

1989 newcomers have tough act to follow

By MARK ANDERSON

Assistant Sports Editor

The best ever. That's what some observers are calling last year's list of college basketball newcomers. Headlined by superstars Alonzo Mourning and Chris Jackson, the class had unheard-of depth. That gives the "Diaper Dandies" (thank you, Dick Vitale) of this season a virtually impossible act to follow.

Here's a closer look:

1. Larry Johnson, UNLV, 6-7, forward — With the most impressive physique in all of basketball, Johnson (Odessa, Texas) totally dominated junior college hoops for the last two years. He hit for 28 points and 18 rebounds per game (down from more than 19 the year before) and led the United States to the World University Games gold medal over the summer. "He may be the best player we've ever recruited," UNLV coach Jerry Tarkanian said. What more do you want?

2. Carl Herrera, Houston, 6-9, forward — Believe it or not, some people think Herrera is better than Johnson. The best foreigner since Akeem Olajuwon averaged 28.2 points and 13.2 rebounds at Jacksonville (Texas) JC. The Guanave, Vene-

zuela, product began his career as a point guard, making him a complete player with three-point range, post-up moves and the ability to run the court like a sprinter. Scary.

3. Shaquille O'Neal, LSU, 7-1, center — O'Neal should follow teammate Chris Jackson as the nation's best freshman. He was named the MVP of the Dapper Dan Rounball Classic and the McDonald's All-America Game. Scouts came away talking about O'Neal, not the more-publicized Kenny Anderson.

4. Michael Tate, Georgetown, 6-6, forward — When Maryland fired Bob Wade, Terrapin recruit Tate headed for Georgetown, where he will be eligible immediately. Tate relied on a power game, but also hit the three consistently. Late-August arthroscopic knee surgery is his only question mark.

5. Allan Houston, Tennessee, 6-5, guard — After signing originally with Louisville, the best freshman big guard is now headed for Volunteer country. Something about his father being named head coach. He has big-time ability, size and is a typical coach's son; he understands the game.

6. Kenny Anderson, Georgia Tech, 6-1, guard — Anderson's stock

fell some after his mediocre all-star game performances, but don't be fooled. At Archbishop Malloy High School in Jamaica, N.Y., Anderson became New York State's all-time leading scorer and New York City's first four-year all-city player, topping even Lew Alcindor in both categories. But is he strong enough and can he handle the pressure?

7. Stanley Roberts, LSU, 7-0, center — That's right, Roberts will be teaming with O'Neal for Dale Brown in the low-post. After his career at Lower Richlands High School in Hopkins, S.C., Roberts was one of

last year's top prospects. He sat out 1988-89 because of Proposition 48. Often compared to Bob Lanier, Roberts spent the time off adding to his massive frame (he's more than 270 pounds now).

8. George Lynch, North Carolina, 6-8, forward — See page 22.

9. Deon Thomas, Illinois, 6-8, forward — Thomas was the top player in the talent-rich Chicago area, but hasn't received much national press because he did not attend summer camps. "This highly skilled, multi-dimensional athlete is another we oft times compare to Danny

Manning," said Bob Gibbons of *All-Star Sports*. Fundamentally sound in the post, Thomas has been forced to miss practice time due to an NCAA investigation of his recruiting.

10. Bobby Hurley, Duke, 6-0, guard — Hurley will have to contribute immediately for the Blue Devils. He is a true point guard in every sense. During the summer, he was the MVP of two major national tournaments and, at the McDonald's All-America game, he set a new assist record (10) and was co-MVP. He's quick and has excellent shooting technique.



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