

Bobcats rookies learn hard lessons of losing

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national college champion to a second-year NBA franchise that loses on a regular basis isn't the easiest of transitions.

"It's definitely difficult losing so much," May said, "because you're not used to it. I think we lost 16 games my freshman year, but I only played in two of those losses. We lost 11 my sophomore year. So this is tough now, because you don't know how to react to those situations. But it's a learning process, and you have (veterans) and other guys who have been through the same experiences that you have."

"When my dad (Scott) played in Chicago (in the late 1970s), they lost 40-some games - and 15 straight. And he tells me, 'You've got to just keep plugging away and try to change what you're doing wrong.' That's what we're trying to do here."

During the three seasons Felton, a point guard, and May, a power forward, were in Chapel Hill, the Tar Heels lost a total of 31 games. By the time the rookies had their talk Monday, the Bobcats already had lost 16 of their

first 21.

"Off the court, you just kind of go your own way, do your own things," May said. "But that's why they have phones. I call (Felton) and say, 'Hey, man, what was wrong with us today? What happened?' We talk every day. But when we're not in the gym, he normally goes to his house (in Ballantyne), and I go to mine (in South Park) or to the hotel room. You just kind of get your alone time. But today was good because we just got to sit by ourselves and talk about things. That helps a lot."

Felton and May aren't regular starters, but their early-season play should keep Bobcats fans optimistic about their futures. At the beginning of the week, May, a forward who underwent knee surgery before the season, was averaging 8.8 points and 5.1 rebounds in 17.8 minutes per game. Felton was averaging 6.7 points, 3.9 assists and 1.1 assists in 18.7 minutes per game, although his shooting (31 percent) has been shaky.

"There are tough times, there are great times, but

that's how it is for a rookie," Felton said. "That's just how it is. I'm still enjoying it. This is where I want to be. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life."

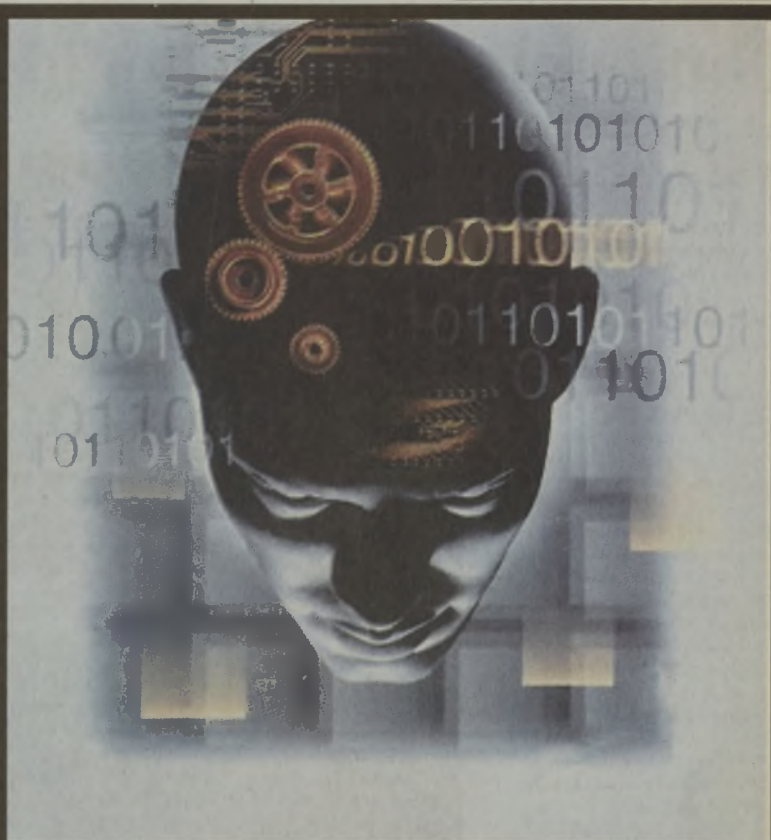


Bickerstaff

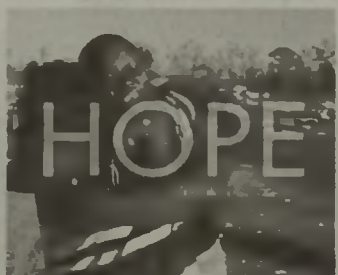
"We're kind of struggling right now, but we've got plenty of time to make it a great season. What I've got to do is work on making myself a better player, and I believe that will help the team in the long run."

Bobcats coach and general manager Bernie Bickerstaff isn't worried about his two first-round draft picks

"The disadvantage for Sean and Raymond, as opposed to some of the other rookies, is that the other rookies are getting substantial minutes," Bickerstaff said. "And our rookies aren't. ... I definitely see them getting more playing time. You can count the guys on one hand who have come right into this league and excelled. But I think both of them are doing fine."



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