



The Cavalier Daily

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SPORTS

Virginia hot on the recruiting trail

U. Va. hosts top recruits this weekend in hopes of finding the future of Cavaliers' basketball

Jessica Garrison, Cavalier Daily Associate Editor

There's more to college basketball than December to March when big crowds in arenas cheer their teams to victory without much thought as to how the teams came together. The foundation of any college team is its recruiting, a year-round process that puts schools on a nationwide search for the right players.

For Virginia women's basketball, the story is no different. The Cavaliers already have one verbal commitment for the 2002-2003 school year: Charita Roberts, a 5-foot-7 guard from Winchester who is ranked 65th in her class overall by the All-Star Girls Report.

With Roberts' commitment, the Cavaliers still have three full scholarships remaining and a wish list that is twice as long.

Tiffany Sardin, from Chicago, is ranked 37th overall among this year's recruiting class. The 6-1 wing forward is the No. 3 player in the nation at her position and a high school standout who came to Virginia on a visit last weekend.

Sardin offers a versatility that Virginia is looking for.

"She's actually more of a guard," said Bret McCormick, who is a recruiting analyst for the All-Star Girls Report. "She can step out and shoot the three - a real athletic kid."

Three of Virginia's top prospects will be visiting Grounds this weekend: Keila Evans from Baltimore, Ganiyat Adeduntan of Athens, Ga., and Gillian Goring, who is completing high school in Waterloo, Iowa.

Evans is a 6-3 post player, ranked 72nd in her class and in the top 10 among power forwards. She, like Sardin, has the potential to be dangerous from the outside even as her height makes her a force under the basket.

Virginia has some competition from another ACC school when it comes to recruiting Adeduntan. Florida State also is interested in the 6-1 wing, who is No. 36 overall and one of the top five wings in her class. Her home state school, Georgia, also is among her prospective schools.

Goring, the nation's No. 9 prospect, has a background almost as impressive as her basketball prowess. Originally from Trinidad, Goring played high school ball at Germantown Academy in Pennsylvania. She averaged 16 points, 11 rebounds and 3 blocked shots per game as a junior there.

Goring transferred to Waterloo West High School to assure that she can graduate on time. Also, Waterloo gives her the opportunity to play under coach Tony Pappas, who McCormick deemed very capable of helping Gillian polish her game.

"When I first saw her, three or four years ago ... she reminded me of Dikembe Mutombo," McCormick said. She is "a terrific shot-blocker and could really run. She's getting to where she can shoot a lot better as well."

Goring has a surprising agility for her 6-7 frame, making her one of the top five post players in her class.

Deidre Chapman is a senior from Richmond, Calif., who has the height that Virginia is seeking. Chapman is a slender 6-6, but McCormick says she "runs very well. She's very skilled. Once they get her in there in the weight room she's going to be a great player."

Chapman plans to visit Virginia the weekend of Oct. 19, along with New Jersey native Michelle Campbell.

Campbell also may fill one of Virginia's critical needs. With the graduation of forward Dean'na Mitchelson, the Cavaliers need a post player with the ability to muscle in down low.

"She's strong with a good strong body," McCormick says.

"She's a low post force and she can shoot with her left or right hand around the basket."

McCormick sees past the individual players that Virginia is recruiting and suggests that Campbell might be a strong complement to others from her potential class.

"Now if you were to get a girl like Gillian or Deidre, and then get Michelle, they would be a perfect complement to each other: the muscle and the height."

Campbell considers her strengths rebounding, blocking shots and scoring. Although she is still deciding between Connecticut, Rutgers, N.C. State and Virginia (who she says are "all even" in the running), she knows exactly what she wants from a school.

"I'm just looking for a good elementary education program," Campbell said. "And for a team, I'm looking for a family and I have to like the coaches."

The next few weeks will be crucial for all six of these girls as they take visits and begin to narrow down their options for their lives next year, both on and off the court.

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