

Ohio State's Hunter doing big things on court

The Othello Hunter story is definitely one worth telling.

In Hunter's story, he didn't play organized basketball until his senior year at Reynolds. Then, he almost recorded a triple-double during his first game with the Demons. Let me remind you that he never did



Hunter

start, despite possessing obvious skills on the court. Hunter still found a way to contribute in major ways

when he did get into the game. Hunter and Reynolds finished one win away from a state basketball championship that year. Then, Othello found a way to sign with Hillsborough Community College (Tampa, Fla.), where he helped the team finish with a 19-14 record in 2004-05 and a 24-6 record last year. His team lost in the opening round of the 2006 Florida Community College Activities Association state tournament. Hunter scored 22 points, grabbed 17 rebounds and blocked six shots in the loss.

Now Hunter is doing big things at Ohio State University, where he started the first few games at center. Othello was the OSU student athlete of the week this past week after he recorded his first career double-double with 17 points and 11 rebounds in a recent win against Cleveland State. Hunter, who's a junior, has three games this year with 10 or more boards and has scored in double figures twice.

I talked with Othello last week, to discuss how things have been since he arrived at OSU. I also wanted to ask him how he does when he and Greg Oden go one-on-one in practice. Take a look at our conversation from last week, before his Buckeyes blasted Cincinnati.

Anthony: What's going on, "O"?

Othello: Nothing much. I'm just chilling.

Anthony: I hear that. Hey, you're doing big things at Ohio State.

Othello: Yeah, I'm trying to do a little bit.

Anthony: You kind of came out of nowhere. You didn't play at Reynolds until your senior year and then kind of blew up after you went off to junior college in Florida. Tell me how things progressed for you.

Othello: When I was in Winston-Salem, at Reynolds, I knew I wanted to play basketball after my senior year. I guess my coach (Howard West) kind of touched basis with the coach down in Hillsborough (Derrick Worrels). I went down there and he wanted to sign me. I went down there and he just worked me real hard. Now, here I am.

Anthony: Why did you wait so long before you got on the Reynolds team?

Othello: Well, I had a job at first. Then my grades weren't up to par afterwards. I really wasn't thinking about playing basketball at that point. I was just like, whatever. Then, my friends kept pushing me to play. Then, I was like, "Yeah, I'm gonna play."

Anthony: (Laughs.) OK. A.J. (Highsmith) was telling me about that the other day. He said he had to basically talk you into getting on the team.

Othello: Yeah.

Anthony: How crazy is it around there with Troy Smith bringing home the Heisman Trophy? I imagine the campus and the entire city of Columbus are pretty crazy right about now.



Ohio State junior Othello Hunter played only one year of high school ball at Reynolds before starting his college career.

Othello: It's pretty crazy. Everybody is happy for him. We're just waiting to see what we're going to do in the national (championship game).

Anthony: Let me ask you what your focus is for this year. I mean, are you trying get better? Is it all about the team this year? Just tell me where your focus is right now.

Othello: (Laughs.) It's everything, man. I'm trying to help us get better. I'm trying to win the national title. I'm trying to work hard and get better at the same time.

Anthony: It was good to see you get the start in the Carolina game. (Smiles.) I know you guys would've loved to have gotten that win in Chapel Hill.

Othello: Yeah, we could've

been leaving to go somewhere in December.

Anthony: When do you plan on coming to Winston?

Othello: I'll be in Winston on the 24th (Sunday).

Anthony: Cool. Hey, I still remember that team some of you formed after you graduated. It was like a throwback Reynolds team.

Othello: (Laughs.) Yeah.

Anthony: You all got smashed by One-and-Done that year too.

Othello: (Laughs.) You didn't have to say all of that. But, yeah we did get beat pretty bad.

Anthony: Tell me what you thought after seeing the Ohio State-University campus for the first time.

Othello: "Dang." I thought I



won that game. There were really just three critical plays that stomped us. That made me want to step my defense up after that one.

Anthony: I bet. Hey, do you and Greg (Oden) go at it in practice?

Othello: Oh, we got at it in practice everyday.

Anthony: Oh yeah?

Othello: Yeah.

Anthony: Does he win all of the battles?

Othello: It's like 50-50 now, man.

Anthony: (Smiles.) OK.

Othello: At first, he used to kill me. Now we go at each other everyday.

Anthony: That's what's up. What's your boy, Rah Davis (Former East player that played JUCO ball with Hunter) up to?

Othello: I don't know. The last I heard, he was supposed to

was going to be late for class all of the time. Luckily, my classes are close together.

Anthony: What do you do during your down time?

Othello: I stay in my room and talk to my girlfriend. Or, I just chill and watch TV.

Anthony: What is your favorite movie right now?

Othello: Right now, it's probably "Glory Road."

Anthony: If you weren't playing basketball what do you think you'd probably be doing?

Othello: I don't know. I'd probably be working somewhere.

Anthony: (Both laugh.) Well, I'm glad you're playing basketball.

Othello: I am too.

Anthony: What kind of nicknames are they calling you down there?

Othello: They call me "O" and Doc. My mom calls me Doc.

Anthony: Were you named after the Shakespeare play?

Othello: No, I was named after my dad.

Anthony: Who would you like to play against, one-on-one?

Othello: KG (Kevin Garnett) I don't know if I'd beat him, but I'd give him a couple buckets.

Anthony: OK. Let's close out with free association. Othello.

Othello: Hunter.

Anthony: Joe Fulp (Former Reynolds teammate.)

Othello: The coolest dude.

Anthony: Howard West.

Othello: Coach. Good man.

Anthony: Andre Gould.

Othello: Cool.

Anthony: The Ohio State University.

Othello: Off the hook.

Former Spartan has career-high for Charleston Southern

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Former Mt. Tabor Spartan standout Natalie Caldwell led her Charleston Southern squad (3-6) to a much-needed victory over the weekend. Caldwell's 20-point performance tied her career high in points and led CSU to a 66-56 victory over Kennesaw State last Saturday.

Caldwell definitely paced the Bucs offense, but it was the defense that set the tone early, as Charleston Southern allowed a season-low 20 points in the first half.

Caldwell sparked the offense with her solid play in the second half. She dropped 14 of her 20 points in the second half alone. She helped the Lady Bucs shoot an amazing 50 percent from the floor in the final half of play.

CSU senior Keena Wicker added 19, while sophomore Pam Tolbert scored 13 to help propel CSU to the victory.

The Lady Bucs took the lead at 19-17 with 6:20 to go in the first half, and never gave it up as they used a 7-0 run to distance themselves from the Owls. A layup by Caldwell with 1:42 remaining in the game gave CSU a 15-point lead, their largest of the game.

For the first time this season, the Lady Bucs won the turnover battle, turning it over 15 times, while forcing 23 Kennesaw State turnovers.



Caldwell

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