

Walk-on offers length

By Alex Angert
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Freshman Alan Wisniewski got a phone call with some pretty exciting news last week.

Six hours later, the freshman was in a meeting with the head coach of the Penn State men's basketball team.

"He told me I had to switch up my schedule a little bit to fit the practice schedule," Wisniewski said. "So I went to the advisor the next day."

That's because after an hour of running drills and playing against the 11 or 12 other guys at the tryout, Wisniewski had shown coach Ed DeChellis enough to warrant a spot.

His 6-foot-9 frame didn't hurt his chances, either.

With Sasa Borovnjak going down for the season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament, the Nittany Lions found themselves with a lack of depth in the front-court behind senior center Drew Jones.

The team's walk-on tryouts provided the team with the chance to add some help in that department, as Wisniewski joins the team to try and fill that void.

"We all feel bad for what happened to Sasa but that's life," forward DJ Jackson said. "But it's good to have Alan come in and help out and give us another body to bang around with. He's enjoying himself and we like having him on the team."

At practice on Monday, the tall and lanky Wisniewski was fully involved with the team running drills, looking puzzled and inexperienced at times.

But despite being a step behind the other players after joining the team late, his new teammates were highly supportive, as they gave him pointers and cheered him on while watching from the baseline.

Nevertheless, even though he doesn't figure to play too much,

Wisniewski is still expected to be a valuable asset to the team as he is now the second tallest active player.

"It helps us in practice, I'm not sure it's going to help us in games," DeChellis said.

"At least in practice it helps us, giving us another guy we can play against and shoot against. He's a guy we have to shoot over."

Wisniewski realizes his biggest influence on the team will come through practice thanks to his post presence with Borovnjak unable to play.

"If I'm lucky, I'll get into a few games," the walk-on added.

However, at this point the Michigan native — who averaged 7.9 points, 4.5 rebounds and 2.0 blocks per game his senior year at Bishop Foley Catholic — is just glad to be on the team.

"I thought I had a pretty good shot after the tryouts were over with," Wisniewski said. "I was just glad to get a call. I'm glad I get another chance to play basketball again."



Wisniewski

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Tyler Sizemore / Collegian

Tim Frazier dribbles at Penn State's media day on Oct. 18.

Frazier leading

By Emily Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When Tim Frazier reflected on his rookie season for the Penn State men's basketball team, there was one thing that frustrated the guard.

Nobody respected his jump shot.

"A lot of teams last year, they laid off me," said Frazier, now a sophomore for the Nittany Lions. "They played me for the drive."

Frazier, the 6-foot-1 shifty guard from Houston, Texas, wasn't upset by it — he said it's just the nature of thorough scouting reports in Division I basketball. However, he did want to make sure this trend would be different this year.

So Frazier worked hard in the off-season — staying at school for both summer sessions, logging countless hours in the weight room and practice gym — to make sure he, and his jump shot, would get stronger for the upcoming season.

It was just one of the many measures Frazier has taken to become an increased presence for the Lions this season.

"He's taken on a leadership role," senior forward D.J. Jackson said. "He knows, as a point guard, we really feed off him, off of his energy."

Jackson said that through preseason the team has already noticed improvements in Frazier's game — especially in his shooting.

Jackson added that Frazier is more confident, more willing to take the open look.

"Which is good because we need him to knock those down," Jackson said.

"He put in a lot of time this summer shooting and it has really showed."

Frazier, who was named the No. 1 recruit in the 2009 class out of Texas by

TexasHoops.com, is perhaps the quickest player on the Lions. He posted a team-high 34-inch vertical and 10.3-second lane agility drill time in preseason workouts before last season.

That speed and agility earned him a regular spot off the bench as a freshman for Penn State. Frazier played in all 31 contests, averaging 5.0 points and 2.3 rebounds per game.

As a sophomore, however, Frazier is hoping for a larger role — one that includes becoming a leader for a Penn State squad that's looking to rebound from an 11-20 season that featured just three league wins.

Senior Jeff Brooks said Frazier has embraced the challenge, both on and off the court. Brooks said Frazier is "a lot smarter with the ball now."

"He improved as a leader too," Brooks said. "Tim makes a lot of good decisions, being a young guy, just a sophomore, on and off the court."

Freshman guard Taran Buie — a four-star high school prospect who highlighted Penn State's 2010 recruiting class — said Frazier has gone out of his way to help him out in practice.

Buie couldn't think of any specific examples, but said Frazier will always come up to him during practice "and kind of tell me what to do here and there."

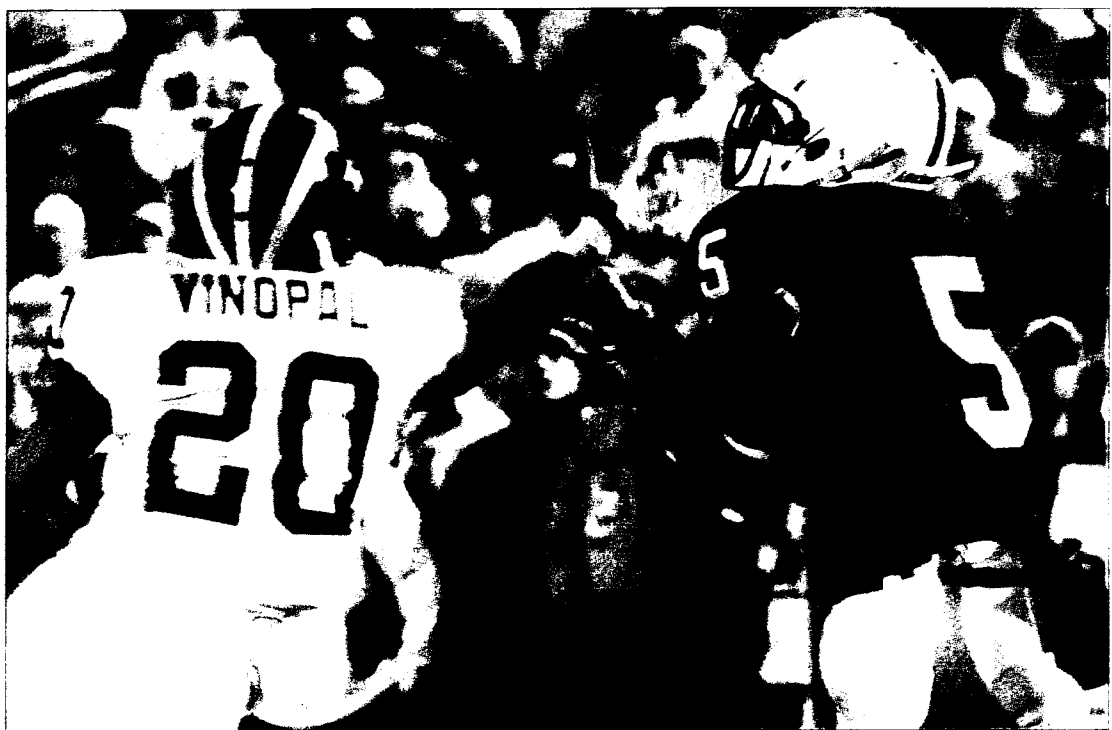
Senior co-captain Talor Battle said it's not in Frazier's character to be loud or too vocal on the court.

Battle described Frazier as "a soft-spoken guy," and the type to lead by example.

Brooks thinks Frazier will do just that during games this year.

"I think he has a lot of expectations for himself heading to the season," Brooks said. "With that confidence, I think he will have a good season this year. You know freshman year, just like me, you're just trying to get your feet wet. Now this year, make plays and do big things."

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Graham Zug (5) makes a touchdown catch in Penn State's 41-31 win against Michigan at Beaver Stadium.

Senior Zug looks to rebound

By Audrey Snyder
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With Graham Zug lined up in the slot, Matt McGloin had no problem delivering a 20-yard touchdown pass to the senior wide receiver.

While the Penn State sideline erupted into celebration, part of the cheers coming from the Nittany Lion players were because Zug scored his first touchdown of the season.

"You guys saw how excited we were when he scored," co-captain Brett Brackett said. "Hopefully he can keep the ball rolling because it helps when he's productive for our team."

The senior wide receiver is no stranger to scoring touchdowns, but this season has been the exception.

After having 46 catches for 600 yards and a team-high seven touchdown receptions last season, Zug has been targeted less this year. His production has seen a dramatic decrease as he has just seven catches for 81 yards,

but he's not complaining.

Zug said throughout his entire career at Penn State, he's had to work harder because he was a former walk on. While he didn't want to say the Michigan game reinvigorated his season, the three catches from McGloin were the most he's had this season.

"I've been motivated this whole season," Zug said. "Whether or not I was getting the ball, that doesn't matter to me. I just try to do my best to help the team win. Whether it's just being a leader out there or making sure guys are motivated, that's just what I have to do."

Having Zug be another weapon for either McGloin or Rob Bolden is something that hasn't happened often this season. While Zug said he has good timing with both quarterbacks, he and McGloin aren't strangers to being buried on the depth chart.

The former walk on-to-walk on connection from McGloin to Zug is something McGloin said was just the result of him taking what the defense gave him. The one-

on-one coverage, coupled with what McGloin called a route Zug runs to perfection, allowed the wide receiver to finally score his first touchdown of the season.


While both quarterback and wide receiver had to work their way up the depth chart and came to Penn State with something to prove, Brackett said Zug works just as hard in practice this year as he always has.

Though Zug said McGloin has had a tougher road to break the starting lineup, than he has because the quarterback is involved in every play, both players are hoping they can continue playing important roles.

And that's a challenge they both plan to embrace with the same attitude they've had since showing up at Penn State without a scholarship offer.

"Coming in as a walk on, you can only climb the depth chart," Zug said. "You can never go back down and you just have to work your hardest."

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