

Tech's Cremins in a crunch over lethal losses

By DAVID J. KUPSTAS
Staff Writer

When Georgia Tech head coach Bobby Cremins recruited point guard Kenny Anderson two years ago, he looked at his prospective team for the 1990-91 campaign and thought it would be a special year for Georgia Tech basketball.

As it turned out, last season was the special year for the Ramblin' Wreck. Led by Lethal Weapon 3 — Dennis Scott, Brian Oliver and Anderson — the Yellow Jackets made it all the way to the Final Four before bowing out to eventual champion UNLV, 90-81.

Now Lethal Weapon 3 has been whittled down to Lethal Weapon 1. Oliver (21.3 points per game in 1989-90) completed his eligibility and became an NBA first-round draft choice of the Philadelphia 76ers, and Scott (27.7 ppg) took off after his junior season for the Orlando Magic, who took Scott with the fourth overall pick in the draft. That leaves Anderson and forward Malcolm Mackey as the only two starters remaining from last year's 28-7 (8-6 in the ACC) squad.

With Scott, the Yellow Jackets would have been a favorite to return to the Final Four despite the loss of Oliver. Without Scott, the Yellow Jackets will probably finish in the middle of the pack in the ACC.

"With (Scott) on your team, that's some wins right there," Anderson said. "If he had stayed, that would be Final Four again. When we came down the court, something offensively was going to happen. I give the ball to Dennis. When he misses two jumpers (in a row), I'm like, 'What's wrong?'"

Any talk of Georgia Tech hoops begins with the 6-foot-2, 166-pound Anderson, the preseason All-America from Rego Park, N.Y. He scores (20.6 ppg), rebounds (5.5 rpg), assists (8.1

Georgia Tech

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.
3	B. Domalik	G	5-11	164	Sr.
11	B. Hill	G	6-4	210	So.
12	K. Anderson	G	6-2	166	So.
14	J. Barry	G	6-4	175	Jr.
15	D. Barnes	F	6-8	202	So.
23	B. Black	G	6-1	178	Fr.
24	J. Munlyn	C	6-11	228	Sr.
31	G. White	G	6-2	168	Jr.
32	M. Mackey	F	6-10	243	So.
33	I. Newbill	F	6-9	224	Fr.
34	R. Balanis	G	6-3	192	Fr.
52	M. Geiger	F/C	7-0	234	Jr.

Head Coach: Bobby Cremins (South Carolina, 1970). Overall Coaching Record: 281-169 in 15 years. Record at Georgia Tech: 181-99 in 9 years

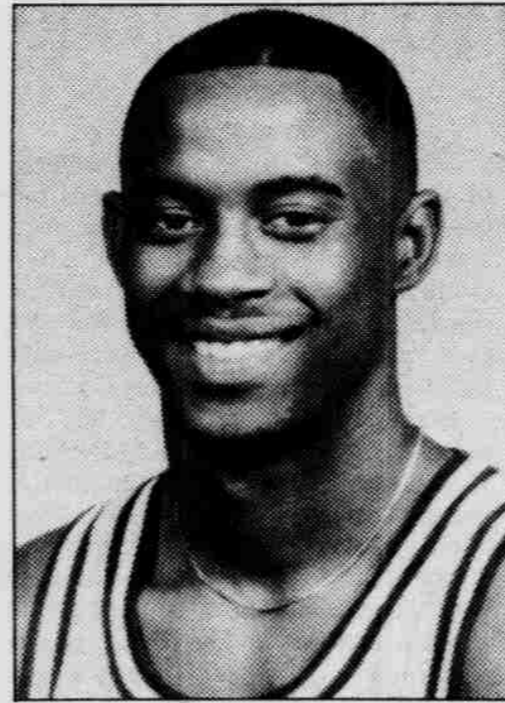
app) and steals the ball (79 steals). He does it all, and he's only a sophomore.

"As great as all the point guards are, I don't think there's any question that Kenny Anderson is easily the best," Wake Forest head coach Dave Odom said. "He is exceptional, just absolutely exceptional. And I think he's the best in the country without any question. I don't think I'm out on any limb by myself there."

Oliver was the team's floor leader last season, and he was preceded by players such as Tom Hammonds and Mark Price. Scott was supposed to take over this year, but now Cremins must ask Anderson to fill that role.

"I've never had a sophomore to be the leader of the team," said Cremins, now in his 10th year in Atlanta. "Last year, I told Kenny to keep his mouth shut, listen to Dennis and Brian and just play. Now I'll ask him to say more."

But Anderson is not expected to be a one-man show this year, despite Tech's



Kenny Anderson

loss of far more than half of its scoring in Oliver and Scott and starting center Johnny McNeil's 5.8 points a game. Cremins said he would like for Anderson to play just like he did a year ago.

Taking Oliver's place at wing guard will be 6-4 juco transfer Jon Barry, the son of former NBA star Rick Barry. He averaged 17.1 points for Paris Junior College in Texas last season.

Barry will be backed up by Chowan (N.C.) Junior College transfer Bryan Hill. Hill has three years of eligibility remaining, while Barry has two.

"Both of those players will play a lot," Cremins said. "We need for them to come through. Even though they lack experience, both will have to contribute."

Mackey, a 6-10 sophomore, leads Tech's inexperienced frontline. Mackey proved to be a rebounding machine (7.5 rpg) and a proficient shot blocker (41 blocks) in '89-90. He did not get the ball

much offensively because of Lethal Weapon 3, but that should change this year, allowing him to improve on his 7.2 scoring average of a year ago.

Auburn transfer Matt Geiger (7-0, 234), who has two years of eligibility remaining, will start at center. An agile inside player who has shown the ability to score off the dribble, Geiger averaged 15.9 points and 6.6 rebounds a game in his sophomore season at Auburn.

"I think he can become a great player," Cremins said, "but he's not a great player now."

Senior James Munlyn (6-11, 228) will also see time in the post.

Tech's biggest weakness will come at the small forward spot. Talented 6-8 sophomore Darryl Barnes is the team's only true small forward, but he still needs to learn the game, Cremins said. If 6-9 redshirt freshman Ivano Newbill starts at forward, there will not be a small-forward type in the first five.

To accommodate the bigger lineup, Cremins changed the Tech offense from a wide-open, full-court perimeter style to a more power-oriented one. The team had trouble responding to the changes, however, so Cremins switched back to the old offense.

Not having a small forward will prove troublesome on defense as well. The

Jackets' defensive quickness on the wing will suffer if one of the big men has to play in the No. 3 spot.

Anderson should come through with a performance similar to last season's. How well the Jackets fare this year will depend on whether Mackey can become an offensive force and whether Geiger can put up the kind of numbers he did at Auburn.

Despite all the question marks, Georgia Tech has been ranked in the top 20 by several preseason publications.

"Hopefully, we'll remain competitive," Cremins said. "I think we'll go through some tough times early. We're a team that can be very good or a team that could be bad."

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