

Morrison Looks to Eradicate Wild Play

Brian Morrison showed flashes of brilliance as a rookie but must improve his poise on the court.

By OWEN A. HASSELL
Assistant Sport Saturday Editor

first year," Morrison said. "You get used to things. It's a tough adjustment, but you start to deal with it after a while."



Sophomore guard Brian Morrison averaged 3.0 points and 1.2 assists in 32 games during the 2000-01 season.

North Carolina shooting guard Joseph Forte left for the NBA, and point guard Ronald Curry is questionable for this season's Tar Heel basketball team.

And it all sets up a chance for UNC guard Brian Morrison to walk through a wide-open door — one that holds a starting guard position.

"The door is open," Morrison said. "It's your choice to get through it or not."

For Morrison, he might not have a choice. Returning as one of the team's few experienced guards, the sophomore has an opportunity to see a drastic increase in playing time.

And Morrison looks forward to every minute on the court.

"I'm hoping to play as much as I can and get in there and do what I can to help the team," Morrison said. "I'm confident in myself. I think it is going to be a different year for me this year."

Morrison played all but one game last season and averaged three points per contest. He began the year alternating time at the point with Adam Boone and scored 14 points in the opener against Winthrop and 13 at Appalachian State.

But Curry's sudden emergence as the Tar Heels' floor general placed Morrison in a reserve role.

He also made plenty of mistakes that caused the shift. Morrison tallied 38 turnovers last year but dished out just 38 assists.

Morrison said his erratic play was caused by his transition from high school to college basketball.

"I think you just mature after your

Without Forte and possibly Curry, Morrison realizes it is up to the remaining players to contribute more offensively. "I think that everybody really needs to step up and try to score more," Morrison said. "I'm going to do my best to score and just play basketball, play an all-around game, really."

And on offense, Morrison remained shaky at best. He connected on just 29 out of 88 attempts at the basket.

"Brian is a kid that understands he needs to improve on shot selection and making decisions with the basketball, and he's tried to do that," UNC coach Matt Doherty said.

Morrison did make some good decisions at this year's Blue-White Game, finishing with 15 points and six assists.

Fellow UNC guard Jonathan Holmes believes Morrison has the tools to challenge for a starting spot.

"For Brian, he's such a great athlete," Holmes said. "He's fast. From one end of the court to the other, he's unbelievably gifted as far as going from point A to point B. I think those are his biggest assets."

Those assets could help Morrison earn more playing time. Until that happens, he is content on improving his game.

"You can't worry about that," Morrison said. "You just work hard, do what you can, and then when it comes down to it, Coach makes those decisions."

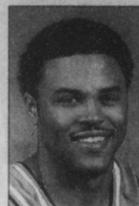
Boone Trying to Settle Into Spot

UNC point guard Adam Boone hopes to built upon a difficult freshman season and better guide the team.

By IAN GORDON
Assistant Sports Editor

Doherty. "I think Adam's earned the right to start right now."

And like last year, the midseason playing time he gets might not be entirely in his hands.



UNC point guard Adam Boone averaged 1.5 points and 1.4 assists in 32 games last season.

Adam Boone wouldn't be sidelined for six weeks. He couldn't, especially in the middle of the basketball season.

But when he broke his wrist during his sophomore year at Minnetonka (Minn.) High School, six weeks of rest were what Boone's physician mandated.

Boone would have none of that. A second opinion and three weeks of strengthening later, Boone was back on the court.

Not only does Boone's search for the quickest recovery illustrate his desire to play basketball, but it also explains his wish to one day become a doctor.

"I just got into the whole process of getting athletes back on the court," Boone said. "I enjoyed it and saw it as something I could see myself doing."

For now, he can look forward to a more immediate, and possibly more stressful, occupation: North Carolina point guard.

The sophomore from Minneapolis most likely again will be the one running the Tar Heels' offense this season, despite his preseason competition with Jonathan Holmes and Melvin Scott.

"There's a fine line between Adam, Jon and Melvin," said UNC coach Matt

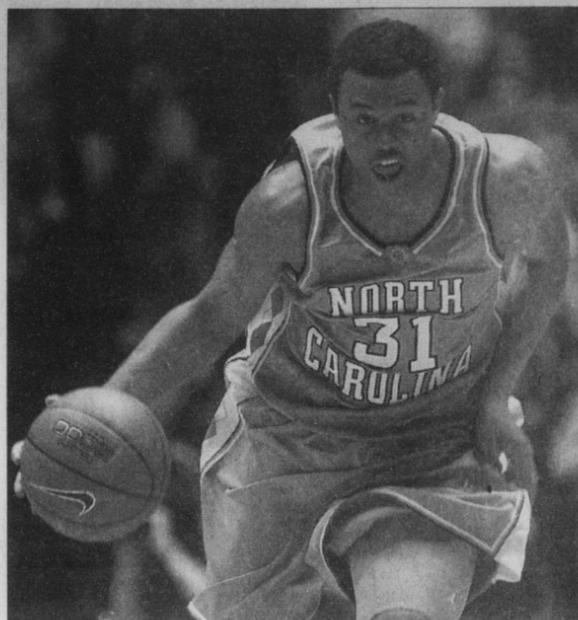
With the possible return of Ronald Curry, it's obvious Boone can't be too secure in his starting role.

"I need to prepare myself to be on the floor as much as possible, and hopefully, whatever Coach Doherty deems fit, that's obviously what I'll play," Boone said. "It doesn't really matter whether (Curry is) coming back or not in terms of a waiting game."

Last year, Boone reacted well to coming off the bench after Curry's return. He played steadily in UNC's win at Duke, dishing out three assists in 15 minutes.

But when Boone went down with a left ankle injury before the game at Clemson, North Carolina lost its safety blanket. The team also lost the game and its 18-game winning streak. For the rest of the season, Boone was relatively ineffective, averaging less than 10 minutes per game.

The Tar Heels could have used a quick recovery from Boone a season ago. Now, they need him to keep progressing from his freshman year and be more aggres-



Adam Boone drives during the Blue-White Game. With Ronald Curry's return questionable, Boone could assume the starting point guard duty.

sive, especially with dribble penetration. He attempted just 12 free throws last year.

stepped to the forefront," forward Jason Capel said. "He's separated himself from the others."

Young Guns to Play Significant Roles

North Carolina's freshmen have been called on in recent years to make big contributions on the court.

By MIKE OGLE
Senior Writer

Forte and Brendan Haywood are gone, and UNC needs big things from its newcomers, and it needs them fast.



Freshman forward Jawad Williams averaged 22 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks as a senior.

Tradition went out the window a while ago.

Jerry Stackhouse and Rasheed Wallace left, so freshmen Vince Carter and Antawn Jamison started on North Carolina's 1995-96 team. Current seniors Jason Capel and Kris Lang started their freshman season when Carter and Jamison departed.

Joseph Forte became the first freshman to lead the Tar Heels in scoring in 1999-2000. Adam Boone began last year as the starting point guard.

The story of this season's fresh faces — Jackie Manuel, Melvin Scott and Jawad Williams — is nothing new.

"We need all three of them to have good years, and take it from me, they will," Capel said.

Williams, a 6-foot-9, 200-pound McDonald's All-American, will likely become the next bright-eyed starter at the three.

Williams averaged 22 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks as a high school senior.

"The hardest part of starting as a freshman is that there's so many unknowns," Boone said. "It's somewhat obvious, but when you come into it, I

know when I came into it I had played a lot of basketball in my life, and I didn't figure it would be too different. But there's no level like ACC.

"There's no way to prepare you. You just have to go out there and experience it."

Scott could get that same experience before the season is done.

Boone has once again become the year's front-runner, partly by default, to run the point. But some believe that the 6-2 Scott could snatch that spot if Ronald Curry doesn't get to it first.

"Melvin Scott is playing hard and really learning," Capel said. "He may take the job later on in the season because he's that talented."

Manuel, a 6-5 guard, could see a lot of minutes off the bench, as well, for a team that returns two of last season's top seven — at least for now.

Last year, North Carolina coach Matt Doherty made no bones about yanking guard Brian Morrison out of the game when he made sloppy mistakes on the court.

One thing seems for sure: These freshmen won't be too shy.

The trio fired up 22 shots in the first game against outside competition — an 107-76 exhibition loss to the EA Sports All-Stars.

However, they combined for just five points as only two of their heaves found their way through the hoop, both by Williams.

Doherty didn't mind the jitters and said he knows the freshmen are better than what they showed. Doherty said he likes that they didn't show fear despite struggling.

"You can always pull in the reins as opposed to try to encourage a passive kid to be more aggressive," Doherty said.

"I like the fact that they're aggressive. I can rein them a little bit to show. 'Hey, this wasn't a good shot,' and still give them confidence and still have them in attack mode."

With a potentially more athletic and active team, Manuel, Scott and Williams — Doherty's first crop of recruits — could come in quite handy.

"They all like to get out there and run," Morrison said. "I like that a lot. We like to push it."

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Tracy D. Sharpley-Whiting is Chair of African-American Studies and Director of the African-American Studies Research Center at Purdue University.

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