



The racle
BASKETBALL
EDITION
Fall 2019

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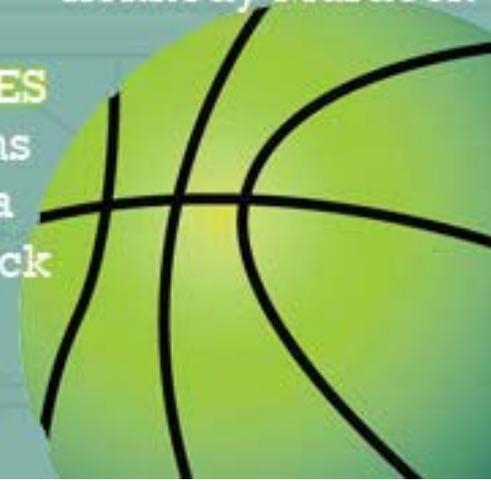
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The leader at the post



Brian Hattab

SPORTS EDITOR

Maybe it's fitting that she's the leader of the pack now, considering the kind of family she's from.

USF's lone senior, post player Tamara Henshaw, is from a sports-heavy family. Henshaw's father played football and basketball, her brother plays football at Georgia Southern and she has numerous other relatives that play various sports.

"My dad actually got me into basketball," Henshaw said. "And my second-oldest sister, she started out playing, and they kind of looked at me and it was like, 'Well, shoot, you guys are the same height. We might as well just throw you in there.'

"So I took a break from cheerleading, and I went to go play basketball. And me, being as competitive as I am, I fell in love with it. And it was all because of my dad."

That's right. The 6-foot-1-inch Henshaw was a cheerleader before she found basketball.

"She wanted to dress up and be pretty and cheer," Henshaw's father, Verneal, said. "But she was a tall cheerleader. She was always taller than everybody else."

Tamara used cheerleading as her way of getting close to football.

"That was my first involvement [in sports]," Tamara said. "But the only reason I started was because

I love football. I grew up in a football family. And I was like, 'If I want to get closer to the action, might as well be a cheerleader.'"

Picking up basketball turned out to be very beneficial for Tamara. She was a four-year letterwinner in high school at Flagler Palm Coast, leading her team to the Florida State Class 8A Final Four in her senior year.

Her decision to come to USF was aided by the fact that not only would she be playing top-tier teams all the time, she'd be a short drive away from the family that got her into the sport in the first place.

"My dad is three hours away. My mom is three hours away. I'm still able to go home, on, let's say, a three-day weekend or whatever," Tamara said. "But it was also because of the coaching staff, the school and being in a program that we play NCAA teams all the time."

But there were some doubts whether or not she could make it with a perennial-top 25 program.

"You had a lot of high school coaches around the area like, 'Oh, she can't go to a top-Division I women's basketball program and do any good,'" Verneal said. "I'm like, 'Well, I'm telling you, once she gets the fire, I'm telling you, she's going to step up to their level. She's going to explode beyond their level, because she wants to compete.'"

"And that was the key. She always loved competing and beating people out. Once she beat people out, she was like, 'See, I told you.'"

Tamara caught fire quickly at USF, as she posted an impressive freshman season, starting every game from Dec. 20 onward, with the exception of one game



The lone senior on USF's 2019-20 roster, Tamara Henshaw overcame doubters out of high school to put up a great collegiate career. **SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/GOUSFBULLS**

against UCF in March. She was second on the team in rebounds (226) and recorded a team-high 31 blocks on her way to a unanimous selection to the AAC Freshman Team as well as being named AAC Freshman of the Year.

"When she won Freshman of the Year, I was like, 'Oh my God, really?'" Verneal said, "because she beat out some freshman out of UConn, who, that's all they talk about is the people up north. That's what I usually say, the people up north, they talk about them more than anything, and she beats them out."

"I was like, 'wow.' Right after Kit [Laksa] won it, the next year, she won it. That's impressive. And it shut a lot of people up."

Three years later and USF's only senior, Tamara is naturally one of the leaders on the team, and that's largely thanks to the leaders who came before her.

"With having great leaders in Maria [Jespersen] and Laia [Flores] and Kit and Laura

[Ferreira], they really helped me and pushed me to be the person that I am today and the player that I am today," Tamara said. "They always wanted us to be the best, and they were pushing us all the time in practice, in weights, in whatever."

"So I take from what they have taught me, and I try to put that toward the newcomers, and push them to always be in the gym and get up shots and be the best that they can be at the game. But also being that outlet for them. If they need someone to talk to, if they need help in school, I'm here for them, which came from all of our leaders, and I'm just trying to be that leader that they were to me."

It hasn't always been easy though, especially last season, when injuries hampered the Bulls to the point where USF was effectively playing with a bench of two players for most of conference play. But things like that, even though far from ideal, are valuable life lessons in the end.

"I definitely took it as that," Tamara said. "You don't know what's going to happen out in the world, and if you're not prepared for those things, then you're going to take it as, 'Why is everyone beating me up?' when it's not that — it's life."

But she still managed to have a good season, leading the team in rebounds (181) and steals (28).

In spite of the doubters coming out of high school, Tamara has put up a great career at USF. She currently sits at No. 11 in program history in career rebounds (686) and No. 12 in blocks (70).

It's been rewarding to watch for her best friend and person who got her involved in basketball in the first place.

"It's extraordinary to watch her on TV, to come to the games or see her play," Verneal said. "When somebody comes to me and says, 'Hey, I've seen your daughter on TV.' Like, 'Wow, really?' That's a blessing."

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE



NOV 5 (TUE) 5:30 P.M.
JACKSONVILLE
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 15 (SUN) 1 P.M.
IDAHO
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 29 (WED) 7 P.M.
HOUSTON
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 8 (FRI) 7 P.M.
TEXAS
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 19 (THU) 7 P.M.
MISSISSIPPI STATE
LAS VEGAS



FEB 2 (SUN) NOON
CINCINNATI
CINCINNATI



NOV 12 (TUE) 7 P.M.
HOWARD
YUENGLING CENTER

TBD

DEC 21 (SAT)
3 P.M./5 P.M.
VIRGINIA OR UNLV



FEB 9 (SUN) NOON
TEMPLE
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 15 (FRI) 11 A.M.
VCU
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 30 (MON) 5:30 P.M.
BROWN
YUENGLING CENTER



FEB 13 (THU) 8 P.M.
TULANE
NEW ORLEANS



NOV 19 (TUE) 8 P.M.
BAYLOR
WACO, TEXAS



JAN 5 (SUN) 2 P.M.
CINCINNATI
YUENGLING CENTER



FEB 16 (SUN) 2 P.M.
UCONN
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 24 (SUN) 2 P.M.
SAINT FRANCIS (PA.)
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 12 (SUN) 6 P.M.
TULSA
TULSA, OKLA.



FEB 19 (WED) 6 P.M.
UCF
ORLANDO



NOV 28 (THU) 11 A.M.
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
CANCUN, MEXICO



JAN 16 (THU) 7 P.M.
TEMPLE
PHILADELPHIA



FEB 22 (SAT) 5 P.M.
MEMPHIS
MEMPHIS, TENN.



NOV 29 (FRI) 1:30 P.M.
FLORIDA GULF COAST
CANCUN, MEXICO



JAN 19 (SUN) 3 P.M.
UCF
YUENGLING CENTER



FEB 25 (TUE) 7 P.M.
EAST CAROLINA
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 30 (SAT) 11 A.M.
NOTRE DAME
CANCUN, MEXICO



JAN 22 (WED) 7:30 P.M.
WICHITA STATE
WICHITA, KAN.



FEB 29 (SAT) 7 P.M.
SMU
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 6 (FRI) 5:30 P.M.
ALABAMA STATE
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 25 (SAT) 2 P.M.
TULANE
YUENGLING CENTER



MAR 2 (MON) 7 P.M.
UCONN
HARTFORD, CONN.

SOUTH FLORIDA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



TEXAS

-VS-

**SOUTH
FLORIDA**



NOV. 08 | 7:00^{PM} | USFSTUDENTTIX.COM

Bulls set to bounce back after injury-plagued season



Nolan Brown

STAFF WRITER

Last season was not what USF women's basketball was expecting. In the preseason, the Bulls were ranked No. 19 and expected to make a run in the NCAA Tournament.

Although the team made it to the second round of the Women's NIT and finished the season with a winning record, the Bulls never finished at the heights they expected.

But it wasn't a lack of motivation or talent that squashed their objectives.

It was an injury-ridden season that saw USF's two seniors — Laura Ferreira and Kitija Laksa — out for the season early on.

Their injuries forced some new, untested faces to play roles they didn't imagine they would be forced to play. It was something unexpected for players like junior guard Enna Pehadzic.

Though that didn't stop her from leading the team in scoring (422) and minutes played (986).

"But you know what, I worked hard in the gym and I just prepared for my opportunity to come," Pehadzic said.

That sort of dedication and intensity in the face of adversity is something the Bulls are looking to translate to this season.

A key difference heading into Tuesday's opener against Jacksonville is mostly everyone



USF was hindered by injuries last season. ORACLE PHOTO/BRIAN HATTAB

is physically able to play. A fully healthy squad is something the Bulls didn't have the majority of last season.

"Well, the one thing I'm excited about is everyone is healthy, so that's a good thing," coach Jose Fernandez said.

USF was picked its usual second in the preseason AAC coaches poll, behind usual-favorite UConn.

But it's by no accident.

Despite the events of last season, the Bulls are hoping they have everything it takes to push for an AAC title and make

a run in the NCAA Tournament, according to Pehadzic.

"We want to go to an NCAA postseason, we want to go play for a conference championship," Pehadzic said. "Our goal has never changed despite what had happened, and I feel like we have the right pieces to go and get what we want."

There is an important role for everyone, according to Pehadzic.

"We have all the puzzles this year," she said. "Everybody is a piece of the puzzle ... we have to just keep working."

The puzzle seems to have

all the right pieces, as USF has significant depth entering the season, according to senior post player Tamara Henshaw.

"We have all kinds of threats on the floor now and we're deep," Henshaw said. "If one person is not having a good game we don't always have to count on that one person. We have multiple people that can come out and have a big game."

USF boasts experienced depth to its roster with six new additions. While five of the new players are freshmen, they boast experience at the international

level.

Only junior Bethy Mununga has collegiate experience, playing at junior college Northeastern Oklahoma A&M.

Freshmen Maria Alvarez, Mihaela Lazic, Elena Tsineke, Cristina Bermejo and Kristyna Brabencova may not have college experience, but they have played for their country or a club team.

A freshmen class that boasts experience at a top level is a benefit for the Bulls.

"A lot of them are experienced," Pehadzic said. "They played a lot of big games with their national teams and I feel like they all want to learn. They're all staying in the gym working hard, so I feel like everybody is just hungry to get started."

Teams like No. 2 Baylor and No. 16 Notre Dame, the champion and runner-up, respectively, of last season's NCAA Tournament, wouldn't be scheduled if the Bulls weren't up to the challenge.

"Coach [Fernandez] never puts us in a position that he doesn't think we can succeed in," Henshaw said. "He gives us a great schedule because he knows that we have great people that came back and great people that came in."

The current team is good, but the key to a successful season is making sure everyone stays healthy, according to Fernandez. Once that is achieved, all the puzzle pieces will find their place.

"We're looking forward to this season," Fernandez said. "The big thing is if we stay healthy, we've got a really good basketball team."

EXPECTATIONS

Continued from PAGE 10B

tournament. Meanwhile, some pundits even have the Bulls as a dark-horse NCAA Tournament team.

"We're maybe years in advance of where we thought we'd be, that's where we're at right now," Gregory said. "We had to kind of change it, the philosophy heading into this year."



Whether USF wins 20 or more games again this season will not determine the success or failure of the 2019-20 campaign, according to coach Brian Gregory. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/GOUSFBULLS

Keep it all in perspective this year

With high expectations coming into this season, it's important to remember that the program is only two seasons removed from arguably its darkest days. There's still hard work to be done, according to Gregory.

"We can't forget where we were and how we got here. That's the biggest thing," Gregory said. "It's a temptation when you start getting a little fat and sassy a little bit if you think you've arrived."

"We have not arrived. Have we made great strides? Is there some excitement around the program? No question about it. ... But we've still got some

steps to go, and we're at a point right now where the steps have to be made in wins and losses.

"You also have to look at the history of the program when you look at how long it's going to take to build something as well. I think someone told me we have three times as many 20-loss seasons as we have 20-win seasons. So you don't just snap your

finger and all of a sudden, you're in the NCAA Tournament and advancing and winning 25 games every year."

Regardless of how this season turns out, whether it's another 20-win season or not, it's all about getting better. That will determine whether the 2019-20 season is a success in Gregory's eyes.

"We want to take another step as a program," Gregory said. "I'm not sure there's a certain number [of wins] that goes with that. I'll know by looking at how we respond. ... We evaluate on a daily basis, we really do, because where we [were] at, there was no sense of trying to look forward more than one day."

"We've just got to keep taking care of today."

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MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE



NOV 5 (TUE) 8 P.M.
ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 21 (SAT) NOON
FLORIDA STATE
SUNRISE, FLA.



FEB 1 (SAT) 4 P.M.
UCF
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 10 (SUN) NOON
BOSTON COLLEGE
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 29 (SUN) 5 P.M.
FLORIDA ATLANTIC
YUENGLING CENTER



FEB 8 (SAT) 4 P.M.
MEMPHIS
MEMPHIS, TENN.



NOV 13 (WED) 7 P.M.
IUPUI
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 1 (WED) 5 P.M.
SMU
DALLAS



FEB 12 (WED) 9 P.M.
HOUSTON
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 21 (THU) 7 P.M.
WOFFORD
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 4 (SAT) 2 P.M.
UCONN
YUENGLING CENTER



FEB 15 (SAT) NOON
TULSA
YUENGLING CENTER



NOV 25 (MON) 1:30 P.M.
LOYOLA CHICAGO
GEORGE TOWN,
GRAND CAYMAN



JAN 7 (TUE) 7 P.M.
EAST CAROLINA
GREENVILLE, N.C.



FEB 20 (THU) 7 P.M.
WICHITA STATE
WICHITA, KAN.

TBA

NOV 26 (TUE) TBA
GEORGE TOWN,
GRAND CAYMAN



JAN 12 (SUN) 4 P.M.
MEMPHIS
YUENGLING CENTER



FEB 23 (SUN) 2 P.M.
UCONN
STORRS, CONN.

TBA

NOV 27 (WED) TBA
GEORGE TOWN,
GRAND CAYMAN



JAN 18 (SAT) 6 P.M.
UCF
ORLANDO



FEB 26 (WED) 7 P.M.
EAST CAROLINA
YUENGLING CENTER



DEC 2 (MON) 7 P.M.
FURMAN
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 21 (TUE) 7 P.M.
WICHITA STATE
YUENGLING CENTER



MAR 1 (SUN) NOON
TEMPLE
PHILADELPHIA



DEC 6 (FRI) 8 P.M.
DARTMOUTH
YUENGLING CENTER



JAN 26 (SUN) 2 P.M.
HOUSTON
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MAR 3 (TUE) 7 P.M.
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DEC 15 (SUN) 4 P.M.
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JAN 29 (WED) 8 P.M.
TULANE
NEW ORLEANS



MAR 7 (SAT) 7 P.M.
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DEC 18 (WED) 7:45 P.M.
UTAH STATE
HOUSTON

SOUTH FLORIDA MEN'S BASKETBALL



**BOSTON
COLLEGE**

-VS-

**SOUTH
FLORIDA**

NOV. 10 | 12:00^{PM} | USFSTUDENTTIX.COM

New expectations for Bulls in 2019-20



Brian Hattab

SPORTS EDITOR

There's something different surrounding the Bulls as the 2019-20 season begins.

And it's something that hasn't been around the program since the early part of a decade that's now in its final months.

Expectations.

Considering the Bulls are coming off a season where they set a program record for number of wins (24) and won the school's first postseason championship since the 1990 Sun Belt Tournament, there are good reasons to have them.

But with those expectations may come some difficulties.

"We're going to be faced with some challenges this year that we've never encountered before," coach Brian Gregory said. "If we lost a game [last season], I'm not sure anybody was like, 'Whoa, what's going on?'"

That was then, when USF was coming off a 10-win 2017-18 season and hadn't qualified for the postseason since the 2012 NCAA Tournament.

Now, as reigning College Basketball Invitational (CBI) champions, fans will be talking about every win — and every loss — like never before.

"There'll be different things being said," Gregory said. "You've got a lot of different platforms that if you lose a game or you don't play well, that there's negative comments can come on. It's really important that guys



After winning the College Basketball Invitational last season, the expectations for USF's season are higher than they've been in recent memory. **SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/GOUSFBULLS**

understand that. ... You've got to stay humble when things are going well, and you've got to really kind of hunker down and hit the mattresses if things aren't going well."

Veteran leadership

When it's time to "hunker down and hit the mattresses," the Bulls will have to rely on veteran leadership to weather the storm, according to Gregory.

Fortunately, they have plenty of that — to a degree.

USF returns all five starters from last year's CBI-winning team, only adding two true freshmen — guard Jamir Chaplin and forward B.J. Mack. But, while mostly everyone is back, it's still a relatively young group.

"When I say veteran, it's interesting, because it's still only two seniors [forward Antun Maricevic and guard Laquincy Rideau]," Gregory said, "but

David [Collins] and [Justin Brown], it's like those guys have been here for 10 years already, and they're only juniors, but they've played so many minutes.

"So we have a lot of playing-time experience for us. But with only two seniors, it's still unique."

It wasn't all sunshine and roses in Collins and Brown's freshman year. In fact, considering the 3-15 AAC record the Bulls put up in 2017-18, it would have been easy to be pessimistic, according to Brown.

"To be honest, as time progressed and things were going the way they were my freshman year, there were a lot of times you could be negative and look down on everything," Brown said. "But the thing about us is we always just look into the future.

"So once last year came around, it was just everything in the past is in the past."

Because of the veteran

presence, practice has been a lot smoother heading into this season than it was in Gregory's first two years. Instead of taking time to explain things, the Bulls have been able to spend practice time actually playing basketball.

"We've done a lot more playing in practice, where we're able to review some stuff and then just go out there and compete within that segment — be it offense, defense, special teams, whatever the case might be," Gregory said. "Where over the last two years, there was maybe a lot more walking through stuff and showing them and explaining why. They know how to do it, they know the why — now, we just have to get better at it. And sometimes the best way to do that is in live action."

A better schedule

Despite the program record 24 wins last season, USF's schedule

was pretty weak. The Bulls' strength of schedule was ranked 128th in Division I by CBS Sports at the end of the season.

It's hard to argue that USF's schedule isn't better this season.

The Bulls are set to face no fewer than seven postseason teams in nonconference play alone. Depending on how things shake out during USF's trip to the Cayman Islands the week of Thanksgiving, that total may be as many as nine before AAC play even begins.

"We talked about how important it was to build a great nonconference schedule," Gregory said. "There's two areas you have to hit to build a nonconference schedule that puts you in position to play in the postseason. ... You have to play some really high-level Quadrant 1 teams, and then the one-way games — the single games that you play at home — have to be against quality opponents."

Of the seven guaranteed postseason opponents, three appeared in the NCAA Tournament and two in the NIT. It's a position the Bulls had to put themselves in to have any shot at a postseason birth, according to Gregory.

"You want to put yourself in a position where heading into conference play, if you take care of things and you continue to develop," Gregory said, "you're talked about as a team that can make it to postseason."

NCAA.com analyst Andy Katz listed USF as one of his "First Four Out" teams in his mock preseason bracket in September, meaning the Bulls would just barely miss out on the

See EXPECTATIONS on PAGE 7B

The soul of USF men's basketball



Nolan Brown

STAFF WRITER

It's hard to imagine someone who initially played both baseball and football to be referred to as the soul of a college basketball team.

But that's what coach Brian Gregory said about senior guard Laquincy Rideau.

"He's the soul of our team," Gregory said. "He wears and plays with his emotions on his sleeve."

Rideau, who's been with the

Bulls for just over two years, has established himself as a key leader of the team.

Before he found basketball, though, Rideau was lining up to play football. And before that, he tried his hand at baseball.

Rideau's father, Greg, pitched for the Cleveland Indians' organization in 1992. He tried to convince his son to follow in his footsteps.

"He tried to get me to play baseball," Rideau said. "I was like a third baseman or a right outfielder and I was just picking the flowers off the ground. I was just bored."

The first sport he loved was football, but he discovered basketball shortly thereafter and was drawn to it.

"Football was like my main

sport," Rideau said. "Then I just embraced basketball because it was more fun ... just more of an active game."

From there, the game of basketball became a part of him.

When Gregory set out to recruit players in 2017, his first season with USF, it came down to the last minute because of how unattractive USF was at the time. The Bulls were coming off back-to-back sub-10 win seasons and the program was considered a mess.

Gregory was seeking out players with mental and physical acuity.

"We didn't just need toughness because I like tough kids that can play, we needed mental toughness, too," Gregory said.

"We knew the hole we were in



Laquincy Rideau is the soul of the Bulls, according to coach Brian Gregory. ORACLE PHOTO/BRIAN HATTAB

See **RIDEAU** on **PAGE 13B**



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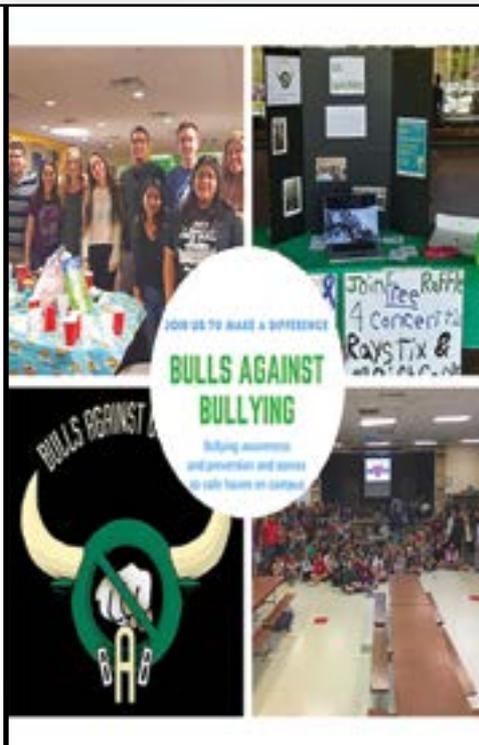
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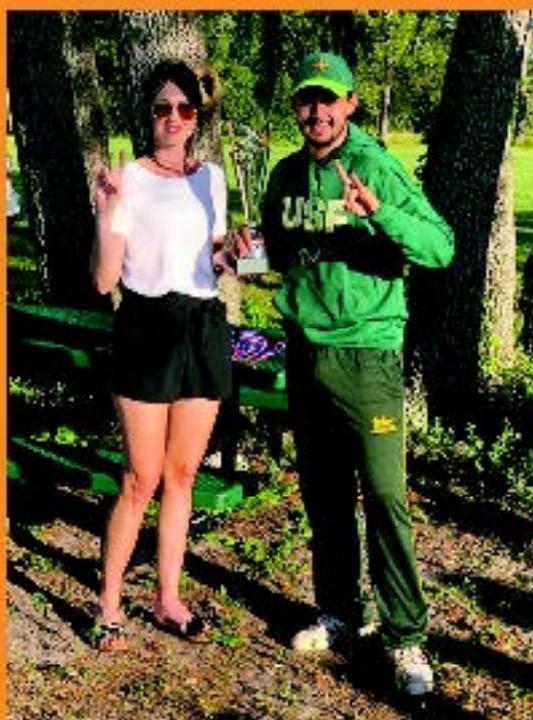
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RIDEAU

Continued from PAGE 11B

and we needed to scrap, claw and dig ourselves out of it."

Rideau, who was playing for Gardner-Webb at the time, happened to fit the criteria.

"It didn't take long for us, when he came up here in the summer, that he had a chance in our system ... and he could be a special player for us," Gregory said.

While USF was sold on the transfer, Rideau wasn't initially convinced.

"When I saw the record I thought, 'There's no way I'm coming here.'"

But with his family in West Palm Beach, just a short drive away from USF, Rideau committed to becoming a Bull.

"I wasn't doing this just for me," he said. "I was doing it for my family so they could also just drive up here and see me play."

Last season, Rideau became

the first player in AAC history to lead in steals (101) and assists (189) in a single season, his first year eligible at USF after sitting out due to NCAA transfer rules the year prior.

It's hard to imagine a player like Rideau needing to work on much more, given how he played last season.

But after entering his name in the 2019 NBA Draft, he discovered there is much more to learn before making it in the pros.

Initially, it was a learning experience — he went to see what they expect in the NBA.

Rideau tweeted an announcement April 22 confirming he was entering his name in the draft. The NBA Draft was June 20, just under two months later.

"I wish I had approached it a lot different," Rideau said. "Like didn't wait until the last minute."

Despite not having much

time to prepare and ultimately withdrawing his name from the draft May 28, it was a valuable experience for Rideau. He's now confident in what he needs to work on.

"My body weight, that's my main concern right now, just get my weight down," Rideau said. "Just taking care of the ball, assist-to-turnover ratio and shooting more consistent."

Gregory highlighted three areas for Rideau to improve — shooting from close range, shooting at the free-throw line and, like Rideau noted, his assist-to-turnover ratio.

"He's just a small amount off in those three areas," Gregory said.

If Rideau focuses on these aspects of his game, the results could speak for themselves, according to Gregory.

"Now you're talking about one of the elite point guards in the country," Gregory said.

Focusing on all tangible parts of the game is the task for Rideau.

But he also finds himself with the intangible job of being a leader. As one of two seniors — the other being forward Antun Maricevic — Rideau is the guy the other players look to.

Junior guard David Collins knows the impact Rideau has on the court.

"[Rideau] is one of those guys we depend on," Collins said. "We play based on his tempo. He plays hard and gritty. It sets the tone for us offensively and defensively."

Although Rideau has only played with the Bulls for two years, he has found himself in a leadership role that works well with the rest of the team, according to Gregory.

"He's an unbelievable competitor and that kind of filters through the rest of our players," Gregory said. "He doesn't take non-competitiveness

from his teammates very well, which is good. ... He's earned the respect of our guys."

Building chemistry with his teammates was key to earning respect. Rideau is an avid NBA 2K player and spends his free time playing with his teammates.

When Collins was asked who wins between him and Rideau, Collins gave a swift response.

"Nah, I be beating him," Collins said.

Rideau disagreed entirely.

"Listen, do not believe that," Rideau said.

Now, just two years after arriving at USF, Rideau is entering his last season as a college basketball player. Having already seen what it takes for him to make it to the next level, he said he wants to make his last season count.

"I want to grow as a player and be the best person I can be," Rideau said.

"That's the main goal."

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