

BREAKING AWAY

The Horned Frog basketball teams look to break away from the norm past teams have set and achieve new levels of success. The men hope to find leadership in three seniors and win a Mountain West Conference Championship. The Lady Frogs want to advance deeper into the NCAA Tournament in quest of a national title.



Courtesy of MEDIA RELATIONS

“”

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Jim Christian
head coach

“”

In order to show ourselves, show our fans and show the country that we're a good basketball program, we have to come out every night and bring it all.

Helena Sverrisdottir
junior guard



Courtesy of MEDIA RELATIONS
AMANDA RINGEL / Design Editor

BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Frogs look to build off last year's beginning

By Josh Davis
Staff Reporter

In head coach Jim Christian's first season, Horned Frog basketball recovered from a 1-3 start to move to 13-6 and 4-1 in conference play. If only the season could have ended there.

The Frogs fell apart down the stretch, losing 11 of their last 12 games, all to conference foes including a heart-breaking last-second loss to top-seeded Utah in the conference tournament quarter-finals.

"My expectations here are a conference championship that's what I want to do for this program and for the fans."

Ronnie Moss
sophomore guard

This year, Christian is looking to put it behind him and lead the Horned Frogs to a smoother season with more experienced starters.

"We now have had some guys that have been through it, last year we had one guy who had been through it in Kevin Langford," Christian said. "Now we have six or sev-

en guys who've been through it, and they have a better understanding of how hard you have to play and how long you have to do it for."

It won't be easy, however. The Frogs lost their leading scorer and locker room leader (Langford) to graduation as well as last season's assist and assist-to-turnover ratio leader Jason Ebie, who was dismissed in the spring following a violation of team rules.

One of the few bright spots as the Frogs slid down the rankings was the play of Ronnie "Tuffy" Moss. The Fort Worth-raised sophomore put it all together during the final three games, scoring 52 combined points in those contests.

Moss knows that this year, he will be expected to step his game up again. He has set a high standard for his time at TCU.

"My expectations here are a conference championship," Moss said. "That's what I want to do for this program and for the fans. Last year, coach had us out at the Utah game watching Utah cut the nets down, and that's something we really want to do."

But Moss will not be alone.

Moss is one of three returning players who averaged more than 10 points per game last year. The other two, pre-



Senior forward Zvonko Buljan chases down a loose ball against Air Force last year.

SKIFF ARCHIVES

season Mountain West first-teamer Zvonko Buljan and Edvinas Ruzgas, are entering their senior seasons and should be deadlier than ever.

Buljan did a little bit of everything for the Frogs last year, leading the team in rebounding by a large margin while averaging 12.3 points per game with a 50 percent field goal percentage. He also finished third on the team in steals and averaged 35 percent from behind the arc.

Ruzgas was the team's pri-

mary three-point weapon last year, shooting nearly 100 more attempts than the next closest player and sinking 33 percent. He was also the team's best free throw shooter at 79 percent, a category the Horned Frogs could struggle in without Langford, who shot 209 from the stripe last year. Buljan was second in attempts with 87 free throws.

Christian said the team will miss Langford for the leadership he brought.

"Your seniors have to lead," Christian said. "You know, Zvonko Buljan and we have three seniors this year, last year we had one. So I think there is a little more strength in numbers ... Everybody on our team has to be committed...to getting better every day."

Langford's graduation also left a major hole in the TCU frontcourt.

The Frogs will enter the year without a healthy center on the roster, and their tallest players are listed as 6-9 on

the team's Web site. Buljan is 6-9, as well as freshman forward Nikola Cerina. Sophomore transfer Cheick Kone was expected to claim some time at center, but a knee injury will keep him out for the year.

With the absence of a true frontcourt presence, the guards will need to create more opportunities for open looks outside. Virginia Tech junior transfer Hank Thomas set a freshman record with 113 assists with the Hokies, but will be sitting out this year in accordance to NCAA transfer rules.

However, another transfer, junior Greg Hill, will be active this year. Hill came from Midland College, which is a junior college and, according to NCAA rules, he will not have to sit out a season. Hill was a high scorer at Midland, where he averaged 15.5 points per game.

Christian said despite the backcourt uncertainty, he thinks another year learning

his offensive system will help the team score.

"Guys understand a little bit more of what we're trying to do," Christian said. "That was a huge emphasis for us this year — is to be a team that can score points, and I made this point earlier, if you can't get to 70 (points) in (the Mountain West,) you're going to have a tough time winning."

Christian said the younger players will be involved early this year.

"We don't have a lot of players," Christian said. "When you inherit a program that only had three returning players, everybody who comes in to the program has a chance to contribute. That's why they come here, and we're expecting them to do that."

TCU had only eight players who participated in more than 21 games last year, and this year could be similar if the three freshmen on the roster can't break in to the rotation.




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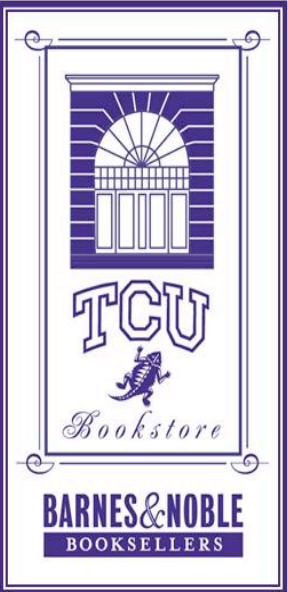
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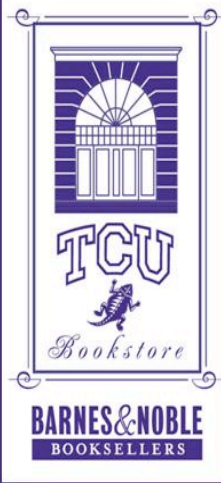
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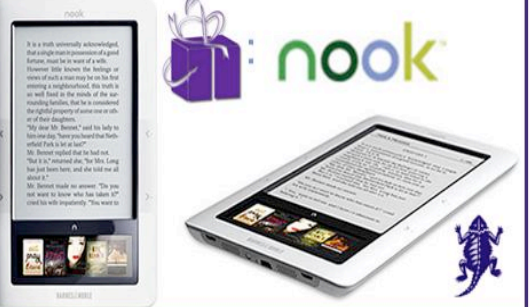
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Salutations!

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Lady Frogs already comfortable with entire roster

By Wyatt Kanyer
Staff Writer

Coaches and players alike are looking forward to the upcoming TCU women's basketball season, which officially starts Wednesday when the Lady Frogs take on Cameron University in an exhibition game.

The 2009-2010 team features talent, experience and depth. There are seven healthy returners from last year's team, six of who are juniors and seniors. The Frogs are led by guards like senior Eboni Mangum, who went down midway through the 2008-2009 season with a torn ACL; senior TK LaFleur (14.7 ppg, 5.4 rpg), a 2008 All-Mountain West Conference second selection; Helena Sverrisdottir (15.8 ppg, 7.4 rpg), a 2008 All-MWC first team selection; and sophomore guard Antoinette Thompson. The star returner is junior forward Emily Carter (11.4 ppg, 3.6 rpg), an All-MWC second team selection. Upperclassmen posts Chantelle John (3.6 ppg, 2.1 rpg), Rachel Rentschler (7.7 ppg, 5.1 rpg) and Micah Garoutte (6.1 ppg, 3.7 rpg) round out the solid core of veteran leaders. The returners' contributions will be crucial for the team's success.

LaFleur said she has made significant changes in the way she leads.

"I'm working on being more vocal," LaFleur said. "I really wasn't much of a vocal leader last year, I led by example. I've worked on being more vocal and helping get everybody on the same page."

Carter said she has also made an effort to improve as a leader.

"I've been trying to kind of help everybody out," Carter said. "If the freshmen are having a bad day, I want to be a person they can come to in confidence to help them out when they're down."

Sverrisdottir said last year's disappointing early exit from the NCAA tournament was a learning experience. The team learned that it must play with consistency, she said.

"It was a big experience for all of us to be in the NCAA tournament," Sverrisdottir said. "I think we kind of look back at it as something that we can learn from, how we have to be mentally prepared for everything and

bring our game out every night."

While the Frogs return most of last year's team, LaFleur said they are still making changes to integrate the new four new additions, guards Hannah Christian and Ida Tryggdsson, and forwards Starr Crawford and Delisa Gross.

"I feel like we've been trying to get (the freshmen) adjusted as quick as possible so they can become a big part of our team," LaFleur said. "As leaders, we've been trying to get everybody involved and make sure everybody is working hard every day."

The freshmen add an aspect the team didn't have much of last year: bench depth, she said.

"We can put anyone in our lineup in the game and feel com-

"I'm working on being more vocal, I really wasn't much of a vocal leader last year, I led by example. I've worked on being more vocal and helping get everybody on the same page."

TK LaFleur
senior guard

fortable and confident they'll do the things we need to get the job done," LaFleur said.

Sverrisdottir said the four freshmen additions to the team have increased the level of competition in practice, which has helped the returning players improve.

"(The freshmen) work really hard, and I'm really pleased with how much effort they've been putting into practice," Sverrisdottir said. "They're really physical, and that's something we needed last year."

Carter said because the team has many good players this year, the team is competing on a higher level.

The team is focused on being more physical, which has required more effort, Carter said. She has made more efforts to improve on the defensive end as the team plans to use more man-to-man defense this season, she said.

TCU vs. Cameron

What: Exhibition game against Cameron

When: 5:30 p.m. Nov. 11

Where: Daniel-Meyer Coliseum

Catch the rest of the Lady Frog schedule on gofrogs.com

What the Lady Frogs really want this year, though, is a Mountain West Conference championship. Carter was quick to mention that the women's basketball program has not won a Mountain West Conference title yet, and LaFleur and Sverrisdottir both said it was the team's ultimate goal heading into the end of the season.

To achieve that goal, the team will have to battle some tough competition. This year's non-conference schedule, much like last year's, which featured teams like Maryland, California, Texas A&M and Oklahoma State, will be difficult. It also includes games featuring Oklahoma, Minnesota and North Carolina State. Oklahoma, Texas A&M and Minnesota were one, two and 10 seeds in the NCAA tournament, respectively.

The Frogs beat Maryland and California last year, both of which were No. 3 in the nation at the time, but they fell to unranked Oklahoma State and No. 3 Texas A&M on the road.

Sverrisdottir said that doing well in non-conference games would show the nation that the team deserves recognition.

"In order to show ourselves, show our fans and show the country that we're a good basketball program, we have to come out every night and bring it all," she said.

The Mountain West isn't much easier. TCU was one of three MWC teams in the NCAA tournament last year, and they're all returning significant contributors. Of those teams, San Diego State figures to be the greatest threat. The Aztecs' returners include senior guard Jené Morris (16.1 ppg, 3.33 spg), the 2008 MWC defensive player of the year, junior forward Paris Johnson (12.0 ppg, 6.4 rpg, and 1.74 bpg), junior forward Ashley Duffy (10.5 ppg, 5.6 rpg, and 2.1 spg), and senior point



SKIFF ARCHIVES

Senior guard TK LaFleur splits the Utah defense for a layup in 2008.

guard Quenese Davis (5.3 ppg, 2.29 spg).

Utah returns forward Kalee Whipple (17.0 ppg, 6.2 rpg, 2.18 spg), a 2008 first team All-MWC selection; senior forward Halie Sawyer (7.1 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 1.21 bpg); and Janita Badon (3.2 ppg, 2.5 apg), who was a spark off the bench last year.

LaFleur said the conference is so deep that "any given day, you can beat anybody, and any given day you can be beaten by anybody."

But the Lady Frogs are confident in their chances to win the MWC championship and return to the NCAA tournament.

"(The championship is) something we're striving for, and it's what everyone wants," LaFleur said. "Right now, we're preparing for that moment. We're putting ourselves in the best possible

position to get that end result."

"We want to look back and think we're already at that limit," Sverrisdottir said. "We don't want to think that we should have worked harder."

Associate head coach Brian Ostermann said the team's experience would be to its favor.

"There's a certain comfort level to knowing what your expectations are on both ends of the floor," he said.

Offensively, Ostermann said the players are more comfortable as the team moves into its second year using the triangle offense. Conditioning has played a role, too, he said.

"From a physical standpoint, the returnees have gotten themselves into better shape," he said. "They're stronger, they're playing more physical, and because

they're doing such a great job in the weight room, they're not only stronger, but they're a little quicker."

Ostermann also acknowledged the team's goal to win the Mountain West Conference championship title.

"I think finishing a game out of first last year, the players know that we're close, and that we want to make that final jump to winning a conference title," he said.

For that to take place, Ostermann said the team must "build on team chemistry from a team standpoint. From a statistical point, we must keep in mind how important rebounding is."

Also, the team will have to utilize its strengths, which he said are three-point shooting, transition and ball protection.

Moss works to carry freshman success into second season

By Chris Blake
Staff Reporter

Sophomore point guard Ronnie Moss changed his commitment from Kent State to TCU a year and a half ago when Jim Christian, the previous Kent State Coach, was hired to coach for the Frogs.

Moss, a Fort Worth native, said he was glad that he made the decision to come home and liked the changes Christian had made to the program.

"Coach Christian loves someone that is going to come in and be a hard-nosed player for him," Moss said. "He has our back, and we're a team and a family."

Assistant coach Jean Prioleau said Moss exhibited a strong work ethic as a freshman last season.

"(Moss) doesn't give up," Prioleau said. "Even if things aren't going well on the court he doesn't give up, he plays as hard as he can all the time."

Coaches and teammates call Moss "Tuffy," his childhood

nickname. He was born with a hole in his heart that he still has and earned the nickname "Tuffy" from his uncle while in the hospital as an infant.

The heart did not bother Moss as a freshman when he averaged 10.2 points and 2.1 assists per game as the top scoring freshman in the Mountain West Conference. His scoring average was also the highest for a Horned Frog freshman basketball player in eight years.

A natural left-hander, Moss worked to improve his weaker hand over the summer in order to become a more dangerous and versatile point guard.

"I worked on my right hand and just seeing the floor when I played pick-up games and stuff like that," Moss said. "Some days I went without shooting the ball and just passed, passed, passed and tried to get my team more involved."

Moss is not focused on improving his individual statistics though. He said his main focus is to become a better leader.

"I want to improve on being a better floor general on the court ... and getting my team doing what they're supposed to be doing on the court," Moss said.

He pleased the coaches with his progress in that very aspect of the game, Prioleau said.

"Last year he had to take on how we wanted him to play, how to play Division I basketball, outside rotations, closeouts, etc," Prioleau said. "Over the course of time he's learned how to adjust and adapt and learn those things, so obviously this year it makes it easier for him. That's the improvement that he's made and when that happens the game starts to slow down."

After one year in the program and the adjustment to college basketball, Moss said winning a conference championship and playing in front of larger home crowds are goals of his this season.

"I watch other college games and I see all the students and I know our students are capable," he said. "If we give them some-

RONNIE MOSS

10.2
Points per game

62
Assists

42.6
Field goal percentage

2008-2009 season stats

thing to come for, they will come."

Moss and Christian will try to give fans something to come for in both of their second years at TCU.

"I feel like I have taken on a leadership role through Coach Christian because through my freshman year he guided me every step of the way," Moss said. "I have a feel for what he wants on the court and what he wants me to do. So it's just natural instinct."



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Sophomore guard Ronnie Moss lays the ball up against Clemson last season.

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW



Senior Forward Zvonko Buljan steals the ball from Air Force forward Matt Holland last season.

SKIFF ARCHIVES

Men's opponents offer similar tests

By Josh Davis
Staff Reporter

The Horned Frogs will face several matchups that are very similar to last year's with six common non-conference opponents.

After the Nov. 13 home opener against Mid-America Christian, the team will go to Tempe, Ariz., for the opening round of the Pre-season NIT. The Frogs will face Cal State Northridge in the first round.

Northridge advanced to the NCAA Tournament in 2009 after a 17-14 season and returns three starters. The winner will go on to face the winner of Arizona State-Texas State.

If the Frogs were to win the Tempe Regional, they would advance to the NIT Final Four in New York City Nov. 25 and 27. If the Frogs lose, they will play third and fourth games on the home sites of the highest remaining teams.

After the tournament, the Horned Frogs are scheduled to play at Nebraska before playing host to Louisiana

Tech. Last year Nebraska came to Fort Worth and beat the Frogs soundly, 62-50, led by a sharp defensive first half.

The Frogs' performance in the Nebraska and Louisiana Tech games should answer two big questions about this team.

Nebraska returns only four lettermen this season, but should still be a talented, well-coached team. The Huskers have a lot of large young talent, but the Frogs should be able to compete. If TCU wins this early road test against a sound defensive team, it would be a solid win to build on.

Against Louisiana Tech, the Horned Frogs will see their first low post game changer in Magnum Rolle, a 6-foot-11-inch center/forward, averaged 12.2 points and 7.2 rebounds per contest last year. If the Frogs' smallish team can't contain Rolle, they will likely have problems with similar players all year.

Other schedule highlights include this year's edition of the SMU game Dec. 2 at

SMU, the Frogs holding Texas Tech Dec. 8 and a tough road test at Houston Dec. 23.

"I think every game is going to tell us (a lot about this team)," said Frogs' head coach Jim Christian. "Because we have a lot of young players and we have a team that is going to try and develop some confidence. All those games are going to be pivotal for us to prepare ourselves to play in the league we play in."

Last year, that league wasn't friendly to the Frogs.

Luckily for TCU, the conference race is open this year behind BYU. The Mountain West coaches selected the Cougars to win the conference with 215 total points. Behind them are San Diego State (166), UNLV (161), Utah (143) and New Mexico (141).

TCU was selected to finish seventh in the conference, the same place it ended last year.

This season will provide a new set of challenges for Christian in his second season. How the team responds to the loss of center Kevin Langford and guard Jason

TCU vs. Mid-America Christian

When: 7 p.m. Nov. 13

Where: Daniel-Meyer Coliseum

For the complete season schedule, visit gofrogs.com

Ebie will determine whether this team can be successful moving forward, while trying to get the most of forward Zvonko Buljan and guard Edvinas Ruzgas' final season.

Horned Frog basketball is at a crossroads, and which path it takes won't be decided until the first tip against Mid-America Christian University.

"I don't have a master plan," Christian said. "My master plan is to keep building our program to be successful and get the right kind of kids in it. In that regard, we're doing that ... I think that we're on the right track on moving towards the goals that we've developed for ourselves."

DALLAS GENERALS

New hoops team an affordable option

By Austin Pearson
Staff Reporter

Courtesy of DALLAS GENERALS

So you want to go see some professional basketball but can't afford a Dallas Mavericks game? There's a new team in town that can help you quench your basketball thirst. The Dallas Generals will be playing their inaugural season this year in the American Basketball Association.

The Generals will pay home games at Fair Park Coliseum in Dallas. Students on a tight college budget can get more bang for their buck with the Generals. For only \$15 a student can sit courtside and see some exciting ABA basketball.

The ABA has many unique rules that are different from the NBA's rules. The 3-D rule gives an extra point for a basket made on a steal before a team crosses half-court. Overtime is played for three minutes, and if the game goes to a second overtime, the first team to score 10 points

"I know how it is to be in college. Pockets can be tight at times. We got a wonderful brand of basketball, a lot of athletes and a lot of dunks for an affordable price."

Brian Carter
current Dallas Generals and former Horned Frog player

wins. Players only have seven seconds to cross half-court instead of eight like the NBA.

The Generals also feature a former Horned Frog player in Brian Carter. The 7-foot-forward played at TCU from 2001-2003.

"He can run the court, he's re-

ally athletic, he's got a great attitude and he works hard," said head coach Chris Terrell about Carter. "I think he's going to be a big part of what we do."

Carter said students should check out the Generals for their brand of basketball and the affordable games.

"I know how it is to be in college," Carter said. "Pockets can be tight at times. We got a wonderful brand of basketball, a lot of athletes and a lot of dunks for an affordable price."

Students can relate to the players and they are very approachable, he said.

"We're professional athletes, but we don't have NBA money," Carter said. "You might catch one of us at the bar after the game."

The Generals' first game is Dec. 5 against the North Texas Fresh at Fair Park Coliseum. The Fresh play in Fort Worth, and the game has been billed as the "Metroplex's Best: Cross-Town Rivalry Series." The Fresh's home court is at Keller Central High School.

The Generals also boast two well-known players on their team. Anthony Miller played eight years in the NBA for the Los Angeles Lakers, Atlanta Hawks, Houston Rockets and the Philadelphia 76ers. Taurian J. Fontenette, also known as "Mr. 720," played on the AND1 Mix-Tape tour and was one of the first people to ever land a dunk featuring two full rotations in the air.

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