

Top 20

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out Big Ten MVP Jay Edwards, who skipped town early for the pro circuit. Back in the saddle is sophomore forward Eric Anderson, last year's Freshman of the Year in the conference. Junior guard Lyndon Jones could blossom in Edwards' absence, but it will be the play of the freshmen that determines how far this team will go. Guards Pat Graham and Chris Reynolds join forward Lawrence Funderburke to give Knight the nation's best freshman troika.

9) North Carolina — See pg. 4.

10) UNLV — The Running Rebels are the consensus preseason pick for No. 1, and Jerry Tarkanian certainly has enough talent to play some interesting intrasquad games. The Shark lost only one player from last year's 29-8 team, and he came up with a heck of a replacement in 6-7, 252-pound man/monster Larry Johnson. Johnson was widely con-

sidered the top juco player in the nation a year ago. Senior forward Stacey Augmon (15.3 ppg, 7.4 rpg), a 6-7 bundle of energy, can fill it up and may be the nation's premier defensive player. Once again, the Rebs will have to get some outside shooting to stay alive in the postseason. That task falls into the sometimes-capable hands of Greg Anthony and Anderson Hunt.

11) Duke — See page 5.

12) Pittsburgh — If this team has just one major injury, the Panthers won't be able to keep up with their tough Big East competitors. But when healthy, Paul Evans' squad can play with anyone. Pitt returns all five starters from a year ago, including the exceptional guard tandem of Jason Mathews (16.5 ppg, 66 three-pointers) and Sean Miller. Brian Shorter (19.6 ppg, 9.6 rpg), Bobby Martin (12.2 ppg, 7.7 rpg) and Rod Brookin man the paint with 6-10

center Darren Morningstar, a transfer from Navy.

13) Louisville — Look for an incredibly quick, pressing lineup from the Cardinals, who will probably come after Metro Conference foes with a three-guard set. Watch LaBradford Smith, Jerome Harmon (really watch this guy) and Everick Sullivan set the tempo at a feverish pace. Senior center Felton Spencer, a 7-footer who was stuck behind Pervis Ellison for three years, is a post-up player who may have trouble keeping up with Denny Crum's frontcourt stallions.

14) Oklahoma — For the first time in years, Billy Tubbs' Sooners open the year without a proven star. But they may have found one in junior college transfer Smokey McCovery, whom many observers say is a better point guard than the departed Mookie Blaylock. McCovery is from Midland (Texas) Junior Col-

lege, the same point guard factory that produced Blaylock and former Sooner Ricky Grace. Junior guard Terrence Mullins should prove to be the perfect complement for the newcomer. Up front, Oklahoma has eight excellent athletes — all who fall in the 6-6 to 6-8 range.

15) Missouri — The Tigers have one of the most athletic big men in the country in 6-10 center Doug Smith, but he's going to need some help up front. Bangers Gary Leonard, Mike Sandbothe and Greg Church all completed their eligibility in last year's 29-8 season. A relaxing sight for Norm Stewart is his backcourt, where Lee Coward and Anthony Peeler should be able to make up for the loss of Byron Irvin to the NBA. The keys to the Tigers' season are the performance of senior forward Nathan Buntin and the development of freshmen big men Chris Heller and Daniel Lyton.

16) Wake Forest — See page 8.

17) N.C. State — See page 7.

18) St. John's — The NIT champion Redmen were 14-3 last year when playing non-conference foes, and they have more than enough returning players to be the fourth Big East team to crack the Top 20 in 1990. Louie Carnesecca's brand-new backcourt features Boo Harvey, back from an academic suspension, and slasher Chuck Sproling, who's returning from his stay in Prop 48 Land. Up front, the Redmen boast 6-10 senior forward Jayson Williams (19.5 ppg, 7.9 rpg), 6-8 sophomore Malik Sealy and an excellent post player in 6-11 sophomore center Robert Werdann.

19) Arkansas — The Razorbacks were the class of the Southwest Conference a year ago, when four freshman graced the starting lineup. It's May Day in the Arkansas backcourt, with Lee Mayberry (12.9 ppg, 4.2 rpg) and Todd Day (13.3 ppg) returning with a year of experience under their belts. Nolan Richardson may also have the best center that nobody has ever heard of in 6-9 senior Mario Credit.

20) Minnesota — If the Golden Gophers can chalk up a few W's outside of the friendly confines of Williams Arena, they will really turn some heads. Clem Haskins has one of the nation's best two-way players in senior forward Willie Burton (18.6 ppg, 7.5 rpg), who can go inside and out with success. Fellow seniors Richard Coffey, Melvin Newbern (14.6 ppg, 5 rpg) and Jim Shikenjanski have watched the Gophers go from 9-19 to 10-18 to 19-12 in the past three years, and they think it's time to take one more step forward.

Others to watch: Alabama, Ball State, Clemson, Florida, Georgia, Houston, Kansas, Notre Dame, Temple, Texas

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