

Davis tries to unravel Clemson's Cliffhanger

By A.J. BROWN
Staff Writer

Elden Campbell. Dale Davis. The Twin Towers. The Swat Patrol. No matter what you call them, one thing remains the same: The dominating duo propelled Clemson to a 26-9 record and its first-ever ACC regular-season title in 1989. The Tigers then advanced to the "Sweet Sixteen" in the NCAA tournament, where their Cinderella season ended with a 71-70 loss to Connecticut.

But that was the Clemson of a year ago. Graduation was a wrecking ball to the Tigers, flattening Tower No. 1 and sweeping Marion Cash, Derrick Forrest, Kirkland Howling and Tim Kincaid away in the debris. Today, one Column of Chaos remains, and one burning question lingers in Orange Country: Is Dale Davis enough for the Tigers to make a respectable run at defending their title?

Maybe. The 6-foot-11 senior from Toccoa, Ga., led the league in both field goal percentage (.625) and rebounding (11.3 boards per game), and he finished up last season as the conference's 14th-ranked scorer, averaging 15.3 points per outing.

Entering this campaign, Davis has more career rebounds than any other active Division I player, and his career .616 field-goal percentage ranks him second on the ACC's all-time list behind

Clemson

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.
3	B. Martin	G	6-3	175	Fr.
10	J. Mason	G	6-1	190	Fr.
11	D. Young	G	6-4	175	Jr.
13	S. Harris	G/F	6-5	190	Fr.
14	D. Bruce	G	6-5	180	Sr.
15	S. Lastinger	G	6-1	155	So.
22	S. Tyson	F	6-7	215	Sr.
24	E. Burks	G	6-3	185	Fr.
25	R. Jones	F	6-7	195	Sr.
31	A. Bovain	G	6-2	180	Fr.
32	T. Paul	G/F	6-5	175	Fr.
34	D. Davis	F	6-11	225	Sr.
42	W. Buckingham	F	6-9	235	So.
44	C. Brown	F	6-8	200	Sr.

Head Coach: Cliff Ellis (Florida State, 1968). Overall Coaching Record: 290-153 in 15 years. Record at Clemson: 119-69 in 6 years

former Tar Heel Brad Daugherty (.620).

Davis, who turned down an invitation to try out for the USA National Basketball team in order to attend summer school, had 58 blocked shots last season and stands at 16th on the career conference list. The 230-pounder also turned in double-figure performances in scoring and rebounding in 10 games last season, giving him 33 such double-doubles in his Clemson career.

"Naturally, our team is going to be centered around Dale Davis," Clemson head coach Cliff Ellis said. "Without a doubt, he's one of the finest post men that there is in the country. I've seen enough of him to know that he'll probably be a lottery pick, so you don't change anything that he does — you build around him."

That's a good plan, but before Ellis starts molding his team around Davis, he should sculpt a player to fill the void left by Campbell.

In Campbell, a first-round draft pick of the Los Angeles Lakers, the Tigers lost a lanky, 6-11, 215-pound center who canned 16.4 points per game and wiped eight rebounds off the glass each contest. Clemson's career scoring leader won't be easy to replace.

"One thing that we will miss from Elden Campbell is his shot-blocking ability," Ellis said. "I think that's where we simply don't have the 6-11 guy that blocks the shots that we had in Elden."

Campbell and Davis were undoubtedly the league's most feared twosome in the paint, combining for an astounding 155 blocked shots. Campbell hand-delivered 97 of those rejections to end his Tiger career with at least 100 assists, blocked shots and steals.

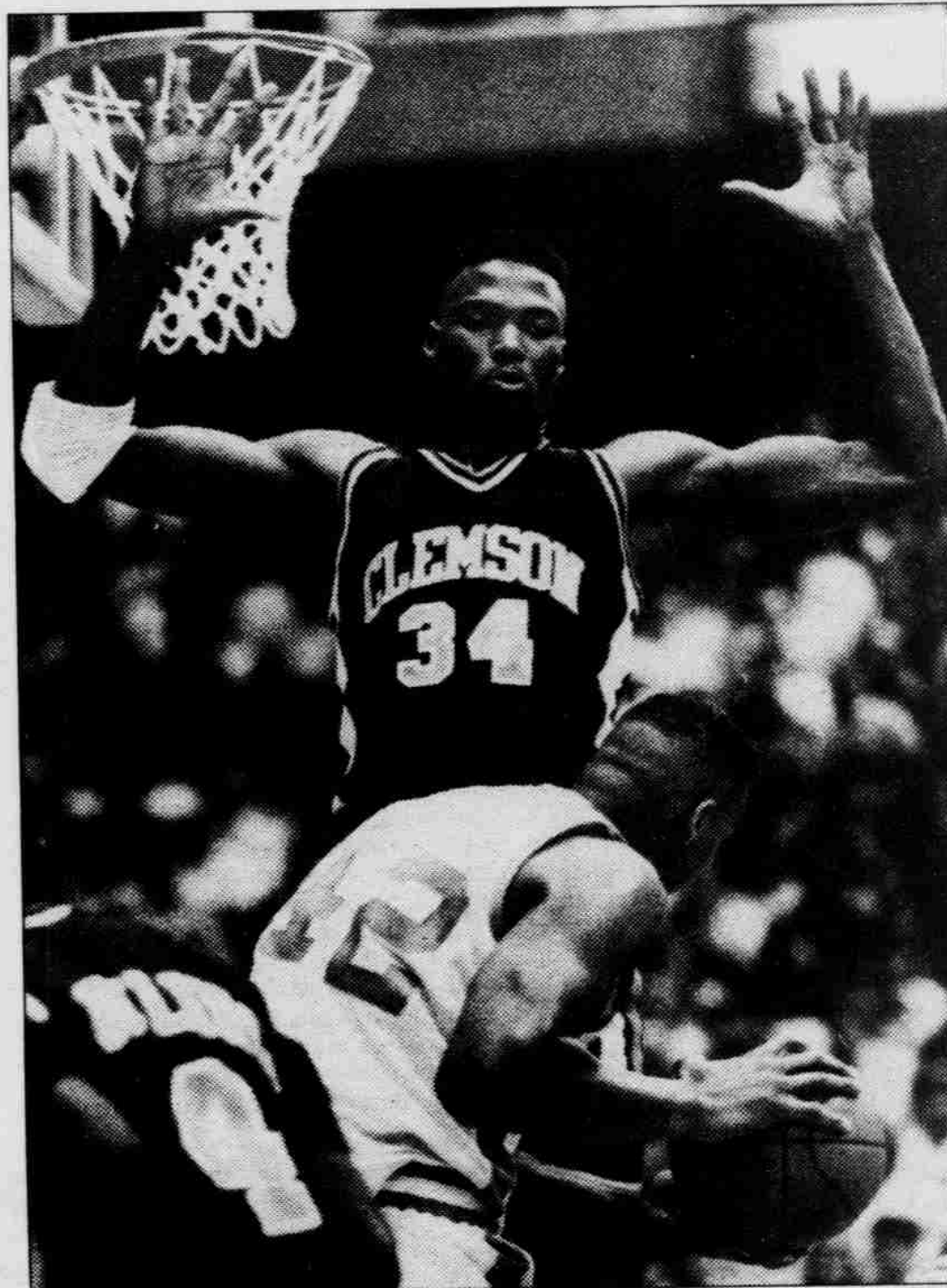
"I think he's definitely going to be a big loss," Davis said. "But with the guys we have up front progressing at such a fast rate, I think they'll be able to take his place."

One candidate eyeing the vacancy left by Campbell is 6-7 Sean Tyson. The senior forward from Baltimore, Md., was third on the team last season in scoring (8.5 ppg), second in field goal percentage (55 percent), and third in rebounds (4.1 rpg). Behind UNC's Hubert Davis and George Lynch, Tyson was one of the best sixth men in the league in 1989-90, coming off the bench to score in double figures 11 times — more than any other Clemson reserve in the last three seasons.

"Tyson has been playing well (in the preseason)," Davis said. "He's had over 40 points in both scrimmages, and his shot has improved a whole lot over last year."

Battling Tyson for Campbell's old home in the paint is Ricky Jones, a 6-7, 205-pound senior from Pendleton, S.C. Jones averaged 7.0 ppg and nailed 32.1 percent from beyond the 3-point line.

At the point guard slot, David Young, a 6-5 junior, is Ellis' top choice. Starting at off-guard in 27 of Clemson's 35 games last season, Young averaged just seven points per game on 41 percent shooting from the floor. The Greenville, S.C., native also knocked down 39 3-pointers last year, nailing 32.1 percent of his shots taken behind the arc.



DTH file photo

Dale Davis — a monster, some say — is all that remains of the Twin Towers

Young isn't stingy with the ball, either. He dished out 142 assists last season, and his 2.15 assists/turnover ratio placed him third in the conference and sixth in the Clemson record books. Young was second on the team (behind Cash) in assists in ACC games with 64. But playing in a conference rich in talent at the point, Young may have a hard time adjusting to his new role and keeping up with the likes of Kenny Anderson, Bobby Hurley, Chris Corchiani and John Crotty.

Adjusting may also be a problem for the six guards in Clemson's freshman class.

Receiving the most preseason attention is Eric Burks, a 6-3, 185-pounder out of Atlanta's McNair High School, whose 27.9 ppg earned him the DeKalb County scoring title his senior season.

The 1990 Georgia 4-A player of the year also averaged an impressive 9.8 rebounds, 10 assists and only two turnovers per game while racking up a 5.2 steal average for his career.

Another frosh in the spotlight is 6-1 Andre Bovain. The Columbia, S.C., product averaged over 17 ppg throughout his high school career at Keenan High. As a freshman in high school, Bovain was the sixth man on the varsity squad and scored 18 ppg coming off the bench. Bovain was selected to the 1990 Associated Press all-state team and received votes for the 1990 South Carolina Mr. Basketball award, which was won by fellow Tiger Stephen Harris.

Harris, a 6-4, 190-pounder from Simpsonville, S.C., averaged 23 ppg for Hillcrest High School and participated in the 1990 North-South game.



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