



A stronger Pete Chilcutt is looking to be a force

Chilcutt beefs up front line

By NEIL AMATO

Staff Writer

Going into last season, everyone knew Pete Chilcutt's role as a backup in Dean Smith's rotation would expand. Chilcutt got extra minutes when J.R. Reid was injured and performed well. Now, with the early departure of Reid, the 6-foot-10 junior will step to the forefront of the frontcourt in this, his fourth season in the Tar Heel program.

Chilcutt, seniors Kevin Madden and Scott Williams, junior Rick Fox and freshmen George Lynch and Matt Wenstrom make up a frontcourt that may be one of the deepest and most talented in the country.

With all the good company, Chilcutt, who averaged 6.9 points and 5.4 boards per game in '88-'89, knows what part he plays with the loss of Reid.

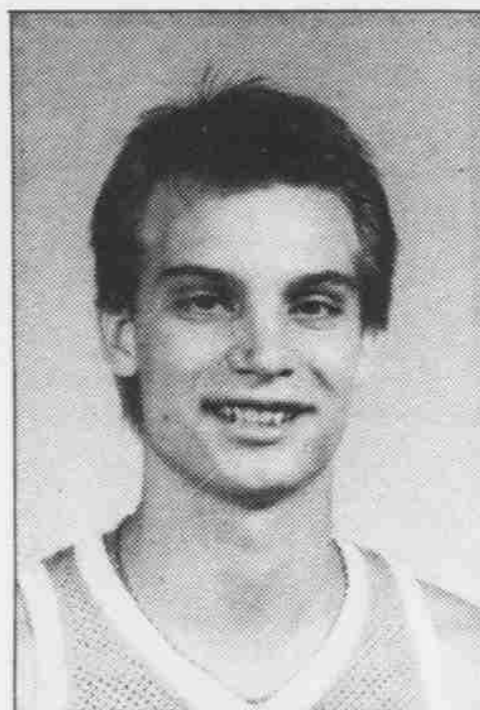
"Basically, my minutes will increase and so will my role as a rebounder," the Eutaw, Ala., native said.

Going to the boards is something Chilcutt will be counted on to do if the Tar Heels want to continue their tradition of excellence. Chilcutt hopes his off-season work in the weight room and in pickup games will help. He also claims he's sprouted an inch from last year's 6-9 measurement.

"During the summer, I worked on my entire game," Chilcutt said. "I also tried to get a little stronger. In doing that, I think I'll be a much better player."

Just by looking at him, one can tell he's definitely bulked up since last year. In fact, Smith, who joked that Williams looked like he was on steroids, noted that Chilcutt was the Tar Heels' strongest player.

Williams lifted with Chilcutt over the summer and the pair have both



Pete Chilcutt

improved their physiques. The two also played a lot of summer hoops.

Chilcutt put in most of his time over the summer, however, traveling to Greece with an ACC all-star team which included Madden and players from other ACC squads. He surprised quite a few people on the trip, shooting 62 percent from the field and averaging 17.6 points and 9.4 rebounds per game, second only to Clemson's Dale Davis in both categories.

"Pete Chilcutt is the one that's going to surprise a lot of people this year," junior point guard King Rice said. "He's improved tremendously over the summer, and I think that showed when he went to Greece."

As the Williams-Reid combo worked last season, Chilcutt and Williams believe they can work well together also.

Williams, who came to Chapel Hill the same year Chilcutt did (Chilcutt was red-shirted), discussed the duo's similarities.

"We're both team-oriented players," Williams said. "We work well together, setting screens and getting each other open and on defense as well. We basically have to continue to do the same thing."

When Chilcutt did play, he often made things happen on the offensive boards. Many a time last year, he either tipped the ball and kept it alive or got his hands on it and put it back in. The forward gives several reasons for his affinity to the offensive glass.

"It's easier to rebound offensively, because it's more fun to go to the offensive boards and put the ball in," Chilcutt said. "And, a lot of times, people don't like to box out. You put the two together and it makes it enjoyable going to the offensive boards."

Chilcutt hopes to add another dimension to his offensive array — the three-point shot. "Hopefully, I'll get the green light," he said. "If I do get the chance, I hope I can make the most of it."

Although only a junior, Chilcutt is a four-year program man who knows the system and should assume a leadership role. "As Scott and Kevin will lead vocally, I think I'll lead by example," he said.

With Chilcutt's versatility, Smith hopes to play him in a variety of positions.

"The nice thing about Pete is I hope to use him inside and outside," Smith said. "On offense, he'll be a wing, and on defense, he'll be a four-man."

Hopefully, with his added dimensions, he'll also be an enforcer.

State

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In the ACC Tournament, N.C. State was stunned by Maryland in the first round. The Wolfpack went on to defeat South Carolina and Iowa in the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament before bowing out to mighty Georgetown in the regional semifinals.

The Pack will use some different tactics this season to try to surpass the success of last year's team. Instead of sticking to only one style, N.C. State players will let the other team set the tempo and take what the opponents give them.

Unlike last year, the Wolfpack is not fully certain as to which five players will always be starting. As the

year progresses and the inevitable changes are made in the lineup, the style may change also.

Matching the success of last year will be difficult, as N.C. State has a rough non-conference schedule along with the tough games in the ACC. The Pack has to face UNLV, Temple and DePaul and will meet St. John's in the ACC/Big East Challenge. In addition, State will play in the Tournament of Champions and the Pre-season NIT Tournament.

Those games, combined with playing in the ACC, which Corchiani said is the strongest it has ever been, make for one of the toughest schedules that N.C. State has ever had.

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