

PLAYER PROFILE

# Dynamite Duo: Grooms and Johnson Form Formidable 1-2 Punch for Vikings.

By MICHAEL JOHNSON  
Chronicle Sports Writer

He is considered the best athlete in school, a player who can do just about whatever he wants to on the court.

"Kenyon Grooms is not just a basketball player, he's simply a tremendous talent," said Gabriel Gordon, father of North Forsyth's Chad Gordon.

"Kenyon is one of those players like a Magic Johnson. If you see him in practice, he's not a great player. If you got him in a shooting contest, you wouldn't pick him," Gordon said. "But when he steps between those lines, he'll score twenty points."

His teammate is considered the consummate team leader, a player who knows what it takes to win. While shooting the ball is not considered his strength, he has

as a star on the gridiron as the starting free safety on the North Forsyth varsity team.

"Kenyon can go a long way in basketball if he wants to, but I think football is his first love," Witt said. "He's really improved in the past year. He's become a reliable shooter from 15 feet, and he has a tremendous first step to the basket."

Grooms said that basketball has become a sport he puts more passion into. When football season is over, he is consciously thinking about getting in shape for basketball.

"Through practice, I've been able to round out my games before the season starts," Grooms said, who will also vie for a starting spot in the Vikings' backfield as a tailback next year. "It's important for the team that I'm ready to play."

Despite his athletic prowess, Grooms still can be described as a raw talent. Last



Forward Kenyon Grooms (left) and guard James Johnson are two different players with one common goal: to win the David Lash/Chronicle Tournament.

**"I want to win at least one game this year, but I don't want to lose. I want to be able to come back to North and say we won the tournament, but I'll be happy with one win."**

—James Johnson

no glaring weaknesses.

"James Johnson makes great decisions on the court by getting the ball to all the players in their favorite spots," North Forsyth coach Tommy Witt said. "It takes a special player to sublimate his game for the betterment of the team. James could score eight points for us and still dominate the game."

Together, North Forsyth's small forward Kenyon Grooms and point guard James Johnson are considered the one-two punch in the North Forsyth attack. And while a significant part of their team's fortunes this season depends on their development, both players shy away from the spotlight.

"I don't see myself as a go-to player, I just want to help my team win," Grooms said. "I can contribute mostly on defense and rebounding."

"I'm not the player who's going to shoot all the time," Johnson said. "I just want to set the others up."

Both players have come from different paths to their current roles on the Vikings. Grooms was a late bloomer who started playing basketball at 12 in the Boys Club, while Johnson took up the sport as a seven-year old at the Winston Lake YMCA. And though Johnson's first sport is basketball, Grooms also doubles

year, Grooms tried out for the junior varsity team and was among the final cuts. After spending part of the season on the ninth-grade roster, Grooms moved up to the jayvee team before the Christmas holidays.

Johnson, though a more polished player, has also had to wait his turn. Johnson was a top reserve who started two games last year. A former player on the Winston-Salem AAU 13-14 and 16 and under teams, Johnson has a size advantage over most of the points guards he will face this year.

"His size does not deteriorate from his quickness," Witt said. "James' long arms and size makes it harder for other point guards to see over him. Plus it helps him to make some great passes on the offensive end."

Both players have had some experience in the upcoming David Lash / Chronicle Junior Varsity Holiday Tournament, playing several minutes in each game. Now both want to extend their stay in the tournament to the championship round.

"I want to win at least one game this year, but I don't want to lose," Johnson said. "I want to be able to come back to North and say we won the tournament, but I'll be happy with one win."



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