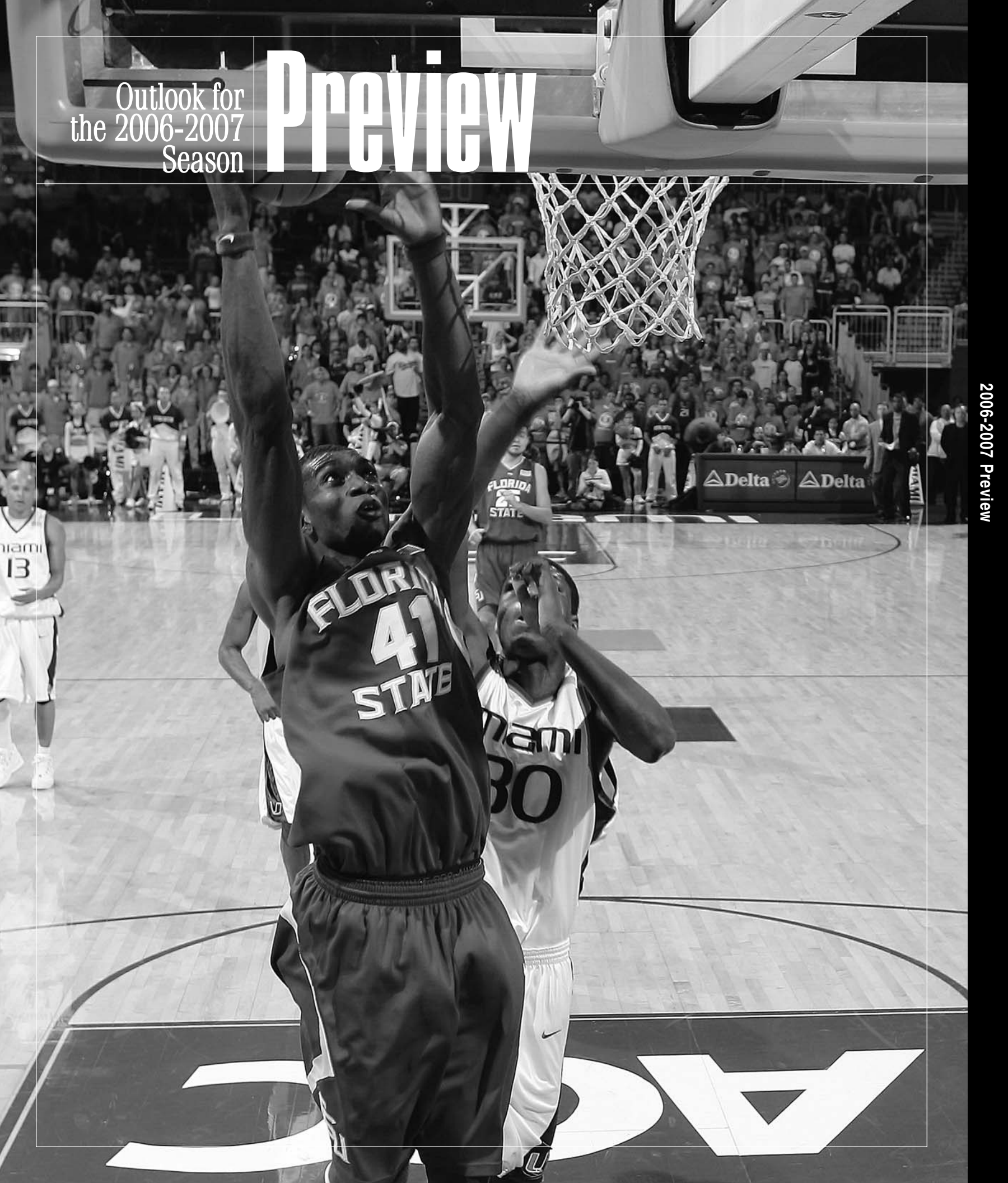


Outlook for
the 2006-2007
Season

Preview



With a solid core of veterans and a stellar recruiting class, the 2006-07 Seminoles are

Cleared For

Florida State, which advanced to the second round of the NIT, finished fifth in the ACC standings with a 9-7 record and defeated No. 1 ranked Duke during the 2005-06 season, returns three starters and nine letter winners for the 2006-07 season as it looks to continue building on the rock-solid foundation which has been put into place by fifth-year head coach Leonard Hamilton.

Led by All-America, National and ACC Player of the Year Candidate Al Thornton, the Seminoles return more than 60 percent of their total scoring (.647 percent) and rebounding (.603 percent) from a season ago. Thornton is Florida State's top returning scorer (16.1 ppg), rebounder (6.9 rpg) and leader in both field goals and free throws made as he enters the 2006-07 season as one of the nation's top collegiate players.

Florida State begins the 2006-07 season with 13 players on its roster — eight veterans who have earned extensive playing time during their collegiate careers and three newcomers who combine to form the Seminoles' fourth consecutive top-15 nationally rated recruiting class. The sum of the parts of the Seminoles' roster make up the most athletically talented group of players in Hamilton's five years as head basketball coach in Tallahassee. The key for Hamilton and his staff will be molding each player on the team and forming a cohesive group that is able to continue Florida State's ascent up the ACC standings and national rankings.

"We are excited about the players on our roster and even more excited about their capabilities on the basketball court," said Hamilton. "The players we are going to count on night in and night

out are veterans both of college basketball and our system. Our upperclassmen have been through many ACC games and have helped lead us into postseason play in two of the last three seasons. For us to continue our climb in the national rankings, they have to be the ones who step up on the court and help educate our younger players and help them quickly learn what it takes to be successful at this level."

The Seminoles' smallest group — its senior class — will have a great deal to say about how successful the Seminoles are this season. The class of two consists of Thornton and Jerel Allen — two players who are both in their fourth year of competition on the collegiate level. Thornton, one of the nation's best and most explosive players, returns as a starter for the second consecutive season. He will have to carry the increased load of being the Seminoles' marquee player as well as the player whom the opposition will attempt to shutdown throughout the season.

Thornton, too, will have to continue to exercise his leadership capabilities both on and off the court for the Seminoles to reach their postseason goals.

"Al Thornton had a breakout year from his sophomore to his junior year and we expect for him to make the same kind of improvement between his junior and senior year," said Hamilton. "He has developed into more of a leader and seems to accept that role as senior leader on this basketball team. We expect him to lead by example the way he always has. He never has an off-effort day. He always comes to practice and gives 110 percent in every practice, and that's one reason why he's been able to sustain that same type of effort in each game."



Takeoff!

Preview FSU SEMINOLE BASKETBALL 2006-2007



Junior guard Jason Rich averaged in double-figure scoring as a sophomore and will look to take on an even greater all-around role for the Seminoles as a junior.

Allen, one of the top defenders off the bench in the ACC, played in all 30 of the Seminoles' games as a junior and averaged nearly 12.0 minutes of playing time per game. The 6-4 guard will see his playing time and performance level continue to increase because of his strong work ethic. His improvement from the beginning of pre-season practice to the end of his first season of Division I basketball was truly remarkable. Allen will be a major contributor for the Seminoles this season as he continues his high level of play and ability to fit into Florida State's concept of team basketball.

"Jerel has raised his level of play as much as any player on our team and we expect him to have much more of a significant role in our rotation this year, in our system, than he did last year," said Hamilton. "He enjoyed a tremendous summer and spring in the weight room and on the court

and he has come into the fall with a rejuvenated spirit."

Florida State's junior class, which came to Tallahassee with the express purpose of turning the Seminole basketball program around, may be one of the most athletically talented classes in the nation. Guards Jason Rich and Isaiah Swann return as starters for the second consecutive year along with Ralph Mims who has distinguished himself as one of the steadiest ball handlers in the ACC. Junior forward Matt Zitani adds much-needed depth to the team and will contribute as an additional skilled player in the Seminoles' frontcourt.

Rich has started 40 of 61 games in the first two years of his career and will be a member of the Seminoles' starting lineup once again as a junior. He averaged 10.0 points and 3.1 rebounds while showing his durability as he was one of

The only player to play in all of Florida State's games in the last two seasons is Isaiah Swann who is one of the most athletically gifted players in college basketball. He has an incredible ability to drive the lane and dunk over players taller than him and in addition, has the strong ability to knock down the outside shot. Swann begins his junior season with a consecutive games played streak of 61 contests.

Swann averaged a career-high 8.5 points and ranked second on the team with a career-high 2.9 assists per game average. He made a single-season career-high 33 field goals from the bonusphere and has made 50 long range shots in his first two seasons. He begins the 2006-07 season half-way to reaching the 100 3-point field goals mark for his career.

"Isaiah Swann has shown that he is ready to contribute in a major way," said Hamilton. "He has always had the talent; we just need him to be more consistent. If effort is an indication of progress or of his potential, then we expect him to have a very good year because his effort and focus has been tremendous in all of our pre-season drills."

Mims, a talented guard who came into his own last season, will see his role on the team increase even more this season. He showed the coaches what he could do in some very important situations in 2006 and should be rewarded with increased and more important playing time in 2007.

Mims' most important outing of the season came against Butler in the NIT as he played 28 minutes in relief of the injured Todd Galloway. He recorded six assists and zero turnovers and his performance in run-

"For us to continue our climb in the national rankings, the upperclassmen have to be the ones who step up on the court and help educate our younger players and help them quickly learn what it takes to be successful at this level."

Leonard Hamilton, Head Coach
Florida State University

only three Seminoles to play more than 800 minutes during the 2005-06 season. He's also one of two returning double-figure scorers, meaning Rich will be

asked to carry more of a scoring load this season. Rich is also one of the top defenders in the league, after ranking third on the team with a career-high 36 steals and second on the team with a career-high 10 blocked shots as a sophomore.

"Jason Rich seems to improve each day," said Hamilton. "He's extremely athletic and he has improved his perimeter shooting, ball-handling and passing. We need Jason to be a major factor for us to be successful this year."

ning the point allowed the Seminoles to defeat the Bulldogs, 67-63, and advance to the second round of the NIT for the second time in three seasons. He also enters his junior season as one of the top five free throw shooters in school history, with a career mark of .795 after setting the school record for consecutive free throws made.

"Ralph Mims has shown tremendous improvement over the last year," said

Senior guard Jerel Allen will earn an expanded role in the Seminoles' rotation during the 2006-07 season after averaging nearly 12 minutes per game as a junior.





Junior guard Isaiah Swann is an explosive offensive player and strong defensive player who will be one of Florida State's leaders during the 2006-07 season.



Inset: Now in his second season as a Seminole, junior Matt Zitani will work to earn increased minutes during the 2006-07 season.

FSU SEMINOLE Preview

BASKETBALL 2006-2007

Hamilton. "He has matured and he has a much better understanding of what we need him to do at point guard. He's always been talented enough, now I think he's grown to the point that he understands exactly what we need of him. We need Ralph to step up and have a good year."

Florida State's fourth junior is Matt Zitani whose role on the team became even more important after the Seminoles lost junior Alexander Johnson as an early entrant into the NBA. Johnson left after his junior season, leaving the Seminoles with a shortage of experienced post players.

Zitani, who played in four games during his first season as a walk-on member of the team, will be expected to excel in his expanded role and contribute well-played minutes whenever he is called upon.

"Matt Zitani has accepted the role, and obviously with a lack of depth, he can be called into duty at any time. The great thing for our team is that he's accepted the challenge and he's working very hard."

Much will be expected of the Seminoles' sophomore class as the maturation of future stars Casaan Breeden and Uche Echefu along with the arrival of much-heralded point guard Toney Douglas will be on display from the beginning of the season. Guard Brian Hoff is in his second season as a member of the team and will work hard to gain playing time.

Breeden is quickly developing into one of the ACC's top wing players while Echefu's role on the team will be greatly expanded with the aforementioned departure of Johnson to the NBA. Douglas, already considered by many to be the top point guard in the ACC before he has even played his first game, will compete each day in practice against some formidable competition to prove his talent to the nation.

Breeden is an athletic forward who is capable of playing different positions and in different places on the court during different trips down the floor. He is a terrific leaper who can handle the ball, shoot well from the perimeter, and defend and rebound well. Breeden's inside and outside abilities on the offensive end of the court, combined with his 6-8 athletic frame make him a very difficult match-up.

Despite averaging 2.8 points and 1.2 rebounds as a freshman he displayed his all-star capabilities each time he was inserted into the lineup. He scored in double-figures for the first time in his career with 10 points

in the Seminoles' victory over Campbell in Tallahassee.

"Casaan Breeden only needs experience and time before he becomes an outstanding player," said Hamilton. "He's a long, lanky youngster who is extremely versatile. He improves each and every day and we know that he has a very, very bright future in our system. We are very confident that he's going to be able to give us much more of a major contribution this year than he did last year."

Echefu is a talented sophomore forward with a learning curve that seems to accelerate quicker than any other player on the Seminoles' roster. He will be a major contributor and should earn a starter's role to begin the season. Echefu has incredible, though as of yet untapped, athletic talent that will need to come to the forefront from the start of practice if Florida State is to reach the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1998.

Echefu's abilities have yet to be put on display and his potential as a future All-Star candidate is tremendous. He has yet to even scratch the surface of his potential in his quest to become one of the top all-around players in the history of the Seminole program. As a freshman he averaged 2.3 points

"Casaan Breeden only needs experience and time before he becomes an outstanding player."

Leonard Hamilton, Head Coach
Florida State University

and 1.4 rebounds while playing in 29 of the Seminoles' 30 games. Echefu began the season on fire as he averaged 4.8 points and 15.4 minutes played in each of the first five games of the season. He also scored his career-high of eight points and added three rebounds and one blocked shot against Purdue in Tallahassee.

"Uche Echefu is a youngster who is going to be put in a position this year where we expect him to be a major contributor," said Hamilton. "He has worked very hard in the off season to improve. He is extremely competitive, fundamentally sound, and he adds a new dimension as an inside player for us being that he's a good shooter. I think he only needs time and experience before he becomes a major contributor."

In Douglas, the Seminoles will play with a prototypical point guard who sees the court and finds his teammates as well as he scores the ball and plays defense. He begins his Seminole career after sitting out the 2005-06



season while observing the NCAA's transfer guidelines after spending his one season at Auburn University in the SEC. Douglas is expected to pick up right where he left off during his freshman season at Auburn. He can play both guard positions and will battle Ralph Mims, Isaiah Swann, Jason Rich and the Seminoles' newcomers for playing time at the point and off guard positions.

Douglas was a starter at Auburn during the 2004-05 season as he averaged 16.9 points, 5.3 rebounds, 1.8 assists and 1.4 steals during his only season at the SEC school. He earned Freshman All-America Third-Team and All-SEC Third-Team honors. Douglas was the nation's second leading freshman scorer and named to the All-SEC Freshman team in a vote by the league's 12 head coaches. He became only the fourth freshman in Auburn basketball history named to the Associated Press All-SEC Team, joining Charles Barkley, Mike Mitchell and Eddie Johnson. He finished his inaugural collegiate season as the fourth all-time leading freshman scorer in Auburn history.

"Toney Douglas transferred to Florida State and he practiced with us all last year," said Hamilton. "He's got point guard skills and he's really determined to be a leader from the point position on our team. He has a tremendous desire; he's extremely determined to learn

Casaan Breeden, one of Florida State's most athletic players, will find himself on the court more often and in more important situations as a sophomore during the 2006-07 season.

Preview FSU SEMINOLE BASKETBALL 2006-2007



A talented post player, Uche Echefu will have the chance to earn a starter's role for the Seminoles as a sophomore.

all the nuances that it takes to be an accomplished point guard. He's a proven scorer who wants to be a significant player in the ACC."

Hoff, in his second season with the program, will compete for playing time in the back court. He played in four games for the Seminoles as a freshman and hopes to gain increased playing time as the Seminoles' continue to excel in Hamilton's up-tempo offensive and high-pressure defensive schemes.

"Brian Hoff is a youngster who works very hard in his role and gives 100 percent every day at practice," said Hamilton.

The talent Hamilton continues to add to his team through nationally ranked players and recruiting classes is evident again with a stellar three-member freshman class. A pair of guards – Aaron Holmes and Josue Soto – and a forward – Ryan Reid – will make their debuts as Seminoles this season. The trio combines to form the fourth consecutive consensus top-15 recruiting class at Florida State.

Holmes has the athletic ability to play both the shooting guard and small forward positions and will give the Seminoles another strong shooter at the wing position. His

strengths include taking an opponent off the dribble and moving inside, playing with his back to the basket and posting a bigger player up in finding his way to the basket. With his soft shooting touch from the outside, Holmes could ultimately prove to be the Seminoles' best outside shooter during the season.

A four-year starter in high school, Holmes scored a school-record 2,478 points during his career. His scoring ability will be a welcome addition to Florida State's depth as will his ability to play numerous positions.

"Aaron Holmes is an incoming freshman who has shown he has very good shooting abilities," said Hamilton. "Like most freshmen, there will be a period of adjustment for him, but he definitely has the skills to develop into a very good player."

Soto will be in the mix for playing time at the point guard position from the beginning of practice. The 2006 Gatorade Player of



Ralph Mims has displayed his dependability at the point guard position during his first two seasons as a Seminole and will be ready to become a frontline player as a junior during the 2006-07 season.

the Year in the state of Florida brings a wealth of talent – at the highest levels of prep basketball, and internationally with the Puerto Rican national team – to the court at Florida State. Because of his extensive playing resume, Soto is more advanced at his position than most freshmen playing their first season of college basketball.

Soto averaged 17.6 points, 9.6 assists and 3.2 steals in earning All-State First-Team honors as a prep senior. He led his high school team to consecutive state championships and a 52-6 record (.897 winning percentage)

during his two-year prep career.

"Josue Soto is a very smart, intelligent point guard who is also a very good shooter," said Hamilton. "He makes great decisions and he's extremely competitive. Like Holmes, he will have to work through a period of adjustment but we feel he has the ability to make the adjustment a little faster than most players his age."

Forward Ryan Reid begins his Florida State career as what could be the most important addition to the roster this season. His frame (6-8, 230 pounds) immediately puts him in the rotation while his advanced

skill level will help him earn extensive minutes throughout the season. Reid is a team player who runs the floor well; faces up and can turn and shoot well and who is going to create a lot of match-up challenges for the Seminoles' opponents.

Reid averaged a double-double of 18.5 points and 13.0 rebounds to go along with 3.0 blocked shots as a senior in high school. Also a strong shooter, he shot .579 percent inside the arc on two point shots and .779 percent from the free throw line as a senior in helping Boyd Anderson High School to a number one ranking in the state of Florida in Class 6A during the 2005 season.

"Ryan Reid is another incoming freshman who is extremely hungry to excel at this level," said Hamilton. "He's a quick learner, he's extremely competitive and best of all he's physical. With our lack of depth inside, we're going to need him to step up and play some major minutes for us."

A non-conference schedule topped by national champion Florida at home, Wisconsin and Pittsburgh on the road and Providence at the St. Petersburg Times Forum – all before Atlantic Coast Conference play begins in January – highlights one of the toughest schedules in recent years for the Seminoles. The Seminoles will also travel to play at North Carolina and Duke while playing host to both Boston College and NC State in league play.

The Seminoles will play a school-record 17 home games in the Donald L. Tucker Center including the Colonial Classic to begin the season on November 12-14. The Seminoles will play host to McNeese State (Southland), Illinois State (Missouri Valley) and Southern Methodist (Conference USA) in the three-day exempt tournament. The Tucker Center will host two games each day with each team in the event playing three games over the three-day period. Florida State will then travel to play at Pittsburgh (Big East) in the final game of the event.

"Our schedule will be very challenging throughout the season," said Hamilton. "We will play a schedule that will put us in position to help us reach our goals when post-season play begins in March. As we continue to become a program of significance in college basketball we hope this schedule will help us become a better basketball team throughout the season."