

Clemson headaches: probation and no Tree

Back in the summer of 1975, Stan Rome was quite impressed with the prospects of the Clemson football team for the coming fall. The Tigers were ranked tops in the ACC in preseason polls and Rome, a gifted athlete by any standard, wanted to share in the experience awaiting the inhabitants of Death Valley.

Little did he know that the glory he anticipated would soon turn to infamy.

The Tigers that year were the biggest flops since the Edsel. And by mid-November, when Rome went to trade his cleats for sneakers, he realized the exchange would be a permanent one. His four-month stint as a wide-receiver taught him that his home was Littlejohn Coliseum — not Frank Howard Field. And, most importantly, it showed him it's no fun to lose.

"It was a good experience for me," Rome said. "It was the first time I was really ever on a losing team. I hate to lose. I didn't feel like I was helping either team."

Rome is satisfied playing basketball and isn't bothered knowing he'd be catching passes for a bowl team this fall if he'd stuck with football. If anything, it's made him long for an equally successful Clemson basketball season.

And with some of the problems the Tigers face this winter, the players need every bit of incentive they can find.

For one, Clemson's basketball program is in the last year of a three-year probation for violations while Tate Locke was coach. No matter how good the Tigers are, their season ends with the ACC Tournament.

"I don't think it affects the team that much," Rome said. "Maybe subconsciously a little. Everybody on the team likes to win. It only means that we can't go to postseason play. The last two years we haven't been able to go anyway."

Secondly, the Tree has been transplanted to the NBA. And without Wayne Rollins — all seven feet of him — around to grab rebounds and block shots as he's done for four years, coach Bill Foster has a number of adjustments to make.

"Everybody's going to have to contribute a little more," said Foster, who begins his third year at Clemson. "We'll have to improve our defense, shore up what we lost. We can't gamble defensively like we used to. We'll have to rely on each other more and be a better defensive team."

Foster has brought in John Campbell, a 6-foot-9, 234-pound transfer from Anderson Junior College, to fill Rollins' post. "He's got a lot of tools," Foster said. "But he doesn't have much experience. He only played one year in high school. He's got a lot of potential. With time I think he can be a

pretty good center."

If Campbell can't handle the job, Stewart Zane (6 feet 11, 228) will get a try.

Although Rome (6 feet 5, 205) can play guard, he'll probably start at forward, joining the team's best shooter, Colon Abraham (6 feet 5, 208). Marvin Dickerson (6 feet 6, 190), Jim Howell (6 feet 7, 210) and Jim "Chubby" Wells (6 feet 6, 205) will also see extensive playing time up front in Foster's fee-substitution system.

It won't matter much who starts at guard because Greg Collins (6 feet 3, 205) Bobby Conrad (6 feet 2, 165) and Derrick Johnson

(6 feet 2, 206) will split much of the playing time. Juco transfer Billy Williams (6 feet 4, 205) could also contribute.

The competition for the starting assignments has made for interesting practices, Foster said. "We've got 10 or 11 people who can play. Practice has been like gang warfare."

But once the season starts, he hopes it's the opponents — not the Tigers — who've lost the rumble.

— LEE PACE

Cavs need glowing offense, shining Lamp

If Carolina basketball fans were to vote on the sports figures they dislike the most, the odds are excellent that Marc Iavaroni would rank among the leaders.

UNC supporters have been incensed several times during the past three basketball seasons when Virginia's occasionally-brilliant forward would throw an elbow, charge into a defender or involve himself in some other conduct not deemed in the best interests of Carolina's hallowed basketball team.

And Iavaroni hasn't helped his image any by being one of the masterminds of the Great Landover Hijack of 1976 and by nearly leading the Cavaliers to a second consecutive ACC Tournament upset over Carolina last spring.

Opposing fans, however, aren't the only folks that get down on him. Marc Iavaroni does too. Sometimes to an extreme.

"Marc expects to win every night out," said his coach, Terry Holland. "He takes it personally when we lose. Sometimes this hurts him."

Iavaroni is aware of the problem and he's willing to work on it. Both he and Holland have admitted that the success of Virginia's efforts this winter might depend on it.

"One of the keys will how well I respond to adversity," says Iavaroni, a stringy 6-foot-9, 215-pound senior forward. "I've got to

handle the pressure and not let things get to me."

Holland says: "He plays his best when the team is playing its best. I hope we can win enough this year so that he doesn't get down on himself."

There are, of course, other keys besides Iavaroni's mental attitude. Holland's most pressing concerns involve the Cavs' scoring ability, the play of freshman guard Jeff Lamp and a shortage of depth in the front court.

"We've got to improve offensively this season without sacrificing anything defensively," Holland says of his team, which hit only 45 percent of its field goal attempts. "We came on strong near the end of last season and we've got to continue to improve."

If preseason play is any indication, that shooting mark will be helped enormously by Lamp, who Holland helped lure to Charlottesville by hiring his high school coach and signing a teammate. In his initial effort in a Virginia uniform — the Blue-Orange game — Lamp scored 30 points.

"Lamp's not spectacular, but he's very, very good," Holland says. "He does everything well. He's capable of scoring; he's smart, aggressive; he's a good team player. He can turn a game around for you when

things aren't going so good."

Lamp will start in the big-guard slot, giving Virginia a height advantage over most opponents, "but he'll wind up inside a lot," Holland says.

Veteran Bobby Stokes and Tommy Hicks, a transfer from Tulane, are the leading candidates for the starting point-guard assignment.

Although Virginia boasts of talented compliments to Iavaroni up front, there just aren't many of them. Center Steve Castellani improved each night last season and by the tournament the 6-foot-9, 222-pound junior was averaging nearly 10 points a game and over seven rebounds. Mike Owens (6 feet 6, 210) will use his soft shooting touch at small forward with Jeff Klein and Lee Raker (Lamp's high school teammate) backing him up.

But Klein and Raker have no experience, and second team center, Ed Shellick, doesn't have much either. "One of our chief weaknesses will be a lack of depth in the front line," Holland says.

"But we should be better offensively, have good overall size and quickness, and I think we'll be able to exploit our strength better."

If they do, the Cavs could make the ACC finals for the third time in a row.

— LEE PACE

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