

GEORGIA TECH

Without Best's leadership, Tech could be a Wreck

By Jason Lowe
Staff Writer

Georgia Tech head coach Bobby Cremins has a deep history of putting youngsters at the point guard position and asking them to contribute immediately.

In the early 1980s, there was the young gun from Oklahoma named Mark Price: a good kid with a lot of potential and an excellent touch. As a freshman, Price was named ACC Rookie of the Year in 1983. He would become a three-time All-ACC selection and is now an All-Star with the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Then there was the legend from the playgrounds of New York. No frills, only thrills abounded when Kenny Anderson took the Rambling Wreck into Cremins' second decade in Atlanta.

Anderson simply led his team to the Final Four and snatched second-team All-America honors in 1990. He took home Rookie-of-the-Year honors in the conference as well as in the nation.

But Anderson left Tech after two years, and the New Jersey Nets made him the second pick of the 1991 NBA draft.

Georgia Tech fans looked to the next freshman phenom.

Travis Best left Springfield, Mass., for Georgia Tech, knowing he would have to step in for the departed Anderson. Best proved to be an effective addition to the Jackets' lineup, dishing the rock to open teammates consistently.

Best finished the year with an assist-to-turnover ratio of 1.96. In the ACC record book, only Anderson, UNC's Jeff Lebo and N.C. State's Chris Corchiani held better ratios as freshmen.

Although Best excelled physically, he still lacked the intensity needed to lead the team. This became more evident down the stretch.

Cremins agreed that Best's lack of intensity had hindered his freshman-year success. But the white-haired guru hopes for a change in Best's court savvy.

"I'm hoping that with the maturity process, (Best) will become more con-

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

Head Coach: Bobby Cremins (South Carolina, 1970).

Cremins' Record: 321-194 in 17 years.
Cremins at Ga. Tech: 221-124 in 11 years.



PLAYER ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.
15	Rod Balanis	G	6-3	191	Jr.
2	Darryl Barnes	F	6-9	209	Jr.
10	Drew Barry	G	6-4	168	Ft.
3	Travis Best	G	5-11	180	So.
34	James Forrest	F	6-8	255	So.
5	James Gaddy	G	6-3	177	Sr.
30	Todd Harlicka	G	6-1	182	So.
11	Bryan Hill	G	6-4	230	Sr.
44	John Kelly	G	5-11	153	So.
42	Keith Kenney	G	5-10	175	Fr.
32	M. Mackey	F/C	6-11	248	Sr.
23	Mallice Moore	G/F	6-7	212	Fr.
33	Ivano Newbill	F/C	6-10	245	Jr.
24	Fred Vinson	G	6-4	186	Sr.

sistent, more assertive and have less of these mental lulls," Cremins said. "He's a little shy and needs to become more aggressive."

"I need to get on him a little more. He's got to become more talkative."

Cremins is asking Tech fans not to give up on his sophomore's leadership skills, noting that Best was not the only one who had to become a leader.

"Price didn't have it his freshman and sophomore years," Cremins said.

Even if there is a question as to how long it will take Best to become Tech's leader, there is no doubt that he must immediately shoulder a large part of Tech's offensive numbers.

Gone from the team is Jon Barry, last year's leading scorer with 17.2 points per game. Best, who averaged a solid 12.3 ppg last year, now must shoot more from the perimeter.

Best hit nearly 39 percent of his 3-point attempts last year. If opposing defenders decide to come out on Best, they had better beware. Best is at his, well, best when gliding by would-be defenders and causing chaos in the paint.

Best, like all other talented point guards in the ACC, is only as good as his supporting cast. This year's team has something that Cremins has not enjoyed in some time — an experienced senior in the frontcourt.

Malcolm Mackey finally is entering his senior season for the Jackets. Mackey has started in all but two games in his



Forward James Forrest excelled in the clutch last year, capping three game-winners

career at Tech. Because of his experience, the 6-foot-11, 248-pound workhorse will be the center of attention in the Rambling Wreck's offense this year.

Last season, Mackey was the team's second-leading scorer with 15.8 ppg, shooting an impressive 55 percent from the field. Mackey found himself at the foul line a team-high 189 times, but he hit just 68 percent of his shots.

Mackey is a monster on the glass. His 889 career rebounds place him third on Tech's all-time list. Last season's 9.0 rebounds per game tied Mackey with Florida State's Doug Edwards for second in the conference.

Cremins said he hoped Mackey could continue to put up the big numbers for Georgia Tech this season, but the coach added that the big man had another fo-

cus of attention for the 1992-93 season.

"When we go through the tough times, (Mackey) is going to have to be there, keeping the team together," Cremins said. "That's his top priority."

Last year, Cremins had the unexpected fortune of having not one, but two freshman standouts. James Forrest moved into the small forward spot last year in superb fashion. The 6-8 hometown favorite proved he could score, averaging 13.3 ppg. He finished second in league Rookie-of-the-Year balloting behind Florida State's Bob Sura.

What was most impressive about Forrest's offense was his ability to score in pressure situations. Three times last year, Forrest connected on baskets to win games for Georgia Tech. His most impressive came with 0.8 seconds left

in Tech's second-round NCAA Tournament victory against Southern California. His sole trey of the year sent the Trojans packing and left a national television audience in shock.

Power forward Ivano Newbill is expected to fill the void left by Matt Geiger's graduation. Newbill led reserves last year with 16 minutes a game. More importantly, while in the game, he averaged one rebound per 3.34 minutes. Only Mackey had a better ratio for Tech.

The big question with Newbill is the condition of his knees. He played most of last year with torn cartilage and underwent surgery just before the team left for a tour of France. If Newbill does not rehabilitate quickly, freshman Martice Moore will replace him.

Moore, named to Parade magazine's high school All-America first team, returns home to Atlanta this year. Moore moved to Oak Hill Academy in Mouth of Wilson, Va., to play his senior year.

Many see Moore as the front-runner for ACC Rookie-of-the-Year honors. He can play either guard or forward and has exceptional ball-handling skills. Moore led Oak Hill in steals and blocked shots. In addition, Moore recorded 73 assists on the year. He averaged 13.8 ppg and shot 57 percent from the floor.

With Barry's departure, Georgia Tech is left with questions about how to best utilize the shooting-guard position. Seniors Bryan Hill and Fred Vinson, Moore and freshman Drew Barry (Jon's brother) will vie for time at the spot.

Hill appears to be the front-runner for the position. After transferring from Chowan (N.C.) Junior College in 1990, Hill started 28 games for the Yellow Jackets in the '90 campaign. He hit 24 of 50 from the 3-point line, averaging 6.5 ppg and 3.9 rpg.

Last season, Hill was Tech's first man off the bench. He was a defensive stopper, holding All-American Harold Miner to 5-of-17 shooting in the Tech-USC NCAA tourney matchup.

Tech's depth on the pine is the best the team has enjoyed in recent years. Cremins is pleased with his players' athleticism and strength.

"We want to be stronger at the six and seven positions," he said. "That's something we are working on in our program."

Cremins also noted that his key reserves could play at either the two-spot or the wing position.

Barry, a redshirt freshman, will move to point guard when Best needs a break. Freshman Keith Kenney, also from Oak Hill, may see limited action. However, Cremins can't look too far down a bench that features mostly walk-ons.

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