&T to the Smith romp, Central was the CIAA's most consistent team. Yet it took consecutive losses by St. Augustine's to put the Eagles atop the West. All Central wanted was a chance to prove it can compete in the national tournament.

"If we get the opportunity, we're going to make the best of it," Pruitt said. "We're going to show we should've been in there last year, too."

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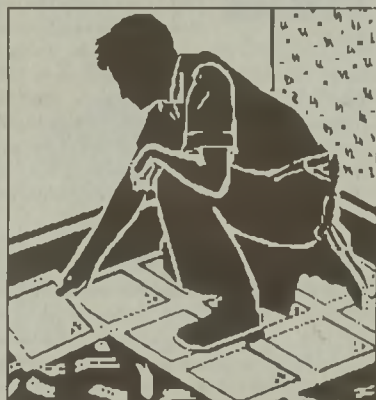
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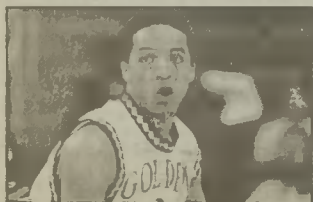
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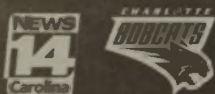
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