

Coles Counting on Mavunga to Calm Sudden Turmoil in Oxford

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Thursday, November 10 2011 4:05 AM - Last Updated Friday, November 11 2011 11:52 AM



Miami University (16-7 overall, 11-5 in MAC, 2nd in MAC East last season)

Charlie Coles has a legitimate MAC Player of the Year candidate in 6-8, 232-pound center Julian Mavunga. He also has a pair of unexpected injuries, plus a discipline issue, that has thrown his RedHawks a few curveballs.

Allen Roberts, who was expected to slide into the starting lineup this season, has probably been lost for the season with a knee injury. Bill Edwards, a transfer from Penn State that was playing well since the beginning of practice, broke his wrist in the RedHawks' first exhibition game and will be sidelined for at least a month.

The loss of Orlando Williams, however, will probably hurt Miami most of all.

On Oct. 24 the University suspended Williams indefinitely for "conduct unbecoming a member of the program." It is not known if or when Williams will be back, but he will not be allowed to participate in any team-related activities, practices or games during the suspension.

Coles Counting on Mavunga to Calm Sudden Turmoil in Oxford

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Thursday, November 10 2011 4:05 AM - Last Updated Friday, November 11 2011 11:52 AM

Williams was a mainstay in the RedHawks' rotation last season, playing in all 33 games and averaging 9.8 points, 2.8 rebounds and 1.9 assists last season. He shot a team-high 39.6 percent from 3-point range last year and led Miami in scoring seven times during the 2010-11 campaign.

Williams' departure leaves four guards on Coles' roster, two freshmen and one sophomore.

"We've got three players out with injury now, with two of them possibly being out a very long time," Coles said. "But I feel good about our team, I think we're a hard-working team. Julian Mavunga is our best basketball player by far, but we've got other guys that are working their way into doing some good things for our basketball team."

As Mavunga goes, so will go the RedHawks. A pro prospect that relies on pure power and a deft intermediate game, Mavunga will be forced to shoulder most of the offensive burden for Miami this season. Last year Mavunga scored 14.8 points and pulled down 8.2 rebounds per contest and led the MAC in minutes per game at 36.34 per contest.

Coles also size on the bench to take advantage of with 6-11 center Drew McGee and 6-9 freshman center Jared Tadlock, but his backcourt is when the questions will lie.

Coles is anxious to see how things will play out.

"I don't know how many games we'll win because everybody is returning everybody, so it'll be hard for me and, possibly, a lot of people to determine who's better than who," he said. "But I do know we're going to be competitive and are going to play to our ability every night out."

Coles is also not going to worry too much about the players he does not have at this point, choosing to focus more on what he can put on the floor now.

Coles Counting on Mavunga to Calm Sudden Turmoil in Oxford

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Thursday, November 10 2011 4:05 AM - Last Updated Friday, November 11 2011 11:52 AM

"As a kid I never did get everything I wanted for Christmas, but I did get a couple things I wanted. I feel that way about our team," he said. "I'm very happy the season is about to start, but a little sad we aren't going to have a couple of the players we thought we were going to have. But we got a few presents and I'm willing to get going with what we got and see where they take us."