



The Cleveland State men's basketball team opens the regular season at the Wolstein Center on Saturday afternoon against Iona, an NCAA tournament team last season.

CSU returns eight letterwinners and four starters from last years squad that finished 14-18 and lost 10 of its final 14.

"We are a total different team from a year ago," said Vikings head coach Gary Waters, whose squad was picked to finish third in the Horizon League. "Last year we were the youngest team in America. {This year} we have about nine starters on the team. I started a different lineup in {CSU's tour of} Europe this summer. We may do that the whole year."

The Vikings are coming off a 78-62 exhibition victory against Lake Erie College on Tuesday. Sophomore guard Bryn Forbes led the Vikings with 21 points in the win, with Jon Harris adding 14.

Waters is excited about the team's depth this year.

"We are going to play 10 every game," said Waters. "The goal is to play no one more then 28 minutes."

The Vikings are led by the inside-outside duo of sophomores Anton Grady and Forbes, who were both named to the preseason All-Horizon League second team.

Grady, a 6-8 forward, missed most of the last season after suffering a season-ending knee injury six games into the season. The Cleveland Central Catholic product was leading the Vikings in scoring (13.7) and rebounding (5.5).

"When Grady went down last year, we lost the ability to compete {in games}," said Waters. "He was our lead competitor. When you took him away, the guys looked at each other and said who's going to lead us."

The Vikings were 4-2 with Grady in the line-up and 10-14 without him.

With Grady out for the year, it was Forbes who emerged as a go-to-guy.

Forbes, last year's Horizon League Newcomer of the Year, started the final 18 games for the Vikings. He averaged 12.7 points per game as a freshman and was CSU's leading scorer on its foreign tour this summer, averaging 22.3 points.

Waters said he never had a player that puts in as much time working on his shot as Forbes does.

"He shoots in the morning, then watches tapes on shooting in the afternoon, then shoots again at night. And he does it every day." said Waters.

The Vikings other returning starters include junior point guard Charlie Lee, who led the HL in assists last season (11.6 points, 4.8 assists), junior guard/forward Marlin Mason (8 points, 5.3 rebounds), and senior center Devon Long (6.7 points).

Waters says this is his deepest bench he has had in his seven seasons at CSU.

"This team has the ability to go to the bench and not lose a beat," said Waters.

The bench should get a boost from Division I transfers Trey Lewis (Penn State) and Harris (Miami of Ohio).

Lewis, a 6-2 combo guard from Garfield Heights, sat out the 2012-13 season due to NCAA transfer requirements. He averaged 5.6 points for the Nittany Lions as a freshman. Waters compares Lewis to former Kent State star Trevor Huffman.

"Trey can really shot the basketball," said Waters. "We are trying to convert him to understand the point guard position as well as the off guard."

Harris, a 6-7 forward from Twinsburg, transferred to CSU to be closer to his father who is dealing with health issues. The NCAA granted Harris a waiver to play immediately. Last season he averaged 8.5 points and 4.2 rebounds as a junior for the RedHawks. Waters compares Harris to former Miami of Ohio star Nick Winbush.

"Jon can play either the three or four," said Waters. "He shoots the three and has a lot of skill level."

Other newcomers to watch include junior college center Ismaila Dauda and freshman forward Demonte Flannigan.

"ID can rebound and block shots," said Waters. "Demonte has got all the athletic ability. He has surprised me with how well he shoots the ball. He needs to improve his defense and how hard he plays."

Other returning players expected to be in the rotation include junior forward Sebastian Douglas (6.7 points) and senior forward Luda Ndaye (3 points).

CSU should have their hands full on Saturday against an Iona team that finished second in the NCAA in scoring a year ago, averaging 80.7 points per game.

The Gaels return five of its top seven scorers from last year's squad that went 20-14 and lost in the second round of the NCAA tournament to Ohio State.

"That's a tough team. They return four of five starters back and three guys off the bench. They have great size," said Waters. "We will find out exactly where we stand early."

**Ndaye has MRI:** Ndaye had a MRI on his left arm on Wednesday.

He injured his arm in a scrimmage against Central Michigan on Saturday and did not play in CSU's exhibition game against Lake Erie on Tuesday.

"His arm was pushed back in the scrimmage and they say he might have torn something in the back of his arm," Waters said on Tuesday. "He had an X-ray {Tuesday} and will have an MRI on Wednesday. Then we will know exactly what is going on."

**Scales to redshirt:** Sophomore center Aaron Scales will redshirt during the 2013-14 season.

"I think he needs the year to get better," Waters said. "I want to use {the redshirt year} similar to what Gonzaga did with Kelly Olynyk."

Olynyk, who was a first team All-American last year, redshirted after his sophomore year then blossomed into a premier player.

Scales averaged 1.5 points and 1.2 rebounds last season as a freshmen.