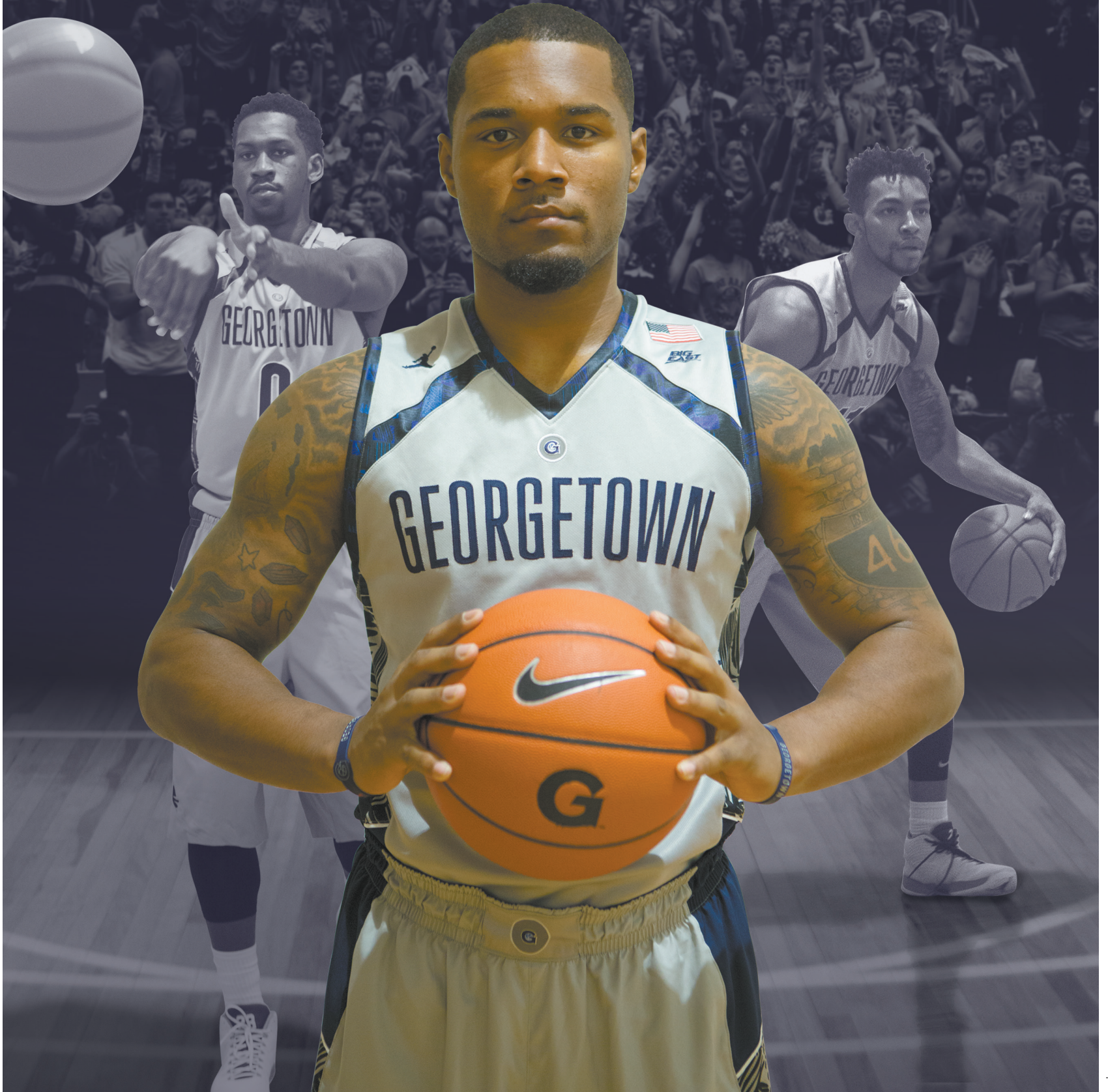


THE HOYA

BASKETBALL PREVIEW

2015 - 2016





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MEN

No. 4 D'VAUNTES SMITH-RIVERA



6-FOOT-3, 215 POUNDS
SENIOR GUARD

No. 0 L.J. PEAK



6-FOOT-5, 215 POUNDS
SOPHOMORE GUARD

No. 11 ISAAC COPELAND



6-FOOT-9, 220 POUNDS
SOPHOMORE FORWARD



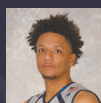
No. 1 TRE CAMPBELL
6-FOOT-2, 170 POUNDS
SOPHOMORE GUARD



No. 21 RIYAN WILLIAMS
6-FOOT-4, 185 POUNDS
SENIOR GUARD



No. 32 KALEB JOHNSON
6-FOOT-6, 205 POUNDS
FRESHMAN GUARD/FORWARD



No. 5 REGGIE CAMERON
6-FOOT-7, 225 POUNDS
JUNIOR FORWARD



No. 22 AKOY AGAU
6-FOOT-8, 235 POUNDS
SOPHOMORE FORWARD



No. 33 TREY MOURNING
6-FOOT-9, 230 POUNDS
SOPHOMORE FORWARD



No. 13 PAUL WHITE
6-FOOT-8, 230 POUNDS
SOPHOMORE FORWARD



No. 24 MARCUS DERRICKSON
6-FOOT-7, 250 POUNDS
FRESHMAN FORWARD



No. 42 BRADLEY HAYES
7-FOOT-0, 275 POUNDS
SENIOR CENTER



No. 15 JESSIE GOVAN
6-FOOT-10, 270 POUNDS
FRESHMAN CENTER

MEN'S SCHEDULE

11/14	vs. Radford	12 p.m.	01/13	at St. John's	6:30 p.m.
11/17	at Maryland	9 p.m.	01/16	vs. Villanova	1 p.m.
11/20	*Wisconsin	5 p.m.	01/19	at Xavier	8:30 p.m.
11/22	*Duke/VCU	TBA	01/23	at UConn	12 p.m.
11/28	vs. Bryant	12 p.m.	01/26	vs. Creighton	6:30 p.m.
12/01	vs. Maryland Eastern Shore	7 p.m.	01/30	vs. Providence	8 p.m.
12/05	vs. Syracuse	1 p.m.	02/02	at Butler	7 p.m.
12/07	vs. Brown	7 p.m.	02/06	at Seton Hall	9 p.m.
12/12	vs. UNC - Wilmington	2:30 p.m.	02/08	vs. St. John's	7 p.m.
12/15	vs. Monmouth	7:30 p.m.	02/13	at Providence	12 p.m.
12/19	vs. UNC - Asheville	12 p.m.	02/17	vs. Seton Hall	9 p.m.
12/22	at Charlotte	7 p.m.	02/20	vs. Xavier	12 p.m.
12/30	at DePaul	9 p.m.	02/27	vs. Butler	12 p.m.
01/02	vs. Marquette	5:30 p.m.	03/01	at Marquette	9 p.m.
01/05	at Creighton	9 p.m.	03/05	at Villanova	12 p.m.
01/09	vs. DePaul	12 p.m.			

* Indicates a neutral site game

SCHEDULES

WOMEN

No. 34 DOROTHY ADOMAKO



6-FOOT-1
SOPHOMORE GUARD

No. 35 DOMINIQUE VITALIS



6-FOOT-2
SENIOR FORWARD

No. 1 KATIE MCCORMICK



5-FOOT-9
SENIOR GUARD



No. 2 DIDI BURTON
5-FOOT-5
SOPHOMORE GUARD



No. 11 DIONNA WHITE
5-FOOT-5
FRESHMAN GUARD



No. 24 FAITH WOODARD
6-FOOT-2
JUNIOR FORWARD



No. 3 TYSHELL KING
5-FOOT-11
JUNIOR GUARD



No. 13 JADE MARTIN
5-FOOT-11
JUNIOR GUARD



No. 32 YAZMINE BELK
6-FOOT-3
SOPHOMORE CENTER



No. 4 MYKIA JONES
5-FOOT-8
JUNIOR GUARD



No. 21 JASMINE JACKSON
5-FOOT-9
GRADUATE STUDENT GUARD



No. 44 JODI-MARIE RAMIL
6-FOOT-2
FRESHMAN CENTER



No. 10 KI-KE RAFIU
6-FOOT-2
SENIOR FORWARD



No. 22 LOGAN BATTLE
6-FOOT-2
SENIOR FORWARD/GUARD

WOMEN'S SCHEDULE

11/13	at Maryland Eastern Shore	6 p.m.
11/18	vs. Virginia Tech	7 p.m.
11/22	at Memphis	3 p.m.
11/27	*Quinnipiac	5 p.m.
11/28	*TBD	TBA
12/02	at George Mason	7 p.m.
12/05	at St. Bonaventure	1:30 p.m.
12/10	vs. Delaware	7 p.m.
12/12	at Alabama	12 p.m.
12/23	vs. Towson	12 p.m.
12/29	at Xavier	7 p.m.
12/31	at Butler	6:30 p.m.
01/03	vs. Creighton	12 p.m.
01/05	vs. Providence	7 p.m.
01/08	at DePaul	7 p.m.
01/10	at Marquette	12 p.m.

01/15	vs. St. John's	12 p.m.
01/17	vs. Seton Hall	1 p.m.
01/24	at Villanova	1 p.m.
01/29	at Providence	7 p.m.
01/31	at Creighton	1:05 p.m.
02/05	vs. Marquette	7:05 p.m.
02/07	vs. DePaul	12 p.m.
02/12	at Seton Hall	7 p.m.
02/14	at St. John's	2 p.m.
02/21	vs. Villanova	12 p.m.
02/26	vs. Butler	11 a.m.
02/28	vs. Xavier	12 p.m.

* Indicates a neutral site game



GU FINISHES 2ND IN BIG EAST, AVOIDS

Although Georgetown defeated Indiana, Florida and Villanova and was selected as a No. 4 seed in the NCAA tournament, the Hoyas again failed to advance to the Sweet 16

PAOLO SANTAMARIA

Hoya Staff Writer

A dark track record loomed going into the 2015 postseason: In its last five appearances in the NCAA tournament, Georgetown had fallen to a double-digit seed: No. 10 seed Davidson, No. 13 seed Ohio, No. 11 seed VCU, No. 11 seed North Carolina State and finally, and most infamously, No. 15 seed Florida Gulf Coast. When the NCAA Tournament Selection Committee awarded the Hoyas a No. 4 seed despite a 21-10 record, 12-6 in the Big East, entering the tournament, many pundits put Georgetown on upset alert, especially as it was slotted to face No. 13 seed Eastern Washington and the nation's leading scorer, junior guard Tyler Harvey.

"It was the first tournament since we went to the [National Invitation Tournament] my sophomore year, so we definitely wanted to go in there with a full head of steam," senior guard D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera said.

The comparisons to the 2008 loss to Davidson were everywhere. Many compared Harvey to current NBA superstar Stephen Curry, the

nation's leading scorer and Davidson's top threat in 2008. But Harvey did not have the same impact as Curry, and the Hoyas were far from unprepared. Smith-Rivera's 25 points and a breakout game from then-junior center Bradley Hayes led the way as Georgetown held off a late comeback and won 84-74.

On paper, it made sense that the higher seed would have a relatively easy game. For fans familiar with the team's tournament struggles, the win meant much more. Although Georgetown would go on to fall in a closely contested game against No. 5 seed Utah, the win helped break the streak of tournament upsets.

However, before the Hoyas broke through in the tournament, the team needed to figure out its player rotation and identity. Despite the loss of guard Markel Starks and forward Nate Lubick to graduation, the Hoyas had five upperclassmen ready to play regular minutes at the start of the 2014-15 season. Guard Jabril Trawick, forwards Mikael Hopkins and Aaron Bowen and center Joshua Smith led the way as the team's four seniors while Smith-Rivera returned for his junior year.

Georgetown also had four freshmen capable of playing rotation minutes, with guard L.J. Peak leading the way as an opening-day starter. Three other then-freshmen — forwards Paul White and Isaac Copeland and guard Tre Campbell — rounded out the rest of the rotation, with then-sophomore forward Reggie Cameron and Hayes seeing occasional minutes.

The season started well with four straight wins, including an overtime thriller against then-No. 18 Florida. The early part of the season also included impressive individual moments, including White's performance against the Gators, when he recorded 10 points, five rebounds and three steals.

"[My] best performance stat-wise might have been against Butler, but as far as my personal belief, I believe it's probably against Florida down in the Battle of Atlantis in the Bahamas," White said.

Despite its early success, the team still had flaws. Peak broke out in his first game, scoring 23 points on 100 percent shooting from the floor before dealing with inconsistency throughout the rest of the season. Smith-Rivera struggled through his first few games, and Hopkins and Smith were up-and-down in the frontcourt. As the team approached a game against then-No. 2 and eventual NCAA tournament runner-up Wisconsin in the Battle for Atlantis semifinals, it seemed like a potential blowout loss.

That blowout never happened. Although the Hoyas fell 68-65, Smith-Rivera excelled,

posting 29 points on 11-of-18 shooting, including 5-of-6 from three-point range, showing why he was named Preseason Big East Player of the Year.

The next game, however, did not keep the momentum going. Georgetown fell to conference rival Butler in the third-place game 64-58. Still, the game revealed what the Hoyas' young talent was capable of, as Copeland and White posted 16 and 13 points, respectively, combining to shoot an efficient 12-of-18 from the field.

As the team walked away empty-handed from the Battle for Atlantis, one thing was clear: The freshmen were ready to play, and Head Coach John Thompson III needed to figure out how to properly integrate them into the rotation.

"We were just thrown in the fire ... kind of thrown in the mix," Copeland said.

As the freshmen worked to find their place in the rotation, the team's senior center made his presence known in a dominating fashion.

Smith, a transfer from UCLA who had to sit out the second half of his junior season due to academic ineligibility, posted 20 points and five rebounds against the then-No. 10 Kansas Jayhawks. Though the Hoyas would fall 75-70, much of the game was tightly contested, with Smith coming up with pivotal plays throughout the second half.

Despite the losses to Kansas and Wisconsin, Georgetown showed it had the talent to compete with the best teams in the nation. All that was left to do was win games. In an overtime shootout against Indiana at Madison Square Garden, it did exactly that.

Smith-Rivera led the way with another 29-point performance, while Bowen broke out for 22 points of his own as the Hoyas defeated the Hoosiers 91-87 in overtime in their last nonconference game.

As Georgetown's Big East schedule began, it met particularly strong resistance from two conference rivals: Xavier and Providence. The Hoyas would lose every matchup with the Musketeers and the Friars, with then-senior Xavier center Matt Stainbrook and then-sophomore Providence guard Kris Dunn proving to be two of Georgetown's toughest matchups. However, the Hoyas only lost two games to the rest of the teams in the Big East.

"The teams that are, I don't want to say the bottom [of the conference standings], but the teams that don't get as much appreciation are just as tough to battle night in and night out, because they've got some great players," Smith-Rivera said.

Winning 12 games in last year's Big East was no small feat. Six teams from the 10-team conference made the NCAA tournament's



FILE PHOTO: JULIA HENNRİKUS/THE HOYA

Isaac Copeland dunks against Villanova.

AFTER BIG EAST SPLIT, A RIVALRY RENEWED

Georgetown and Syracuse will meet again for the first time since the 2012-13 season



FILE PHOTO: CHRIS BIEN/THE HOYA

D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera scored 15 points against Syracuse on March 9, 2013.

CAROLYN MAGUIRE

Hoya Staff Writer

A halfcourt, desperate heave at the buzzer: That is how the rivalry that helped define the Big East as a premier conference ended.

In the 2013 Big East tournament semifinals, the end of the old Big East was imminent, and first-seeded Georgetown and fifth-seeded Syracuse were slated to face off for the 14th and final time in the conference tournament.

The stands were littered with signs: One read, "The Rivalry is closed," while another said, "Kiss 'Cuse Goodbye."

Of course, the game took place in Madison Square Garden, where the conference was built. Gerry McNamara sat on the Syracuse bench. Patrick Ewing's (CAS '85) number from his time on the Knicks hung from the rafters. John Thompson Jr. and Derrick Coleman watched from the stands. Jim Boeheim still coached from the sidelines.

It seemed like those who contributed to some of the rivalry's most noteworthy moments were there to bear witness. An era was ending and everyone knew it.

In the teams' two previous meetings that season, Georgetown dominated Syracuse. On Feb. 23, the Hoyas handed the Orange a 57-46 loss and ended the Orange's 38-game home winning streak. The game, fittingly, was reminiscent of the rivalry's beginning in 1980.

In 1980, Georgetown defeated Syracuse 52-50 in the last men's basketball game played at Manley Field House. With the win, the Hoyas ended the Orange's 57-game home winning

streak. That was when John Thompson Jr. made the declaration that defined the rivalry: "Manley Field House is officially closed."

Following Georgetown's win in 2013, many expected, even begged, current Georgetown Head Coach John Thompson III to mimic his father's speech, to close the Carrier Dome, but he refrained.

"I'm sure you guys are waiting for a Manley Field House-type of statement. You're not going to get it," Thompson III said in the postgame press conference. "But it feels good to win here."

The final meeting in the Big East tournament would be different. There would not be any such dominance. For nearly 40 minutes, Syracuse stayed in control, leading by as many as 12 points in the second half.

Georgetown, however, never let Syracuse pull away. Then, with seven seconds remaining, then-sophomore forward Otto Porter Jr. netted two free throws to tie the game 51-51 and send it into overtime.

In overtime, then-senior guard Brandon Triche and then-junior forward C.J. Fair gave the Orange a 58-55 lead. Then-sophomore guard Jabril Trawick's attempt to force a second overtime slammed off the backboard.

Syracuse, 58. Georgetown, 55.

The rivalry that had helped define the storied Big East had seemingly ended.

In the fall of 2011, Syracuse announced its intention to leave the Big East for the Atlantic Coast Conference. In July 2012 it became official: After paying a \$7.5 million exit fee, the school would leave July 1, 2013.

For the Hoyas, the last three years will be

remembered for postseason failures. After the semifinal loss, the Hoyas were a No. 2 seed in the NCAA tournament, and in their first-round game, Florida Gulf Coast shocked them 78-68.

In 2014, the Hoyas failed to make the NCAA tournament. Although Georgetown defeated Eastern Washington in the first round of last year's tournament, it again failed to advance to the second weekend, losing to Utah in the Round of 32.

Meanwhile, the Orange are marred by scandal.

Last season, the NCAA cited the Syracuse men's basketball program and Boeheim for lacking institutional control from 2000-12. Specific violations include improper benefits for players, academic misconduct and a failure to enforce the school's drug policy.

As a result, the NCAA docked Boeheim 108 victories and 12 scholarships over the next four seasons, suspended Boeheim for nine games and fined the team more than \$1 million. Syracuse also missed the entire 2015 postseason following a self-imposed postseason ban.

Neither program is at the height it reached during the heyday of the Big East. One aspect of the good old days will make a triumphant return, however: The rivalry is back on.

The two teams agreed in June 2014 to renew the rivalry with a four-year out-of-conference home-and-home. The first game is set for Dec. 5 at the Verizon Center.

For a majority of the players, it will be the first time facing each other. Only Georgetown senior guard D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera and senior center Bradley Hayes and Syracuse graduate student guard Trevor Cooney and senior center DeJuan Coleman have played in the rivalry.

"It'll be exciting. I've played in the games before," Smith-Rivera said. "It'll be great for us and the young guys who haven't played against Syracuse."

Sophomore guard Tre Campbell will be among those who will play in their first Georgetown-Syracuse game. As a Washington, D.C. native, however, Campbell may be more familiar with the rivalry than some of his counterparts.

"That is a great rivalry, a Big East rivalry from the get-go," Campbell said. "That's great to get them back with us and that's going to be another challenge that we are going to have to face."

Although both schools will relish the four-game series, the future of the rivalry is still in question. Thompson is hopeful the schools can reach a long-term agreement.

"I think time will tell. You know, hopefully that will happen," Thompson said. "I think the people up there hope so, but it's just so hard with how fluid intercollegiate athletics is. It's hard to say definitively, especially these days, because we're not in the same conference, that this will go on forever. But hopefully it will."

TOP 25 MATCHUPS HEADLINE NONCONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Maryland, Wisconsin stand out among early opponents

MADLINE AUERBACH

Hoya Staff Writer

The Georgetown men's basketball team has historically enjoyed a relatively easy out-of-conference schedule in its first few games. Teams such as St. Francis Brooklyn, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Robert Morris presented little challenge last season. The Hoyas routed each team by a margin of at least 15 points, quickly building a 3-0 record.

This season's early opponents could not be more different. Georgetown will play No. 3 Maryland, No. 17 Wisconsin, Syracuse and either No. 4 Duke or VCU by Dec. 5.

"We like the challenge," senior center and co-captain Bradley Hayes said. "To be the best, you've got to beat the best. To take on the best early and beat them is going to be the best thing."

The team kicks off its 2015-16 campaign Nov. 14 against Radford. Georgetown beat Radford last season, walking away with a convincing 76-49 victory. With a squad full of returning players and promising new personnel, the Hoyas should be confident heading into this rematch against the Highlanders.

Nonetheless, the Hoyas will soon after encounter much more challenging programs. Just three days after the Radford game, Georgetown will take on Maryland for the first time in more than 20 years, reigniting a marquee matchup in the D.C., Maryland and Virginia area.

"That's going to be a great matchup," sophomore guard Tre Campbell said. "We haven't played each other in so long. I know everybody in the DMV is ready for it."

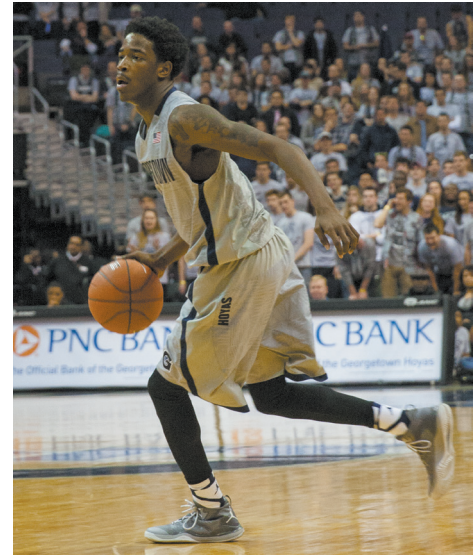
The Terrapins boasted a 28-7 regular-season record last year, including a 14-4 Big Ten conference record. At the conclusion of the season, Maryland was No. 12 in the AP Top 25 rankings. Maryland, led by Head Coach Mark Turgeon, is currently ranked third in the preseason USA Today Coaches Poll, behind only Kentucky and North Carolina.

"They have the best, or one of the best, teams in the country. ... We'll see when that game goes off," Head Coach John Thompson III said. "I think both Mark Turgeon and I are pretty excited."

Turgeon echoed Thompson's sentiments. "It's two really good programs," Turgeon said. "Probably should have our best teams we've had the last two or three years. Everything is a positive with this."

Georgetown will face Maryland on the Terps' home turf Nov. 17 at Comcast Xfinity Center, where the Terrapins recorded an 18-1 home record in their 2014-15 campaign. The Blue and Gray notched an unremarkable 5-4 record on the road last season, so this much-anticipated away matchup against the Terps will certainly be a challenge.

Building on the early run of challenging opponents, Georgetown will take on Wisconsin on Nov. 20 as a part of the 2K Classic, a



FILE PHOTO: MICHELLE XU/THE HOYA

D.C. native Campbell is eager to play UMD.

small preseason tournament that also features Duke and VCU. The Badgers come off a run to the NCAA championship game, where they made it very difficult for the Duke Blue Devils to capture the title. Last year, Wisconsin scored an average of 72.5 points per game and allowed an average of just 58.2 points per game to its opponents. However, the Badgers only return two starters, and preseason rankings place them 17th in the country.

The game against Wisconsin will take place at Madison Square Garden, as will the Hoyas' contest against either Duke or VCU. The winners of the Georgetown-Wisconsin game and the Duke-VCU game will face off in the finals, while the losers of the opening-round games will play in the consolation game. Preseason rankings have Duke, with its seven freshmen, slated at No. 4 in the Top 25. VCU fell to Ohio State in the first round of the NCAA tournament last season, but it boasted a 26-10 regular-season record.

"Duke and Wisconsin at The Garden, that's the biggest stage it can get, so I'm excited," sophomore forward Isaac Copeland said.

The Hoyas will face Bryant and Maryland Eastern Shore at the end of November and beginning of December, quickly followed by the long-awaited game against Syracuse on Dec. 5. Georgetown and Syracuse have not played one another since the Big East reorganized, so this game will be the first meeting between the bitter rivals in over two years.

"I know that our program and fans will be excited to have a game against Syracuse on our schedule," Georgetown Athletic Director Lee Reed said in a statement released in July 2014. "This is something that both schools have worked very hard to have happen, and we're very happy to have this series continue."

Ultimately, the Hoyas view this tough out-of-conference schedule as a valuable challenge that, if they are successful, could establish them as a top national contender.

"Hopefully we can come out with all wins," senior guard and captain D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera said. "I'm certain the guys will all be ready. We've done a lot of preparation and leading up to that, we've got high expectations."



FILE PHOTO: JULIA HENNIKUS/THE HOYA

Head Coach John Thompson III is preparing for games against UMD and Wisconsin.

GOVAN, DERRICKSON EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE

While it may not be as highly touted as last season's group of freshmen, this year's cl

#15 Jessie Govan



ESPN ranked Govan as the No. 67 prospect in the Class of 2015.

#24 Marcus Derrickson



Derrickson scored at least 15 points in three of Georgetown's four games in Italy.

#32 Kaleb Johnson



Johnson averaged 23.3 points and 12.2 rebounds in his final year of high school.

#22 Akoy Agau



A knee injury will sideline Agau, a Louisville transfer, this season.

DARIUS IRAJ

Hoya Staff Writer

On a team led by senior guard and co-captain D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera and four talented sophomores, it would be easy to overlook this year's freshman class. The sophomore class, which ESPN ranked as the seventh-best recruiting class in the country last year, will be one of the focal points of the team this year. However, this year's freshmen may play a larger role than expected.

"The new freshmen have been a great pick-up for us this year," sophomore forward Paul White said. "They are strong; they know what they are doing. We expect a lot from them coming into this year and we are looking forward to seeing what they can provide for the team."

This year's class continues a trend in Head Coach John Thompson III's recruiting habits — his affinity for local players from D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Two of the three freshmen in this year's class, forward Marcus Derrickson and guard/forward Kaleb Johnson, are from the DMV area. However, the freshman with the most hype, center Jessie Govan, is not.

Govan, a rare back-to-the-basket big man, comes from Wings Academy in Bronx, N.Y. Ranked the No. 67 prospect in the Class of 2015 by ESPN, Govan could be the next player in Georgetown's long lineage of star big men. Shandue McNeill, who coached Govan when he played for the New York Lightning Amateur Athletic Union team, highlighted Govan's low-post ability as a key aspect of his game.

"I think Jessie was one of the best, not only in our program, but across the country, he was one of the best back-to-the-basket big men in the country," McNeill said. "From an offensive standpoint, he was pretty much unguardable on the block."

Govan averaged 8.25 points and 7.0 rebounds per game on Georgetown's preseason trip to Italy, with a highlight in his performance in a loss to BC Atletas, a Lithuanian professional team, when he recorded 15 points and nine rebounds. He is expected to split minutes with senior center and co-captain Bradley Hayes this season. Billy Turnage, who coached Govan at Wings Academy, believes he will be ready to perform right away.

Turnage coached Wings Academy to a Public School Athletic League title in New York City last season. Govan dominated the tournament's championship game with 17

points and 17 rebounds.

"He's been in the spotlight his entire career so far," Turnage said. "He's not an unknown kid. He's been highly recruited since the eighth grade."

As Govan begins his freshman season at Georgetown, he is prepared to bring more than just an offensive presence on the low block.

"The thing that is beautiful about Jessie and what makes him a perfect fit for Georgetown is the system that [Georgetown] runs, he fits it perfectly," Turnage said. "He can shoot the 15 [to] 18-footer, he passes the ball extremely well ... and he's intelligent. He has a high IQ on the court."

According to Turnage and McNeill, Govan still needs to improve his rebounding skills. Although he averaged 13 rebounds per game in his senior season at Wings Academy, Tur-

nage and McNeill both believe if he can improve his rebounding, it will take him to the next level.

Govan is not the only freshman who could be starting this year. Freshman forward Marcus Derrickson, whom ESPN ranked as the 89th-best prospect in the Class of 2015, was the team's leading scorer during its trip to Italy. Derrickson scored a game-high 20 points, including 4-of-6 shooting from three-point range in a 74-64 win over Haukar Basket, a professional team from Iceland. He

again led the Hoyas in scoring with 18 points in a 95-36 win over the Italy All-Stars, a team composed of players from Italy's first, second and third divisions of professional basketball. He finished the trip by scoring 15 points and grabbing nine rebounds in a 76-73 win over the Swiss team SAM Basket Massagno.

Derrickson's performance in Italy impressed his teammates.

"I was actually surprised at how well he played. I didn't think Marcus had all that in his arsenal. He's also one of the better three-point shooters — probably the second-best three-point shooter on the team," Hayes said.

According to Thompson, Derrickson himself is willing to go one step further than Hayes in terms of his own shooting ability.

"He gets rebounds and can score on the block," Thompson said. "He also can really shoot. He will tell me he is our best shooter."

Derrickson attended Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax, Va., for his first three years of high school. He led Paul VI to two Washington Catholic Athletic Conference championships in his three years before transferring to Brewster Academy in New Hampshire for his senior

[[[Derrickson] gets rebounds and can score on the block. He also can really shoot. He will tell me he is our best shooter.]]]

- Head Coach John Thompson III

RECRUITING FOCUSES ON HISTORY, LOCATION

Georgetown recruits basketball players from all areas of the country, emphasizing the school's basketball history, academic reputation and player development

TYLER PARK

Hoya Staff Writer

Jagan Mosely was torn. The 6-foot-3-inch guard had just finished his junior season at St. Anthony's High School in Jersey City, N.J. He averaged 13 points per game, led his team to a 28-2 record and was named a Second Team All-State selection. In addition, Mosely had a 4.2 GPA and ranked in the top of his class at St. Anthony's.

As he moved closer to choosing a college, though, he faced a dilemma.

"My parents and I, we kept going back and forth, deciding between whether I wanted to go to a dominantly academic school or a dominantly basketball school," Mosely said.

When Georgetown offered Mosely a scholarship, it gave him the best of both worlds, and he committed to play for Head Coach John Thompson III and his staff starting in fall 2016.

"When Georgetown came in it was the perfect fit, because they have both high-level academics and basketball," Mosely said.

In many ways, recruiting is the foundation of any college basketball program. It is difficult to predict how a high school player will develop during his time in college, but if coaches can bring in talented players, they can create a foundation for success. However, the recruiting process is not always as straightforward as it was with Mosely.

THE PROCESS

Thompson and his three assistant coaches — Kevin Broadus, Tavaras Hardy and Kevin Sutton — evaluate hundreds of prospects around the world in each recruiting class.

"The majority of it, at least from my vantage point, is done when we are not playing games," Thompson said. "It's harder for me to get away because we're practicing and playing games, whereas it's easier for an assistant."

When the coaching staff identifies a prospect that it is interested in, it reaches out and begins to communicate with the player.

"The first time I spoke to Coach Thompson was on the phone right before my senior year started, I believe," junior forward Reggie Cameron said. "He just said that they were interested in me and stuff like that. I think it was Coach Broadus that saw me at a Nike camp down here, I think a week earlier."

According to Thompson, whichever assistant coach identifies a prospect of interest will usually take the lead in recruitment. In addition, Thompson himself is involved with all of the prospects. Thompson and his staff frequently attend games and practices around the country as they pursue their desired talent.

Scott Willard, who coached current Georgetown sophomore forward Isaac Copeland during his junior year of high school at the Miller School in Charlottesville, Va., said Thompson and his staff invested a lot of time in Copeland's recruiting process.

"They attended a lot of our practices and games; they recruited him hard. We played in a couple of events in D.C., as well, given that we're not too far, it was not a bad trip for them to really make an effort," Willard said.

Thompson and his staff received positive reviews from high school coaches, including Willard and Sean McAloon, who coached current Georgetown sophomore guard Tre Campbell at St. John's College High School in Washington, D.C., for their conduct during recruiting.

"It's not the first time I've ever dealt with them before. I mean, I had some kids before I got here that were at my old school at Benedictine; I dealt with ... them substantially before, so it wasn't the first time. It's always been enjoyable," McAloon said.

If there is mutual interest between a prospect and the coaching staff, the two sides work to set up a visit to campus. According to Thompson, the staff aims to show each prospect a normal weekend at Georgetown.

"I think it's important, good, bad, ugly, right, wrong, that once they leave here they have some semblance of what their experience is going to be like," Thompson said.

Hoya Hoops Madness has stood out as an important event for recruiting visits. Freshman center Jessie Govan, freshman forward Marcus Derrickson and freshman guard/forward Kaleb Johnson all attended Hoya Hoops Madness in 2014. In addition, Mosely, who is currently the only prospect who is committed to Georgetown in the Class of 2016, attended this year's event.

"It's been big, because it's a fun time," Thompson said. "It's a big party. So the kids come and it's light, it's a fun time, so it has been important for us."

THE SELLING POINTS

Thompson and his staff highlight a few key aspects of Georgetown and its men's basketball program when recruiting.

"I think we have a very good history, I think we have a good present, I think we have a good future as it relates to basketball," Thompson said. "I think Georgetown is an outstanding academic institution and the degree means something, and our location in Washington, D.C., is important."

Many recruits are particularly attracted to Georgetown's rich history of success in men's basketball and are aware of Georgetown's former standouts, including Dikembe Mutombo (COL '91) and Alonzo Mourning (COL '92).

"The history of the school is just amazing," senior center and co-captain Bradley Hayes said. "You know, being a big man coming to a big-man school with the history of Dikembe, Alonzo, all the greats, I wanted to follow right in line and I felt like this was the best place to do it."

In addition, many of Georgetown's recruits are attracted to the university's strong academic reputation.

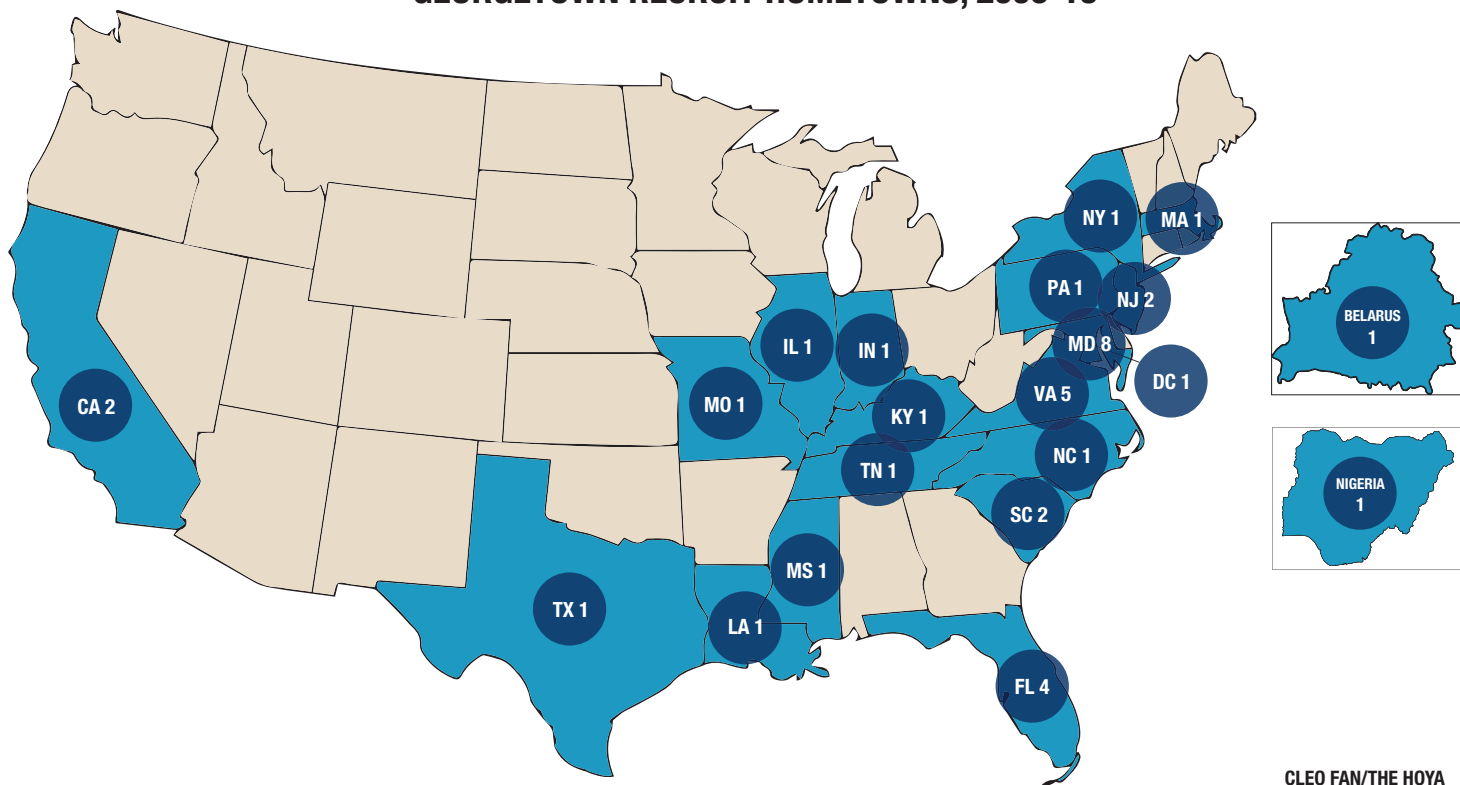
"The academics, one, obviously," Cameron said when asked what attracted him to Georgetown. "The university as a whole is second to none. Basketball and academics, you know, you can't find a lot of things to complain about."



FILE PHOTO: CLAIRE SOISSON/THE HOYA

Sophomore guard Tre Campbell chose to attend Georgetown to stay in his hometown.

GEORGETOWN RECRUIT HOMETOWNS, 2006-15



CLEO FAN/THE HOYA

THE LURE OF THE PROS

According to Thompson, Georgetown's rigorous academics are actually a deterrent for certain recruits.

The NBA has become a billion-dollar industry. Superstars like LeBron James, Stephen Curry and Anthony Davis are ubiquitous, constantly appearing in commercials, Vines, video games and Twitter feeds. The appeal of the bright lights of the pros is stronger than ever.

As a result, ever since the NBA implemented a requirement that players spend at least one year after high school before entering the NBA Draft, the "one-and-done" has dominated headlines, and certain recruits are singularly focused on moving onto the pros.

Superstars like John Wall, Kyrie Irving and Anthony Davis used college basketball as a one-year steppingstone to the NBA, seemingly blazing a trail for professional success at an early age. However, although players like Wall, Irving and Davis draw attention for their success, there are far more examples of players who entered the draft early only to find that success in the NBA was far from guaranteed.

"Now I don't know the exact numbers ... but how many kids have really been one-and-done? Big picture, it's a small number," Thompson said. "But what that does is those guys garner so much attention from the press, from the media, that the following classes, even kids that have no shot, they aspire for that."

Despite this trend, however, Thompson has not sent any players to the NBA after only one season in his time at Georgetown. Otto Porter Jr., Jeff Green (COL '12), Roy Hibbert (COL '08) and Greg Monroe are examples of players Thompson has coached who have gone on to professional success. Porter and Monroe stayed at Georgetown for two years each, Green stayed for three years and Hibbert stayed for the full

four years. However, the team's lack of one-and-done players has not been the result of a conscious effort by Thompson and his staff.

"We want the best players we can," Thompson said. "We want the kid that while they're here, appreciates Georgetown, like a Greg Monroe who left after two years, Otto Porter who left after two years, so it's not like we've said we're not going to recruit players who will have the opportunity to leave after one [year]."

Georgetown players also have NBA ambitions, but Thompson and his staff look for players who are also focused on their development off the court.

"I have a locker room with 12 or 13 guys that want to make it to the NBA," Thompson said. "But they also appreciate Georgetown and everything Georgetown has to offer and understand that while you are working and want to grow your game, you want to grow your mind also."

A GLOBAL EFFORT

Georgetown recruits from all areas of the country and even internationally.

"That's the power of Georgetown and that's the power of our tradition and our history, and also where we stand now in the Big East. We're able to recruit nationally [and] globally, so we do that," Thompson said.

However, Thompson and his staff tend to bring in a significant number of prospects from the D.C., Maryland and Virginia area. In the last 10 recruiting classes, Georgetown has added 38 new players. Thirteen of them, including Johnson, Derrickson and Campbell, have come from the DMV area. Some prospects prefer to attend college relatively near their hometowns, which adds to the attraction of Georgetown.

"I wanted to stay around in the DMV just to stay close to my parents and my family,

and I just felt comfortable here. That's why I chose it," Campbell said.

Georgetown also brings in prospects from all areas of the country. In the last 10 years, the Hoyas have recruited players from 19 different states and three different countries — the United States, Belarus and Nigeria. That list includes eight players from Maryland, five players from Virginia and four players from Florida.

AN AREA OF SUCCESS

ESPN ranked Georgetown's Class of 2014 as the seventh-best recruiting class in the nation. In addition, ESPN ranked the Class of 2015 as the 26th best in the country. Of the 13 players on the Hoyas' current roster, eight were ranked in ESPN's Top 100 recruits in their respective classes coming out of high school.

However, Thompson is more concerned with how players will fit in at Georgetown.

"Those rankings, they are what they are, but I don't think you should put stock in who you recruit solely based on numbers as opposed to who you think can help you, come in and contribute," Thompson said.

Last season, four freshmen — Copeland, Campbell, forward Paul White and guard L.J. Peak — played in all 33 of Georgetown's games, each playing at least 13 minutes per game. The Class of 2014's immediate impact demonstrates the importance of recruiting in college basketball, and Thompson hopes that he and his staff can continue that success in the future.

"As a coach, every year, you want to get everyone you want to get," Thompson said. "But that doesn't always happen. I think for the most part, we're getting some good student-athletes in here. Can you always say, 'I'd love for it to be better?' Absolutely. But I think we're doing okay."



DANIEL SMITH/THE HOYA

Sophomore forward Isaac Copeland scored at least 17 points in three Big East games last season, including 17 in a win over Villanova.

SOPHOMORE CLASS PREPARED FOR NEW ROLES

With only 4 upperclassmen on the roster, the group will need to step up

SAM ABRAMS

Hoya Staff Writer

Before the 2014-15 season began, then-senior guard Jabril Trawick made it clear he was there to provide senior leadership and strength to the Hoyas.

"With the way my personality is and the kind of player that I am, I'm going to be a naturally vocal person on the court and off the court and just try to teach the younger guys," Trawick said. "I'm going to be a leader."

This year's Hoyas have several advantages. They are led by Preseason All-Big East senior guard D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera and experienced Head Coach John Thompson III. Georgetown's roster is blessed with good overall athleticism and height, as sophomore point guard Tre Campbell is the shortest player on the roster at 6-foot-2.

The roster also includes two touted front-court recruits — freshman center Jessie Govan and freshman forward Marcus Derrickson — who are expected to contribute immediately. One area in which the Hoyas are lacking, however, is upperclassman leadership, the type that Trawick provided.

After the graduation of Trawick and other important contributors like forward Mikael Hopkins and center Joshua Smith, Thompson expects a new crop of leaders to emerge for the Hoyas this season.

"I've told our sophomores, we need them to perform like seniors, as it relates to production, but more importantly in understanding and caring," Thompson said. "I'm putting a lot on their shoulders, but I think they can handle it."

One player whom Thompson tasked with big responsibilities from day one is versatile

sophomore guard L.J. Peak, who became the first Hoya in five years to regularly feature in Georgetown's starting lineup as a freshman. The Gaffney, S.C. product started 32 of 33 games for Georgetown, leading the team in scoring five times and finishing third on the team in minutes played per game.

After establishing himself as a key contributor as a freshman, Peak feels ready to accept Thompson's challenge of becoming a crucial, albeit soft-spoken, team leader.

"I'm not much of a talker, so I just lead by example. I just play hard all the time and [the freshmen] see that," Peak said.

Sophomore forward Isaac Copeland was similarly thrown into the fire last year, starting 11 games and finishing fourth on the team in rebounds per game and fifth in points per game. Armed now with a year's worth of experience in the physical Big East, Copeland feels confident that he has grown into a bigger role on the team.

"Last year was more of a learning experience, like just growing and learning from the older guys," Copeland said. "This year, I have one year underneath my belt. Basically, I've been more of a teacher and more vocal this year. So [I am] definitely seeing my role change this year compared to last year."

Despite his potential, Copeland realizes that as a freshman, the pressure of playing crucial minutes led him to underperform at times. With a year of experience and a bigger role as a leader, Copeland said he better understands the ups and downs of the college game:

"Last year I think I got rattled a little too easily — especially last season. But now, I realize that certain things happen throughout the course of the game, and it's a long game. You just need to keep

your head up and keep playing," Copeland said.

The departure of last year's senior class leaves the Hoyas without 57 percent of their scoring and 50 percent of their rebounding from last season. Sophomore forward Paul White, who averaged 5.0 points per game as he assumed a bigger role as the season progressed, is ready and willing to replace that production.

"I'm just going to see whatever the coaching staff needs from me, whether it's passing, scoring, defending, rebounding. Whatever they need from me, I am here to offer all of my abilities and just win," White said.

Thompson sees his sophomore class as the crucial piece in this year's squad that could determine how far the Hoyas go come March.

"That class is the core of what we have. We have a very good freshman class. This year's freshman class is going to play just like last year's freshman class played," Thompson said. "And you have some seniors up there in D'Vauntes and Bradley [Hayes], who have been very good. But the sophomore class is going to have to make huge strides and maintain the consistency."

Copeland echoed Thompson's sentiment, noting that the sophomores acknowledge their enhanced roles and relish the chance to become leaders on a young team. Copeland and the rest of the sophomore class will have to prove that they can lead in both word and deed this year if the Hoyas stand a chance at progressing into the second week of March Madness.

"We all played in some big games last year. We're going to be called upon," Copeland said. "We have young guys that need to learn from us. The seniors, they told us some things last year. We have to show the freshmen, since they're young guys, how to do it, too."

PEAK LEARNS FROM TEAM USA EXPERIENCE

The sophomore played for the U-19 National Team in Greece this summer

AIDAN CURRAN

Hoya Staff Writer

Sophomore guard L.J. Peak added several stamps to his passport this summer. Coming off a strong freshman season in which he was featured in the starting lineup from start to finish — a rarity for a freshman under Head Coach John Thompson III — Peak was named to the Team USA U-19 team. Between that and Georgetown's summer trip to Italy to play against international competition, Peak had a basketball in his hands for most of the offseason.

Peak helped the U-19 team to a perfect 7-0 record at the 2015 FIBA U19 World Championship, held in Heraklion, Greece. Peak, who averaged 7.9 points and 2.3 rebounds per game for Georgetown last season, started two games in Greece and averaged 3.6 points and 1.1 rebounds per game.

The team featured the United States' top young talent, with most of the players either entering their senior year of high school or their freshman year of college. This provided Peak with the opportunity to take on a leadership role on the team. Peak's teammates included Jayson Tatum, the No. 2 overall recruit in the Class of 2016 according to ESPN, and Harry Giles, the No. 1-ranked recruit on the same list, both of whom are committed to Duke.

Peak hopes to use what he learned to help senior guard D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera and senior center Bradley Hayes, Georgetown's co-captains, lead the team this season.

"I was on the team with a bunch of young guys, so I just learned how to be more of a leader and just bring it back to Georgetown and help D'Vauntes and Bradley, be more of a leader and just lead by experience," Peak said.

After losing defensive stalwart and team leader guard Jabril Trawick — as well as center Joshua Smith and forwards Mikael Hopkins and Aaron Bowen — the team will need a new infusion of leadership as it looks to build upon a 2014-15 season that ended in a Round of 32 loss in the NCAA tournament. Peak, along with his fellow

sophomore teammates including forward Isaac Copeland, guard Tre Campbell and forward Paul White, will be called upon to lead a team that now features only three seniors in Smith-Rivera, Hayes and guard Riyan Williams.

"It feels different a little bit because now I'm a leader and I'm looked up to by the younger guys, and I have to come ready to play every time," Peak said.

In addition to improving as a leader with the national team, Peak also improved on the court. As a freshman, Peak shot 39.4 percent from the field and 24.6 percent from three-point range. During his time with the national team in Greece, Peak displayed an improved shot, recording a 41.2 shooting percentage from the field.

"I've really been working on my dribbling and my shooting, and I think it's getting a lot better," Peak said.

If Peak can extend his shooting range and become more of a versatile scorer, he could quickly become Georgetown's second-best scoring option behind Smith-Rivera. After scoring a career-high 23 points in last year's season opener against St. Francis (Brooklyn), Peak levelled off as the season went on and teams adjusted to him defensively, keeping him from driving into the paint.

Thompson noted that Peak's experience playing with Team USA will likely improve his performance in the Hoyas' 2015-16 campaign.

"I think it helped," Thompson said. "Representing your country is obviously something that's unique and special. I thought it was good for him just to go against the guys he played against in practice every day, and the guys he played with. Overall it was terrific."

Peak's teammates are taking note of his improved play as well.

"L.J. has gotten a lot better. He's gotten a lot faster, gotten a lot stronger, and he's gotten a lot smarter with the game as well," Hayes said. "His three-point range is a lot better, he's not just someone who can go to the hole and lay it up. He's going to be good."

"Defensively, he's gotten a lot better as well," Smith-Rivera added.

Thompson has also noticed a jump in Peak's game.

"I think he's starting to really take pride in his defense and have fun with defense, as opposed to just being naturally good at it," Thompson said. "But I think the biggest thing with all the sophomores is the understanding of how we're going about things; that has been a huge jump."

Much will be expected from the sophomore class this year, with two or three sophomores potentially slated to be in the starting lineup for the Hoyas' season opener at home against Radford on Nov. 14. After his time with the national team, Peak seems ready to become a go-to option and a leader who can carry the team deeper into the NCAA tournament than it has gone in recent years.

"I don't have many personal goals but as far as my team, just being a winner, winning the championship, Big East, and hopefully the national championship," Peak said.



DANIEL SMITH/THE HOYA

SMITH-RIVERA RETURNS FOR FINAL SEASON

After surprising many by declaring for the NBA Draft, the Hoyas' leading scorer in each of the last two seasons changed his mind and came back for his senior year

TOM SCHNOOR Hoya Staff Writer





PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ISABEL BINAMIRA AND DANIEL SMITH

The rumor broke just before lunchtime on March 31.

“Hearing not-so-great things about D’Vauntes Smith-Rivera being back at Georgetown next season,” Casual Hoya, a popular SB Nation site, tweeted. “Hopefully wrong.”

The first user to respond gave voice to the feelings of more than a few Georgetown fans.

“Is this an April Fool’s joke?” @GyrationMaster asked on Twitter. “I genuinely hope so.”

It was not a joke, and a few hours later it was official.

“Junior D’Vauntes Smith-Rivera to Submit for NBA Draft,” read the press release released by the Georgetown University Athletics Department.

Just like that, the team’s leading scorer in each of the last two seasons was gone.

SECOND THOUGHTS

A player leaving early for the NBA is not a new phenomenon at Georgetown. Just two years prior to Smith-Rivera’s declaration, Otto Porter Jr. made the jump after a breakout sophomore campaign earned him the Big East Player of the Year award. His decision was not a surprise. Although the Hoyas were disappointed in the NCAA tournament, Porter’s stock was as high as it was ever likely to get. The Washington Wizards validated it on draft night when they made him the third overall pick and signed him to a

four-year, \$19 million contract.

Smith-Rivera’s case was different. There were no sure riches awaiting him at the professional level. At the time of the announcement, ESPN NBA draft expert Chad Ford did not list the junior on his “Big Board” of the top 100 players in the draft.

“Fringe prospect,” DraftExpress.com’s Jonathan Givony tweeted.

No one disputed that Smith-Rivera is a great basketball player. He had averaged more than 16 points per game and shot better than 38 percent from behind the arc in each of the previous two seasons. In addition, his announced departure came less than two weeks after he led his team to the Round of 32 in the NCAA tournament. But talent evaluators had doubts about how the 6-foot-3-inch guard’s skills would translate to the next level.

An October 2014 scouting report from DraftExpress.com noted that Smith-Rivera had the skill set of a shooting guard but the size of a point guard. The report also questioned whether the Indianapolis native could defend the speed and quickness of guards in the NBA.

The analytics did not bode well for Smith-Rivera either. Kenpom.com, the leading advanced stats website in college basketball, features a tool that matches players with their most statistically similar peers. Smith-Rivera’s junior season most closely aligned with four players; only one of these players, former Connecticut guard Shabazz Napier, was

drafted and played in the NBA. The other three, Gonzaga’s Matt Bouldin, Wisconsin’s Trévon Hughes and North Carolina State’s Trevor Lacey, currently play in South Korea, France and Italy, respectively. All, like Smith-Rivera, boasted impressive college resumes, yet none could translate his game to the NBA level.

A week after his original announcement, however, Smith-Rivera rendered the debate about his professional prospects pointless, at least for another 12 months.

“Offensively, I think I’m more than ready. I can score the ball in different ways, can make plays for my teammates, can defend the ball. There’s a lot of things that I think can translate.”

—Senior Guard D’Vauntes Smith-Rivera

“1 More Go Around!” Smith-Rivera posted to his Instagram account April 7, along with a photo of himself in a gray Georgetown uniform. The athletics department did not release a statement, but the story was soon confirmed: Smith-Rivera would return for his senior season in 2015-16.

In Smith-Rivera’s eyes, the decision about his future was not necessarily a basketball decision.

“Over time I had thought about some things, like finishing school,” Smith-Rivera said. “I’ve come this far — to not finish would be disappointing to my family more than anything. I’m a first generation for my family to go to college and I’ll be the first to graduate, so that was a major factor.”

Opponents in the Big East can testify to the competitiveness and confidence of Smith-Rivera, so it should come as little surprise that the guard said doubts about his ability factored little into his decision.

“I got some feedback, but I wasn’t declared long enough to even really get opinions on where I would pan out,” Smith-Rivera said. “Offensively, I think I’m more than ready. I can score the ball in different ways, can make plays for my teammates, can defend the ball. There’s a lot of things that I think can translate.”

Head Coach John Thompson III has a slightly different recollection.

“A lot of the pro guys are telling him, ‘It might be in your best interests to put that on hold for another year,’” Thomp-



FILE PHOTO: JULIA HENNRİKUS/THE HOYA

Senior guard D’Vauntes Smith-Rivera was Georgetown’s leading scorer in 2014-15.

son said. "I'm not going to sit here and say it was an easy decision, but it wasn't necessarily a hard decision either."

THE UNQUESTIONED LEADER

Regardless of the reason for his return, Smith-Rivera's decision had an immediate impact on the expectations for this year's Georgetown team. The day after Duke claimed the national championship, CBS Sports released an early ranking of the top 26 teams for the 2015-16 season that did not include Georgetown. One week later, after it became clear Smith-Rivera would be back, Georgetown appeared at No. 17 in a revised version of the rankings.

The Hoyas without Smith-Rivera would have had exciting potential with a lack of clear leadership. Sophomore forwards Isaac Copeland and Paul White and sophomore guards L.J. Peak and Tre Campbell each played a major role in at least a few wins last season, and this year's freshmen also appear capable of making an immediate impact. Yet neither senior center and co-captain Bradley Hayes nor junior forward Reggie Cameron — the only two other upperclassmen on scholarship — averaged more than two points per game last season.

Now that Smith-Rivera is back, he will take a leadership role on the team. The senior, who will serve as a co-captain of the team for the second consecutive season, has shown he can make big plays on both ends of the court. Last year, he hit a go-ahead jump shot in the waning seconds of an overtime victory over No. 18 Florida and came up with a crafty steal in the final moments of a road win over No. 21 Butler.

The universal respect that Smith-Rivera receives from his younger teammates testifies to his importance to the team.

"He's like a coach on the court and off the court," Peak said.

"He brings the experience, the leadership, just the poise, you know, him handling the ball," White said. "He's been in big games and big situations. He knows what to do. So that leadership is going to trickle down to the rest of the team."

WORK TO BE DONE

Although only a quarter of Smith-Rivera's college career remains, some of his legacy has yet to be written. The senior scored a total of 1,386 points in his first three seasons on the Hilltop, good for 19th on the school's all-time scoring list. That number places Smith-Rivera one spot ahead of Chris Wright, the predecessor to Smith-Rivera's predecessor, Markel Starks, at point guard.

Once the season starts, Smith-Rivera will likely surpass several of the names ahead of him on the list. He will pass



FILE PHOTO: JULIA HENNRİKUS/THE HOYA

Senior guard D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera has scored 1,386 points in three seasons.

Roy Hibbert (COL '08), who ranks 16th on the list, and Allen Iverson, who ranks 14th, by Christmas if he scores at a pace similar to his pace from the last two years.

The milestone of 2,000 points is a golden number in college basketball, and it is one that carries some extra weight at Georgetown, where only Alonzo Mourning (COL '92), Reggie Williams (CAS '87), Patrick Ewing (CAS '85) and Eric "Sleepy" Floyd (CAS '82) have surpassed the mark. With a strong performance this season, Smith-Rivera could add his name to that rarified bunch.

The Hoyas are scheduled to play 30 regular-season games this year; if the team can put together a run to the Big East tournament final and a trip to the Sweet 16, Smith-Rivera would have to average just over 17 points per game to reach 2,000. He scored 17.6 points per game his sophomore year and 16.3 points per game last season. Yet individual records go only so far. If Smith-Rivera wants to go down as one of the all-time Georgetown greats, he will have to do more than score points. Austin Freeman (COL '11) ranks seventh on the school's all-time scoring list, but many would prefer the career of Jonathan Wallace (COL '08), who ranks 23rd but played a critical role in the Hoyas' run to the Fi-

nal Four in 2007.

Smith-Rivera knows more about post-season disappointment than anyone else on the roster, and the fact that he has never played on the second weekend of the NCAA tournament is partially responsible for his presence on campus this year.

"It definitely factored into my decision to return," Smith-Rivera said. "My freshman year, we were top five in the country, expected to do great things."

That season ended, of course, in a shocking Round of 64 upset at the hands of Florida Gulf Coast.

After receiving a bid to the National Invitation Tournament in Smith-Rivera's sophomore year, the Hoyas got back to the NCAA tournament last season, where they bowed out with an unceremonious loss to No. 5 seed Utah in the Round of 32.

"We did alright," Smith-Rivera said of last year's campaign. "Ended in the top 25, but we had a handful of games that we lost by five or fewer points, so hopefully we can be better."

With its combination of talent and leadership from Smith-Rivera, Georgetown could position itself to make that hope a reality. "It's his senior year and I know he wants to go out with a bang," Campbell said. "So why not? Let's do it."



FILE PHOTO: CLAIRE SOISSON/THE HOYA

Head Coach John Thompson III led Georgetown to the Final Four in 2007, but the Hoyas have not reached the Sweet 16 since that year.

NCAA TOURNAMENT UPSETS REMAIN UNLIKELY

Georgetown has suffered surprising upsets, but they were likely statistical outliers

NICK BARTON
Hoya Staff Writer

At the start of last season's NCAA tournament, many pundits predicted No. 13 seed Eastern Washington would upset No. 4 seed Georgetown in the first round of March Madness.

"You got Georgetown sitting in there, they're dying to be upset based on the way they played in the Big East tournament," analyst Doug Gottlieb said on CBS's "Selection Sunday," which announced last year's bracket March 15.

Eastern Washington Head Coach Jim Hayford guaranteed his team would upset the higher-seeded Georgetown.

"We're going to win and talk again, Jim," Hayford said on CBS Sports Radio's "Jim Rome Show" prior to the game.

Part of the reason that Eastern Washington generated so much chatter as an upset pick was that Georgetown has been susceptible to upsets in the past. Current NBA superstar Stephen Curry burst onto the national scene in 2008 by scoring 30 points in No. 10 seed Davidson's upset of No. 2 seed Georgetown. In 2013, No. 15 seed Florida Gulf Coast became only the seventh No. 15 seed to defeat a No. 2 seed when it upset Georgetown. FGCU earned the nickname "Dunk City," as it became a national sensation on its way to the Sweet 16.

However, last year, Georgetown silenced its critics by defeating Eastern Washington 84-74. Although the Hoyas lost to No. 5 seed Utah in the next round, Georgetown was finally able

to avoid the upset bug in last year's tournament for the first time since it lost to No. 1 seed Ohio State in the 2007 Final Four, having lost to No. 10 Davidson, No. 14 Ohio, No. 11 VCU, No. 11 North Carolina State and No. 15 FGCU in that span. As the Hoyas finally managed to avoid an early upset in last year's tournament, it is an appropriate time to analyze the statistical probability of NCAA tournament upsets.

The first step in this process is to determine what exactly constitutes an upset. For the sake of simplicity, any game that includes a team that is at least three seeds higher than its opponent would be deemed a potential upset. A No. 3 seed versus a No. 6 seed would be considered a possible upset, but a No. 4 seed beating a No. 2 seed would not qualify. Over the past three years, 155 games fit this criteria. The higher seed won 72 percent of these matchups.

Analyst Ken Pomeroy's website kenpom.com compares teams on an objective scale, using series of statistics, including points scored and allowed per possession, strength of schedule and the number of possessions a team is likely to have per game. This gives a numbers-based idea of how teams stack up without relying on the highly fallible eye test. Ratings began in the 2002 season, making it a perfect tool for hindsight.

Using a logistic model that picks the result of the game, the likelihood of an upset occurring can be calculated. The logistic model accurately predicted whether the underdog would win the game around 80 percent of the time.

According to the model, Georgetown was

expected to beat Eastern Washington 92.99 percent of the time. Fortunately for the Hoyas, the outcome that played out on the court fell in the 92.99 percent.

That was not the case in 2013 or 2010. According to the model, Georgetown had a 93.06 percent chance of beating FGCU before suffering a shocking upset. In addition, No. 3 seed Georgetown had a 92.15 percent chance of beating No. 14 seed Ohio in 2010, but lost 97-83. However, according to the model, the Curry-led Davidson team was an underdog in terms of seeding only, as the Hoyas had only a 20.48 percent chance of defeating the Wildcats.

The influence, or lack thereof, of pace of play will interest critics of Georgetown's Princeton-style offense. As it turns out, the tempo of a game had little impact on the outcome. Even a side-by-side comparison of teams that won or lost and their respective tempos revealed a minimal difference between the two groups. Thus, it probably is not fair to blame upset losses on the Princeton offense's tempo. In any event, Head Coach John Thompson III believes that this year's team can play at different paces.

"I think we can be a fast, smaller team, I think we can jump. If we have to, I think we can win different ways," Thompson said.

Anything can happen in the Big Dance, and no amount of predictive modeling can decide the outcome of a game ahead of time. However, models like the one used above indicate that despite past history, Georgetown is likely to avoid upsets in the future.

MEN'S BIG EAST PREVIEW

TOM SCHNOOR
Hoya Staff Writer

1. VILLANOVA

Villanova won the last two Big East regular season titles — with a combined record of 32-4 in the conference during that span — and is widely expected to continue its dominant run this year. Undersized in the frontcourt, the Wildcats will rely heavily on a few talented guards. Senior guard and reigning co-Big East Player of the Year Ryan Arcidiacono will be joined in the backcourt by freshman Jalen Brunson, a McDonald's All-American, and junior Josh Hart, the team's leading returning scorer.

2. GEORGETOWN

After finishing tied for second place in the Big East last season, Georgetown returns several key players. Senior guard D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera, who has averaged at least 16 points per game in each of the last two seasons, will return to lead the Hoyas. Smith-Rivera, a First Team All-Big East selection last year, will be joined by sophomores Isaac Copeland, L.J. Peak and Paul White, each of whom scored at least 5 points per game last season.

3. BUTLER

Butler returns the most important members from the team that surprised many last year by reaching the NCAA Tournament and taking No. 3 seed Notre Dame to overtime in the Round of 32. Senior guard Kellen Dunham and senior forward Roosevelt Jones are All-Big East-caliber players who can light up a scoreboard, and junior guard Trey Lewis is a transfer from North Carolina State who was a McDonald's All-American in high school. For the ever-overachieving Bulldogs, it will be a disappointment to finish worse than fourth in the conference.

4. XAVIER

A three-time victor over Georgetown last year, Xavier will look to build on the Big East's lone Sweet 16 appearance in the past two seasons. Gone is goggle-wearing center Matt Stainbrook, but sophomore guard Trevon Blueitt averaged 11 points per game as a freshman last season, and junior forward Jalen Reynolds is one of the strongest players in the conference. Expect at least a fourth-place finish out of the Musketeers.

5. PROVIDENCE

Junior guard Kris Dunn will be a one-man show in Providence this year. Finally healthy, Dunn exploded to average 15.6 points, 7.5 assists and 5.5 rebounds per game last year and could very well be the National Player of the Year this season. It remains to be seen if Dunn has the talent around him to take the Friars to their third consecutive NCAA Tournament.

6. MARQUETTE

Head Coach Steve Wojciechowski had a largely forgettable first year in Milwaukee, with his team finishing at the bottom of the Big East standings. The Golden Eagles will hope to make some memories this year with arguably the most talented frontcourt in a league largely devoid of quality big men. Junior center Luke Fischer, who averaged 11 points and 4.8 rebounds per game last year, will be joined by freshman forward Henry Ellenson, who is expected by many to go in the lottery of next June's NBA Draft.

7. SETON HALL

Many were surprised Head Coach Kevin Willard retained his job after Seton Hall squandered a promising start and fell into dysfunction and a sixth-place finish last season. The team now belongs to sophomore guard Isaiah Whitehead, a highly touted recruit out of high school who struggled at times last year, and sophomore forward Angel Delgado, last season's Big East Rookie of the Year.

8. DEPAUL

After enduring yet another year of mediocrity, DePaul fired Head Coach Oliver Purnell and brought back Dave Leitao, who led the Blue Demons to their last NCAA Tournament in 2004. The hiring decision was puzzling, but Leitao has enough talent to surprise some in the league with junior guard Billy Garrett Jr., senior forward Myke Henry and junior center Tommy Hamilton IV, all double-digit scorers last season.

9. CREIGHTON

Creighton struggled to adjust to the post-Doug McDermott era last season, stumbling to a 14-19 (4-14 Big East) finish. Unfortunately for the Bluejay faithful, which consistently packs the CenturyLink Center in Omaha, the outlook is not much better this year. Junior guard Mo Watson Jr. could be a bright spot; the Boston University transfer averaged 13.3 points per game as a sophomore for the Terriers two years ago.

10. ST. JOHN'S

Although St. John's lost nearly the entirety of last year's team that qualified for the school's first NCAA Tournament in five seasons, there is an excited buzz around the Red Storm this fall because Hall of Famer and St. John's legend Chris Mullin has returned to Queens to coach his alma mater. Mullin made ripples on the recruiting front, but it is tough to envision the Red Storm finishing much better than eighth or ninth in the Big East.

INCONSISTENCY PLAGUED HOYAS IN A

An unfamiliar head coach and a lack of leadership on the court combined to create a particularly challenging set of obstacles for Georgetown throughout last season

MOLLY O'CONNELL
Hoya Staff Writer

Every time members of the Georgetown women's basketball team stepped onto the court last season, they battled far more than just the opposing team. Obstacles past and present combined, resulting in a 4-27 record for the Hoyas and a last-place finish in the Big East.

The Hoyas were playing under their third head coach in three seasons, Natasha Adair. For the third consecutive season, they had to start from scratch. For the third consecutive season, they faced an entirely new set of standards and systems of play. And for the third consecutive season, they had to put their trust in a new leader and have faith that leader would be someone who deserved it.

"In this process of coaching, you don't gain trust overnight. And for a group — they've gone through a lot. ... And so to come in and say, 'I'm the one' for a crew — they've heard that before. It just wasn't going to happen overnight," Adair said. "We had to grow and trust throughout the year while building relationships, while coaching, while they're

trying to figure me out as well. So you've got to imagine how hard that was for them."

In addition to the absence of familiar leadership on the sideline, Georgetown also lacked experienced leadership on the court. There was not a single senior on the Hoyas' roster last year and, of the team's five juniors, only two averaged more than 20 minutes per game during their sophomore seasons.

"I blame myself, and a lot of my teammates, my class at least. We didn't step up at the times we needed to. I think in those situations the leadership needed to be a little more," senior guard Katie McCormick said. "We didn't have as much leadership as we should have."

The absence of experienced leaders required returning players to transition into unfamiliar roles. The most prominent example was senior forward Dominique Vitalis. During her freshman and sophomore seasons, Vitalis was a role player, averaging only 10 minutes and three points per game.

In her junior season, Vitalis became an integral part of the team. Vitalis went from not starting a single game during her sophomore season to starting all 31 games for the

Hoyas last season. Her playing time increased significantly and she managed to triple her offensive production. Vitalis averaged 24.8 minutes and 9.1 points per game.

"Even with juniors [on the roster], we were young in experience," Adair said. "[Vitalis] had the best year of her career and she doubled minutes total, she doubled points total. So it was still new to everyone. They used to have former players who would take those shots."

The Hoyas also relied heavily on their freshman class. Georgetown consistently started two freshmen, one of whom was guard DiDi Burton, who was tasked with leading the team's offense from the point guard position.

"She came in as a freshman and she was given a big position as the point guard; you take a lot of responsibility as the point guard," Vitalis said of Burton.

Burton started 24 of the Hoyas' 31 games last season. She led the team in assists with 96 and was second in steals with 37. However, Burton also turned the ball over 73 times, the second-highest number of turnovers committed by anyone on the team and an example of the inexperience that plagued Georgetown last season.

Another freshman who immediately became an essential component of the Hoyas' roster was guard Dorothy Adomako. Named Preseason Big East Freshman of the Year, Adomako was one of only two Hoyas to earn conference preseason honors last year.

Adomako started every game last season and led the team in both scoring and rebounding, averaging 13.1 points and 6.8 rebounds per game. Adomako was the leading scorer in 11 of the Hoyas' 31 games and the leading rebounder in 10 of them. In seven games, she led Georgetown in both of those categories.

In a season without much to celebrate, Adomako was a bright spot for Georgetown, receiving the Big East Freshman of the Week title on five occasions and the Big East Freshman of the Year award at the conclusion of the regular season. In addition, Adomako was a unanimous Preseason All-Big East selection going into this season.

"We're excited that they respect [Adomako] in the league and the coaches do, but the team wants to hold up the trophy," Adair said. "And so it's a team deal, so she doesn't say much about those personal accolades. And we're proud of her, we don't want to diminish them, but the bigger goal is for the group."

Despite Adomako's status as one of the best players in the conference, her individual performance could not negate all the other challenges confronting the team.

Of Georgetown's four wins last season, two were against nonconference opponents. In November, Georgetown beat Maryland



FILE PHOTO: CLAIRE SOISSON/THE HOYA

Senior guard Katie McCormick scored 7.9 points per game last season.

FRUSTRATING 2014-15 CAMPAIGN



FILE PHOTO: STANLEY DAI/THE HOYA

Senior forward Dominique Vitalis was one of Georgetown's top scorers in 2014-15.

Eastern Shore in its first game of the year by a 13-point margin and then defeated Loyola in a 27-point rout five days later.

Following the victory over Loyola, Georgetown did not win another game until early January — a drought spanning nearly two months — when it beat Big East rival Marquette in the team's second conference game of the season. Georgetown managed to win only one other game in regular season conference play, defeating Providence by seven points a week after the win over Marquette.

That win against Providence would be the Hoyas' last. Georgetown lost 15 straight games to close out the season and finished Big East play with a 2-16 record — the worst in the conference.

However, Georgetown did not lack opportunities to win games. The team's 15-game losing streak included seven games in which the opponent's margin of victory was less than 10. The Hoyas struggled to close out games down the stretch, frequently finding that they had a chance to win in the final minutes of play but were unable to get necessary scores or defensive stops to finish the game on top.

"Teams either talk about how they need to learn how to be good starters or good finishers, and we need to be better finishers," senior guard/forward Logan Battle said. "Just to be able to not give up, to keep finishing, one last [play] at the end of a game. And we didn't really have that last year."

Vitalis echoed Battle's comments, citing inconsistency as one of the issues plaguing the team last season.

"We would start a game great, be right in

it up until the end, and then we have to be the same team all throughout. We have to get the same stops from the beginning to the end and just finish it all the way through. So I just think consistency all the way through the game is what kind of limited us from really finishing those games," Vitalis said.

The Hoyas' inconsistency and inability to finish games down the stretch showed in an overtime loss to Big East rival Seton Hall. A powerhouse in the Big East last year, the Pirates finished the regular season with a league-best 15-3 record. Seton Hall was the runner-up in the postseason conference tournament, falling to DePaul in the final, and also qualified for the NCAA tournament as a No. 9 seed.

The Pirates visited McDonough Arena in late January for the first of two scheduled matchups with the Hoyas. Entering the game, Seton Hall was 18-2 and 7-1 in the Big East. Georgetown was 4-16 and 2-6 in conference play.

The Hoyas led by as many as 12 points in the first half and entered the locker room at the break with a nine-point lead. Georgetown continued to lead for much of the second half

as well, but the Pirates battled back, tying the game with 19 seconds left to play.

Adair called a timeout with 12 seconds remaining on the clock and drew up a play designed to give McCormick a chance to take a shot to win the game. McCormick took a three-pointer as time expired that missed the mark, sending the game into overtime.

"I would draw the same play and I would put the ball in Katie's hands again. I wouldn't change a thing," Adair said. "She beats herself up. ... Katie is the ultimate competitor and she has probably watched that game a million times, but like I told her, 'I can't wait to play them again, I can't wait to put the ball in your hands again.'"

In overtime, Seton Hall dominated, putting up 17 points and allowing the Hoyas to score only three. The five-minute period ended with the Pirates leading 99-85. It was a disappointing result for Georgetown in what was one of the most memorable games of the season.

"We played well in that game. I thought we executed, I thought we had some pushback. Even [Anthony Bozzella], the coach, after the game he said, 'Coach, I don't want to see you guys again.' And it was just out of respect, but every game, in my opinion, was like that. Every game was just that little bit of oomph and just who's going to get us over the hump," Adair said.

This season, many of the obstacles that held Georgetown back last year are now strengths. Last season's lack of senior leadership means that this season the Hoyas do not have to worry about filling voids left by graduation. Last year's heavy reliance on freshmen means that this season the Hoyas have an experienced sophomore class that is better integrated into the team.

"Everything was new last season," Vitalis said. "We had a new coach, we had new people coming in, and we had to get acquainted. So this year, we're comfortable with each other.

... We got a chance to bond, and so now we feel more connected as a family."

Perhaps most importantly, the Hoyas hope to be stronger because of continuity in the coaching staff.

"Having stability, it's great. I know I'm going to have Coach 'A' walking every day into practice and just to feel like she's got me, we have the same thing going every day and that's a good thing," McCormick said.

Georgetown will put these strengths to the test for the first time against Maryland Eastern Shore on Nov. 13. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

Teams either talk about how they need to learn how to be good starters or good finishers ... just to be able to not give up, to keep finishing, one last [play] at the end of the game.

-Senior Guard/Forward Logan Battle



ISABEL BINAMIRA/THE HOYA

Head Coach Natasha Adair enters her second season after becoming Georgetown's fourth head coach in four seasons last year.

ADAIR FOCUSES ON ADJUSTMENTS IN 2ND YEAR

The coach hopes to finally bring stability to a program that has recently endured turmoil

MATTHEW MORROW
Special to The Hoya

After back-to-back losing seasons under former Head Coaches Keith Brown and Jim Lewis, the Georgetown women's basketball team looked to find a long-term solution to fill its coaching void. Enter former Hoyas Assistant Coach Natasha Adair.

Georgetown hired Adair from the College of Charleston as the ninth head coach of the Georgetown women's basketball program. As a team with no seniors, the Hoyas struggled after Adair's return to the Hilltop. After winning two of its first three games, the team only managed two more wins over the rest of the season, ending with a 4-27 overall record and a 2-16 conference record, last in the Big East.

"Just adjusting to a new system. That's the hardest thing you can ask any team to do, especially when it is a lot of upperclassmen," senior forward Logan Battle said. "You're adjusting to the way a coach plays people, the way a coach does different set-ups, stuff like that. Definitely the coaching system itself is the hardest to get used to."

Adair said she has pinpointed the issues that contributed to a poor first year and is looking to make the necessary adjustments this upcoming season. She describes discipline as the main issue that plagued the team last season and something the Hoyas are most focused on improving.

"The thing we talk about is just discipline," Adair said. "That's kind of our word. ... It's just more about discipline in every

area. You know, the offensive efficiency, the defensive accountability. We just want to be the team that's disciplined."

On defense, the Hoyas allowed 73.4 points per game, which ranked them 22nd worst in the nation among 343 Division I teams.

"I felt like our Achilles heel was ... just getting that defensive stop when we needed it," Adair said. "If you come in practice right now, probably over half of practice is defense. We want to be that team in the league that keeps the opponent under their average. We want to be that team that really takes pride in defense."

“ I felt like our Achilles heel was ... just getting that defensive stop when we needed it. ”

-Head Coach Natasha Adair

On the offensive end, the Hoyas fared better. The offense averaged 63.2 points per game, which was around the national average. Although Georgetown put points on the board last season, Adair still feels that adjustments must be made.

According to Adair, last year's offense was more set-driven. This year, the team will use a motion system designed to keep the offense moving.

"It's more of a motion [offense]," Adair said. "This will just keep the movement of the offense going, and it will actually keep the defense kind of on-guard."

Adair is also focused on pushing her players both on and off the court.

"She's not taking a break, we just grind every day," senior forward Ki-Ke Rafiu said. "She's a grinder, and she wants people that grind on her team. But she's great — she doesn't want us to take a break in class, just keep pushing hard on the court and just keep grinding and pushing hard."

The team's biggest advantage this season is experience. Last year's team did not have any seniors on the roster. This year's roster, however, includes five seniors, four juniors and three sophomores. The Hoyas will return all of their primary starters from last season.

With no players graduating and a returning coach, the team may gain something it lost a few seasons ago: stability. When Terri Williams-Flournoy left as head coach of the women's team in 2012, the Hoyas lost that stability, and in the past three seasons, it has shown.

According to Adair, the key to future success is not to dwell on the past, but rather to look at the positives in the future.

"I think there are so many positives in front of us, and with even this senior class and how we are going to transition outward for them," Adair said. "I want to send my seniors out on a winning note, whatever that is. I don't want to put a number on it. But I want them to leave here as winners ... and even more excited to come back."

GU ADDS 2 FRESHMEN, 2 TRANSFERS TO ROSTER

Dionna White highlights a promising group of new additions to the Georgetown roster

ISABELLE PERCIBALLI

Special to The Hoya

Last season, lacking the presence of seniors and with the addition of a freshman class of five players, the Georgetown women's basketball team was one of the youngest in the Big East. The team struggled, posting a 4-27 record. This year, much of the same roster returns, and the team will add several new faces as well.

The new faces — graduate student guard Jasmine Jackson, junior guard Mykia Jones, freshman center Jodi-Marie Ramil and freshman guard Dionna White — will look to help the Hoyas improve this season.

This year, the freshman class is relatively small, with only Ramil and White joining the Hoyas from the high school ranks. These two additions have already garnered significant attention and will add youth to a roster with a great deal of experience.

Ramil, a center from Binghamton, N.Y., stands at 6-foot-2. She is currently one of just two centers listed on the roster alongside sophomore Yazmine Belk. As a senior in high school, Ramil earned a spot in the Basketball Coaches Association of New York State Top Ten. When the Hoyas travelled to Europe over the summer to play against three professional teams, Ramil shined against SMUC-Marseille in Marseille, France, contributing 13 points in a 105-51 triumph.

Dionna White, a 5-foot-7-inch guard out of Baltimore, has already impressed Head Coach Natasha Adair, who was quick to praise her mentality and ability on the court.

"Dionna is a player. She is a baller," Adair said. "When she steps on that floor she has ice in her veins."

Entering the season as the No. 22 ranked guard recruit in the Class of 2015 according to ESPN, White made an immediate impact with her performances on the team's trip to Europe. She put up 11 points in the win over SMUC-Marseille and 16 points in a win over the AMW All-Stars in Paris.

"When she steps on the court you don't know she's a freshman," Adair said. "I expect big things from her."

Although she aims for high grades in school, the freshman emphasizes the team's goals over her own success on the court.

"School-wise, I would like to get a 3.0 [GPA]. Basketball, I'd just like to help my team with whatever they need me to do,"

White said.

Jackson, who hails from Old Bridge, N.J., returns to the Hoyas as a graduate student. Jackson played at Georgetown from 2011-2013 before transferring to George Mason in her junior year.

She came to the Hilltop as a highly regarded recruit, having scored more than 1,800 points in her time at Old Bridge High School in Matawan, N.J. At Georgetown, Jackson appeared in seven games as a freshman, averaging 2.0 points and 1.4 rebounds per game. She had a breakout season as a sophomore, a year that included a pair of 12-point games against Delaware and LaSalle and a career high 15-point game against Notre Dame.

At George Mason, Jackson redshirted her junior year in accordance with NCAA rules. In her senior year as a Patriot, she started in 26 of her team's 30 games with averages of 9.6 points per game, 3.7 rebounds per game and a 33.2 percent shooting percentage from the field. For Jackson, leaving Georgetown to go to George Mason was never an easy decision.

"I thought about it, and then I was like, you know what, yeah, I do want to come back, just to finish what I started. Because I never wanted to really go to begin with. You know, Georgetown has always been a place that I wanted to get my degree from," Jackson said.

As a seasoned player, Jackson will bring both leadership and extensive

experience to Georgetown.

"And from the time [Jackson] stepped back on the floor, another voice, another leader in that locker room, where I just thought we were missing a little bit of that a year ago. Now we have that," Adair said.

Though not eligible until next season, Jones, a transfer guard from Wake Forest, will also add another dimension to the roster. Another high school standout, Jones started four games in her first season at Wake Forest. In her rookie campaign, she recorded an average of 3.2 points and 1.4 rebounds per game and shot almost 30 percent from beyond the arc. As a sophomore, she started 10 games, averaging 4.9 points per game, 1.7 rebounds per game and a 32.1 percent shooting percentage from the field. Jones' ability to shoot from distance should give Georgetown an extra weapon and scoring threat once she can take the court.

“School-wise, I would like to get a 3.0 [GPA]. Basketball, I’d just like to help my team with whatever they need me to do.”

-Freshman guard Dionna White

#11 Dionna White



ESPN ranked White as the No. 100 prospect in the Class of 2015.

#44 Jodi-Marie Ramil



Ramil scored 13 points in Georgetown's win over SMUC-Marseille in France.

#21 Jasmine Jackson



Jackson spent two seasons at George Mason before returning to Georgetown.

#4 Mykia Jones



Jones, a transfer guard from Wake Forest, is ineligible to play this season.



ISABEL BINAMIRA/THE HOYA

Senior forward Ki-Ke Rafiu played in 38 games over three seasons before retiring due to a series of persistent leg and knee injuries.

RAFIU PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE OFF THE COURT

The senior has retired from playing due to injuries but still makes an impact on her team

TYLER PARK

Hoya Staff Writer

Senior forward Ki-Ke Rafiu has faced a tumultuous career for the Georgetown women's basketball team.

In her freshman season, she played in 26 of 31 games, scoring 36 points and grabbing 39 rebounds. The Hoyas, led by current WNBA player Sugar Rodgers (COL '13), won 15 games against a loaded schedule in the old Big East.

However, prior to Rafiu's sophomore season, then-Head Coach Keith Brown resigned amid allegations of verbal abuse. Jim Lewis took over as interim head coach and the Hoyas' win total decreased to 11. Rafiu dealt with injuries to her knee and leg and only played in nine of her team's 32 games, averaging only three minutes per game in those contests.

Last season, Rafiu and her classmates played for Natasha Adair, their third head coach in three seasons. The team struggled to a 4-27 record, and Rafiu decided to retire from playing due to a series of nagging injuries.

Despite her injuries, Rafiu has spent the past three summers combining sports and philanthropy in her home country of Nigeria. This past summer, Rafiu helped create "Girls Rise Up," an organization for young girls. The program, which provides shoes and a copy of a motivational book called "The Energy of Us" to each of its participants, encourages the nearly 100 girls involved in the program to play sports.

Rafiu said she hopes to help the girls find an appropriate balance between athletics and

education.

"It feels good. It makes me happy, because my philosophy is that I want to count my wealth according to the smiles I put on people's faces," Rafiu said. "Seeing just a smile and how happy those kids are just makes me feel like the richest person in the world."

Rafiu has also spent the past few years collecting shoes, clothing and equipment for girls in Nigeria who enjoy athletics despite their lack of proper equipment. Her generosity and selflessness has impressed her teammates and coaches, particularly Adair, who refers to her as "the mother hen of the group."

"Her heart is so big, and you can see it in how she gives back and how she wants to help people in her area and her native country," Adair said. "And just people locally, that are less fortunate. She's a giver. And so whether it's collecting shoes, whether it's running camps, she's always there to help, and I really see the impact of that with our team and just how she's put her arm around the whole group."

Rafiu has also made an impact on her teammates, several of whom have helped her with her international projects.

"[My teammates are] really getting involved," Rafiu said. "Next year we're trying to do Nigeria and Haiti, so we've started that already so we can get ahead of the game. We're really into it now, and my teammates are really helping me with the whole process, even if it's advice or giving me ideas or how to go about stuff. My teammates are really right

there with me."

Rafiu also maintains a leadership role on the team during the season. She serves as an unofficial player-coach, frequently offering both strategic suggestions and support for her teammates and coaches.

"It's not uncommon for her to text me and just say, 'Hey, Coach, I'm checking on you. How are you doing, are you having a good day?' And I'm like, 'Oh, wow! Ki-Ke!' But that's who she is, and you need that in that locker room," Adair said.

Rafiu and her fellow seniors have faced a difficult four years on the Hilltop. Still, Rafiu, fellow senior forwards Dominique Vitalis and Logan Battle and senior guard Katie McCormick have elected to stick together, even though the program has struggled and several marquee players have transferred out.

"I played with Logan before. We'd been playing since I was probably 12 or 13, so we just decided we were staying. Dom and Ki-Ke, we were all close," McCormick said.

The senior class hopes to be rewarded for its patience in its final season, and Rafiu is optimistic about the team's chances to improve on its record from last year.

"I just think we need to bring it together," Rafiu said. "We couldn't pull it together last year, but I feel like now we're getting there. [If we] put everything together — listen more, just do the little stuff, just pay attention more, and I think we'll get it. I think that's what we struggled with last year, and this year is way better."

AFTER LEADING GU IN SCORING AS A FRESHMAN,

Last year's Big East Freshman of the Year was a unanimous selection to the Preseason A

KARA AVANCEÑA
Hoya Staff Writer

Dorothy Adomako was 30 seconds into her collegiate career when she made a first impression that would define her role on the Georgetown women's basketball team.

Playing in front of a home crowd in McDonough Arena in mid-November, the then-freshman guard took the first shot of Georgetown's 2014-15 season opener against Maryland Eastern Shore. Adomako's jump shot, her first ever as a Hoya, swished through the net to give Georgetown a 2-0 lead.

Just 15 seconds later, Adomako stole the ball from a UMES player during the Hawks' first possession of the game. She coupled her defensive effort with an offensive burst as she almost immediately fired her second shot of the game and banked in a jump shot that gave the Hoyas a 40 lead.

The Hoyas ultimately won the game 88-75. Adomako finished with 17 points and a game-high 14 rebounds; a double-double to start her Georgetown career.

Head Coach Natasha Adair, then in her first year, praised Adomako for her well-rounded and determined performance.

"I think she did a great job of being shot-ready, but I also think she played a complete game. She defended, she rebounded, she took disciplined shots in our offense. She made extra effort plays — going to the offensive glass, diving on loose balls," Adair said after the game. "I think it was just a great debut for her and I can't wait to see what's next."

Though the season started with a victory, the joy would be short-lived, as Georgetown finished its season at the bottom of the Big East with a 4-27 overall record and a 2-16 conference record. Amid the Hoyas' troubles, however, Adomako shined, as her performances throughout her rookie season secured her the 2015 Big East Freshman of the Year honor and a spot on the honorable mention All-Big East team. Adomako led Georgetown with 13.1 points and 6.8 rebounds per game.

Nearly one year after her debut, expectations are higher than ever for the sophomore guard. In October, Adomako was a



DANIEL SMITH/THE HOYA

Adomako averaged 13.1 points and 6.8 rebounds per game in the 2014-15 season.

unanimous pick for the preseason All-Big East team, the only player from Georgetown to earn a preseason distinction.

"She works so hard. She's always in the gym, always determined, always working on her shot. I just think she deserves it," senior forward Dominique Vitalis said.

For Adomako, lofty expectations are nothing new. She attended Cosby High School in Midlothian, Va., and played on her high school varsity basketball team for all four years. Adomako led her team in scoring and rebounding every year, earning her the team MVP award for each of her high school seasons.

By her senior season, accolades for Adomako piled up as she led Cosby to an undefeated 26-0 season and averaged 21.5 points, 9.0 rebounds, 3.6 assists and 2.8 steals per game. Adomako received the 2013 Richmond Times-Dispatch All-Metro Player of the Year award and was the No. 60 recruit

on ESPN's rankings of the top high school women's basketball prospects in the Class of 2014.

In the final game of her high school career, the six-foot-one-inch guard led her high school to a 53-46 victory to clinch the school's first state championship. Adomako accounted for nearly half of her team's offensive output as she scored a game-high 26 points in addition to her 16 rebounds.

Adomako's accomplishments throughout her high school career earned her the 2014 Gatorade Virginia Girls Basketball Player of the Year distinction, an award that incorporates both athletics and academics to determine the best basketball player in every state across the country.

"Dorothy Adomako is unstoppable," Carolyn Clay, head coach of the women's basketball team at Cosby's cross-town rival, Manchester High School, said in Gatorade's press release announcing the award. "It doesn't matter what defense you throw at her, she makes adjustments to her game very well. She doesn't seem to get rattled. If her game isn't on track, she just turns it up a notch."

Adomako took the next leap in her basketball career when she arrived on the Hilltop in the fall of 2014, following through on a verbal commitment she had made one year prior.

“I didn’t know what role I was going to be taking, but every team that I’ve played on, I’ve always had a big role, so I didn’t expect to be not having a big role on the team.”

-Sophomore guard Dorothy Adomako

ADOMAKO TAKES ON A BIGGER LEADERSHIP ROLE

All-Big East Team, demonstrating the high expectations for the guard this season

Though Adomako knew that the coach who recruited her to play for Georgetown would not be the same coach she would have as a freshman on the team, she had faith in the athletic program and still regarded playing for the Hoyas as a dream come true.

“What really attracted me to Georgetown was the name. They have a great academic program here, great athletic program, and I just trusted in the [athletic director] that he was going to bring in someone good,” Adomako said. “I always had dreams of playing at Georgetown, so I had to continue to just trust in what God told me to do.”

Though Adomako was unsure of the exact role she would take on at Georgetown during her rookie year, she was prepared to take on as much responsibility on the court as the team required.

“I didn’t know what role I was going to be taking, but every team that I’ve played on, I’ve always had a big role, so I didn’t expect to be not having a big role on the team,” Adomako said. “I always go in with high expectations, so I think that’s what I did.”

With one year under her belt and one set of expectations met, the bar rose once again for the sophomore guard. At the end of Adomako’s freshman season, Adair expressed her desire for Adomako to expand her presence as a vocal leader on the team moving forward.

“I want her to carry over from what she does on the court in the locker room and the day-to-day of what we do as a team and as a program,” Adair said in an interview with THE HOYA last April.

On a team with five seniors who have three times as much collegiate experience as Adomako, the sophomore is gradually growing into her new role as

““ She’s expanded her game offensively and, I think, defensively. She’s expanded a little bit more of [her] shot, going out to the three-point line, she’s a little more comfortable with that.”

-Senior Guard Katie McCormick

one of the leaders on the team.

“Some things are a little bit uncomfortable, but as a sophomore, you hear her in the gym and you hear her in the locker room,” Adair said. “The thing is the consistency of it. As the season is going on, or she has a good game or if she has a bad game, don’t let that deter from being a leader and letting us hear your voice. That’s something I’m really going to push for her, because she’s one of the faces of the program, and I want her to be able to be in the forefront,



ISABEL BINAMIRA/THE HOYA

Adomako started all 31 games last year.

answer those questions, and just speak on the behalf of the group.”

On the court, Adomako is expanding her offensive arsenal to incorporate more jump shooting, in addition to improving her overall defensive performance.

“She’s expanded her game offensively and, I think, defensively,” senior guard Katie McCormick said. “She’s expanded a little bit more of [her] shot, going out to the three-point line. She’s a little more comfortable with that.”

Adair echoed McCormick’s comments about Adomako’s improvement.

“I think her offensive package has elevated. She is shooting the ball at a very high clip; where she was more of a slasher and driver, now she is shooting the three. Her mid-range is very consistent,” Adair said.

As much as she looks forward to growing into her leadership role and improving specific skills on the court, Adomako has a bigger picture in mind as her second season opener with Georgetown approaches.

“Getting Big East Freshman of the Year was a good accomplishment, but I can’t really look at that, take that to the head. I have bigger goals, like being the Big East Player of the Year and just helping my team win as much as possible,” Adomako said.



DANIEL SMITH/THE HOYA

Adomako was unanimously selected to the Preseason All-Big East team this year.

CONTINUITY BENEFITS HOYAS

Georgetown will return each of the six players who played at least 20 minutes per game on last year's team

SEAN HOFFMAN

Hoya Staff Writer

The Georgetown women's basketball team enters this season with a unique advantage: the team did not lose any players to graduation after last season, returning the six players who played more than 20 minutes per game and adding two freshmen and two transfers.

Without any seniors on the roster last year, the team lacked experience and established leadership in Head Coach Natasha Adair's first season as the team's coach.

"If you look at it as a senior and having a new coach from last year, it makes you feel like a freshman again because you're all learning the system all over again," senior forward Ki-Ke Rafiu said. "But now we're seniors, and we know how it goes. We know the coaches, and the coaches know us."

This year's team has five seniors, including Rafiu, on the roster. Suddenly, the Hoyas are one of the most experienced teams in the Big East, an attribute Adair believes will benefit the team.

"We went from [being] one of the kind of younger teams to the oldest team. But experience is the best teacher," Adair said. "You think about now, they have the experience

on and off the court."

Adair expects the players' familiarity with one another, whether from playing on the team last year or from the summer training for the newcomers, will bring the roster closer together.

"We've been around each other and we know each other," Adair said. "I think that will determine how well we do. We now can finish each other's sentences, and that wasn't the case a year ago, because we were just still trying to learn each other."

Adair cited the team's summer trip to Italy and France as a time for the players to improve relationships with each other.

The Hoyas played three games in Europe, falling 53-48 to the Cameroon National Team before defeating SMUC-Marseille and the AMW All-Stars by margins

of more than 50 points. Sophomore guard Dorothy Adomako scored 19 points against SMUC-Marseille and added 20 more against the AMW All-Stars, while freshman guard Dionna White posted 16 points, 11 steals, eight rebounds and five assists against the AMW All-Stars.

"The biggest thing for us, I think, is just the experience that we had overseas this summer, and how we bonded as a group," Adair said. "That was the best trip. It was at the right time.

“The biggest thing for us, I think, is just the experience that we had overseas this summer, and how we bonded as a group.”

-Head Coach Natasha Adair



DANIEL SMITH/THE HOYA

Senior forward Dominique Vitalis returns.

We got to go overseas and have success."

The benefits of the trip to Europe go beyond group bonding and on-court experience. Adair said it also changed the mindset of the team after a tough end to the 2014-2015 season, when the Hoyas fell by three points to the Xavier Musketeers in the opening round of the Big East tournament. The competition over the summer helped put that disappointment further in the past.

"We ended the season on a loss, we're starting [this] season on a win," Adair said.

Six players — Adomako, sophomore guard DiDi Burton, senior forwards Dominique Vitalis and Logan Battle, senior guard Katie McCormick and junior forward Faith Woodard — started at least 17 games for the Hoyas last season. Each of those six players will return for this season.

Adair enters her second season as the team's head coach; when she accepted the role as head coach last year, Adair became the third head coach in three years for the Hoyas. The lack of continuity in the coaching staff has hindered the team's success, and the players look forward to seeing how successful the team can be now that the coaching position has stabilized.

"Just having a stable coach ... having the same type of coaching technique, the same team — we only have two freshmen — it's good in my situation because, as a senior, you don't have to teach as much," senior guard Katie McCormick said. "You know the offensive and defensive schemes as much as you can. It's just great to have a pattern to know what you need to teach and what to relay to the freshmen."

Adair recognizes that her return will have a stabilizing impact on the team, which she believes will lead to better results for the program this season.

"I think you improve already going into year two because you have pretty much the same team back, you're adding leadership, you're adding experience, you're adding more depth," Adair said. "I just feel like we're in a good place to compete and to really be successful."



FILE PHOTO: DAN GANNON/THE HOYA

Senior guard Katie McCormick led Georgetown with 53 three-pointers made last year.

WOMEN'S BIG EAST PREVIEW

ANDREW MAY
Hoya Staff Writer

1. DEPAUL

The reigning Big East tournament champions are this year's pre-season favorites to retain the title in 2015-2016. The Blue Demons fell in the NCAA tournament to eventual runner-up Notre Dame, but were the only Big East squad to win a game in the Big Dance. Three players — senior guard/forward Megan Podkova, senior guard Chanise Jenkins and junior guard Jessica January — that averaged double-digit points per game will return this season. With its history and talent, DePaul will expect to be top dogs in the Big East.

2. ST. JOHN'S

The Big East is set to be a guard-heavy league in 2015-16, and the Red Storm's backcourt provides a prime example. Senior guard Aliyyah Handford is the preseason Player of the Year in the Big East, and senior guard Danaejah Grant is a unanimous selection to the preseason all-conference team. Add a pair of highly regarded recruits, freshman forwards Jordan Augustus and Akina Wellere, to the mix and St. John's will have depth to match its talent.

3. VILLANOVA

Villanova will also rely on its outside players to make a difference this season. Senior guard Caroline Coyer is a unanimous selection to the preseason all-conference team and will be supported by sophomore guard Alex Louin, who made the all-freshman team last year. With six seniors on the roster, Head Coach Harry Perretta looks to turn experience into postseason success.

4. CREIGHTON

Four starters return for the Bluejays from last year's Women's National Invitation Tournament team. Senior guard Marissa Janning and sophomore guard Sydney Lamberty stand out among that group as members of the preseason all-Big East team. This year, Creighton will also have the advantage of another year of experience for a promising core of players. It may be picked fourth, but Creighton could easily contend for the conference crown in 2015-2016.

5. SETON HALL

The Pirates won the conference regular season title and made the NCAA tournament with outstanding play from a pair of guards in their final seasons. Now that those key contributors and two other starters have moved on, Seton Hall does not look quite as dangerous. The lone returning member of last season's starting five, senior forward Tabatha Richardson-Smith, has a track record of being a formidable scorer. With a pair of transfers joining Richardson-Smith, Seton Hall will have an uphill, but not impossible, journey back to the NCAA tournament.

6. XAVIER

A program on the upswing, Xavier returns nearly all of the team that finished with an 18-15 record last season. Senior forward Briana Glover led the team in scoring in the 2014-2015 season and is a member of the preseason all-conference team this season. Just two years ago, Xavier finished with an 8-23 record. Now, it must not be overlooked by any team hoping to finish at the top of the conference.

7. GEORGETOWN

Coming off a last-place finish in the Big East last season, Georgetown returns each of its six players who averaged at least 20 minutes per game last season, a group led by sophomore guard Dorothy Adomako. Adomako led the Hoyas with averages of 13.1 points and 6.8 rebounds per game last season and was named the Big East Freshman of the Year. Georgetown also has five seniors on the roster, including forward Dominique Vitalis and guard Katie McCormick.

8. BUTLER

The Bulldogs finished in a surprising fifth place in the conference last season after they were picked to finish last in the 2014 Big East preseason poll. They will hope to surprise the rest of the conference again in 2015 but will have to do so without their two top scorers and their top rebounder from last year. Despite its losses, Butler adds the conference preseason Freshman of the Year in forward Brittany Ward.

9. MARQUETTE

The 2015-16 season for Marquette can be previewed in one word: youth. The roster includes two juniors and one sophomore, only two of whom played on a team that went 9-22 last year. The rest of the team will make its collegiate debut. All five starters from the 2014-15 season have left the program, so there will be plenty of minutes for all those young players. The Golden Eagles will have their work cut out for them, but a fresh start could be just what the program needs.

10. PROVIDENCE

The Friars finished 6-24 in 2014-15 and watched their top scorer and leading rebounder graduate. Needless to say, expectations are low this season. Junior guard Sarah Beal did make the preseason all-Big East team, however, and if she can remain healthy, then Providence has a weapon in the backcourt. Providence may not be a serious contender, but every conference needs a spoiler to make things interesting.



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