

Local Preview

By Steven Goff

SUNDAY | National Men

MONDAY | ACC

YESTERDAY | Big East

TODAY | Local Men

TOMORROW | Women's Preview



BY PRESTON KERES — THE WASHINGTON POST

Point guard Derrick Mercer has played in every game of his college career.



BY DONNIE BIGGS — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fifth-year guard John Vaughan is George Mason's leading returning scorer.



BY RICHARD A. LIPSKI — THE WASHINGTON POST

Behind Rob Diggs, the front court should be a strong suit for George Washington.



HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Howard guard Eugene Myatt scored 36 points against Pennsylvania last season.



U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

Guard Chris Harris led the Midshipmen in steals and assists last season.

American

COACH: Jeff Jones (125-113 in eight seasons at AU, 271-217 overall).
LAST SEASON: 21-12, 10-4 in Patriot League, won conference tournament.
THE GLUE: Senior point guard Derrick Mercer compensates for his height — he's generously listed at 5 feet 9 — with leadership, endurance and production. Since arriving from St. Anthony's (N.J.), he has played in every game (92) and started all but two. Last season, Mercer averaged nearly 38 minutes per game, played every second in 14 contests and, despite his size, averaged 3.2 rebounds. His 12.4 points per game and 43.4 three-point percentage complemented shooting ace Garrison Carr (18.4 ppg), but his rate of assists (133) to turnovers (97) slipped and his free throw shooting percentage was a career-worst 62.4, including 2 of 10 in the postseason. With opponents keying on Carr, Mercer will need to shoot consistently and find open teammates.
GAME TO WATCH: Forget the brutal non-conference schedule. The true test for AU will come in the league opener Jan. 10 against visiting Lehigh, picked to finish second behind the Eagles. The regular season is particularly important in the Patriot League, because it determines the seedings in the conference tournament, and the higher seed gets to host the tournament championship game.

5-11

Average height of the Patriot all-league preseason team

George Mason

COACH: Jim Larranaga (207-131 in 11 seasons at GMU, 404-301 overall).
LAST SEASON: 23-11, 12-6 Colonial Athletic Association, won league tournament.
THE GLUE: How will the Patriots cope without Folarin Campbell and Will Thomas, who helped elevate the program to national prominence? To begin, they'll turn to fifth-year guard John Vaughan, who has appeared in all but one game in his career. Vaughan's strength is his versatility in shooting from long range, penetrating, rebounding and playing outstanding defense. "He has a major role in setting the tone for how this team will perform at both ends of the court," Larranaga said. Vaughan and senior Dre Smith, a streaky shooter, will flank sophomore point guard Cam Long, while 6-foot-7 senior Darryl Monroe, who sat out last season because of a toe injury, will replace Thomas in the low post. At 275 pounds, Monroe is the size of Jai Lewis, the bulky forward from the 2006 Final Four team. "There are a lot of question marks, and that means probably several different starting lineups," Larranaga said.
GAME TO WATCH: Mid-majors need to beat other mid-majors, which makes Ohio's visit to Patriot Center on Nov. 29 so important. Last season, the Bobcats outscored the Patriots 50-25 in the second half for a 69-57 victory. This season, they are not expected to challenge in the Mid-American Conference.

13-1

Home record last season

George Washington

COACH: Karl Hobbs (123-82 in seven seasons at GW).
LAST SEASON: 9-17, 5-11 Atlantic 10, did not qualify for league tournament.
THE GLUE: Rob Diggs will need to score (13.9 ppg), rebound (7.7) and block shots (1.2) again, but perhaps most of all, Hobbs needs the 6-foot-9 senior forward from Gwynn Park High to provide leadership to a program that tossed one player (Maurice Rice) off the team late last season and two more (Cheyenne Moore and Miles Beatty) in May. Diggs, a second-team preseason all-conference pick, works the lane well and offers a short jumper. While senior Wynton Witherspoon (11 ppg) and junior Damian Hollis (9.1) will relieve some of the front-court pressure on Diggs, questions abound in the back court. Sophomore Travis King, who missed almost all of last season with a knee injury, will attempt to run the offense and senior Noel Wilmore (42 percent three-pointers, including seven vs. Rhode Island) adds a long-range option.
GAME TO WATCH: It's not a traditional rivalry, but given the proximity of the campuses and the fact that the Colonials have won the last two meetings, the Dec. 7 game against Maryland at Verizon Center looms large and should be a good measure of GW's progress.

29.3

Freshman G Tony Taylor's scoring average at Archbishop Stepinac High (N.Y.) last winter

Howard

COACH: Gil Jackson (22-70 in three seasons at Howard).
LAST SEASON: 6-26, 3-13 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, lost in first round of league tournament.
THE GLUE: Eugene Myatt (14.1 ppg) is a game-changer, and from the looks of things, the Bison will need a lot of games to be changed. On a team that rarely scored 60 points last season, the 6-foot-5 guard from Philadelphia reached double figures in 11 of the first 12 games and struck for 36 on 13-for-17 shooting against Pennsylvania. As he cooled off, so did the Bison, who lost 22 of their final 25 games, had a pair of eight-game losing streaks and finished 1-16 on the road. The previous season, Myatt scored 41 against Virginia Military Institute and was Howard's primary threat despite missing more than half the season because of injuries. He will receive support from several other returning regulars, including forward Randy Hampton, a Dunbar High graduate and Drexel transfer who averaged 11.6 points and 5.2 rebounds in his first season with the Bison, and top rebounder Adam Walker (5.8).
GAME TO WATCH: The Bison will be tested right away, hosting Oregon State in Friday night's opener at Burr Gymnasium. The Beavers, picked to finish last in the Pacific-10, are coached by Craig Robinson, President-elect Barack Obama's brother-in-law who departed Brown after 19 victories last season.

2

Trips to New York City in the first five weeks of the season

Navy

COACH: Billy Lange (50-66 in four seasons at Navy, 89-85 overall).
LAST SEASON: 16-14, 9-5 in Patriot League, lost in quarterfinals of league tournament.
THE GLUE: The good news for the Midshipmen is that four starters have returned from a team that finished a surprising second in the Patriot League regular season. The bad news is that guard Greg Sprink, the program's third-leading career scorer and the team's top rebounder last season, is gone. Filling the leadership and production roles are a pair of guards, Chris Harris and Kaleo Kina, who combined to average 28.5 points, 6.7 rebounds and 7.2 assists last season. Harris, a 6-foot-2 junior, was selected to the preseason all-league team and will be the key to the Midshipmen replicating their Patriot-best 76.3 points per game. He averaged three three-pointers per game on 42 percent accuracy and led the team in steals and assists. Idaho transfer O.J. Avworo is the probable starter at point guard.
GAME TO WATCH: Never mind the Virginia Tech game at Verizon Center in the BB&T Classic, the trip to Villanova or the pair of meetings with AU. The Army series is always paramount. The Midshipmen are 67-41 all-time against the Black Knights.

1,250

Victories in the program's 101-year history

POSTSEASON PROSPECTS (1 to 4 basketballs): The only realistic route to the postseason is by winning the league tournament, and the Eagles are determined to play in front of a rowdy gathering at Bender Arena again.

POSTSEASON PROSPECTS: Picked to finish fourth in the 12-team CAA behind Virginia Commonwealth, Northeastern and Old Dominion, the Patriots could emerge as a league dark horse or win enough games to reach the NIT.

POSTSEASON PROSPECTS: With Xavier, Temple and Dayton leading the way and the Colonials picked to finish 11th in the 14-team Atlantic 10, the path to the postseason appears treacherous.

POSTSEASON PROSPECTS: Six of the MEAC's 11 teams received first-place votes in the preseason poll, led by Morgan State, but Howard, picked ninth, was not one of them.

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
15	G	Frank Borden	Sr.	6-4
5	G	Garrison Carr	Sr.	5-1
14	F	Brian Gilmore	Sr.	6-8
13	F	Riley Grafft	Fr.	6-10
21	G	Nick Hendra	So.	6-3
25	G	Joe Hill	Fr.	6-2
32	F	Stephen Lumpkins	Fr.	6-8
22	G	Steve Luptak	So.	6-3
4	C	Frane Markusovic	Sr.	6-10
0	G	Simon McCormack	Fr.	6-4
3	G	Derrick Mercer	Sr.	5-9
44	F	Jordan Nichols	Sr.	6-5
33	F	Bryce Simon	Sr.	6-6
50	C	Mike Technow	Fr.	6-9
1	G	Matthew Wilson	Jr.	6-2

Month	Opponent	Score
November	at Oklahoma	7
17	St. Francis (Pa.)	7:30
19	at Howard	7
22	at Jacksonville	7
25	at Stony Brook	7
29	at Fairfield	7:30
December	4 Army	7:30
1	Mt. St. Mary's	9
6	at Georgetown	1
17	at GW	7:30
20	at UMBC	7
22	at Maryland	8
29	at Manhattan	7:30
January	2 Brown	7:30
5	Columbia	7:30
10	Lehigh	2
14	Bucknell	7:30
17	at Colgate	2
24	at Holy Cross	3:30
28	at Navy	7
31	Lafayette	2
February	4 Army	7:30
7	at Lehigh	7
11	at Bucknell	7
14	Colgate	1
18	at Army	7
21	Holy Cross	2
25	Navy	8
28	at Lafayette	1
March	4, 8, 13, Patriot League tournament	
14	at Vermont	1
17	Brown	7
20	at Hampton	7
22	at East Carolina	4:30
25	Mt. St. Mary's	7
29	Ohio	4
December	1 at Liberty	7
6	at Drexel	4:30
19	Radford	7
22	Tulane	7
30	at Dayton	7
January	3 UNC Wilmington	7
5	Georgia State	5
7	at Towson	7
10	Old Dominion	2
14	at Wm. & Mary	7
17	James Madison	2
21	at Northeastern	7
24	at VCU	4/7
27	Delaware	7
31	at Old Dominion	7
February	1 at Hofstra	9
7	at James Madison	2
12	at Delaware	7
14	Northeastern	Noon
18	Drexel	7
21	at Bracketbusters TBA	
25	at UNC Wilmington	7
28	Towson	8
March	6-9 CAA tournament	TBA

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
33	F	Louis Birdsong	Jr.	6-6
2	G	Andre Cornelius	Fr.	5-10
40	F	Chris Fleming	Sr.	6-7
3	F	Kevin Foster	Fr.	6-7
5	G	Brian Henderson	Fr.	6-3
20	G	Cam Long	So.	6-4
41	F	Vlad Moldoveanu	So.	6-10
32	F	Darryl Monroe	Sr.	6-7
22	F	Michael Morrison	Fr.	6-9
10	G	Jimmy Nolan	Fr.	6-0
24	F	Ryan Pearson	Fr.	6-6
1	G	Dre Smith	Sr.	6-0
13	G	Isaiah Tate	So.	6-4
23	G	John Vaughan	Sr.	6-3

Month	Opponent	Score
November	15 at Vermont	1
17	Brown	7
20	at Hampton	7
22	at East Carolina	4:30
25	Mt. St. Mary's	7
29	Ohio	4
December	1 at Liberty	7
6	at Drexel	4:30
19	Radford	7
22	Tulane	7
30	at Dayton	7
January	3 UNC Wilmington	7
5	Georgia State	5
7	at Towson	7
10	Old Dominion	2
14	at Wm. & Mary	7
17	James Madison	2
21	at Northeastern	7
24	at VCU	4/7
27	Delaware	7
31	at Old Dominion	7
February	1 at Hofstra	9
7	at James Madison	2
12	at Delaware	7
14	Northeastern	Noon
18	Drexel	7
21	at Bracketbusters TBA	
25	at UNC Wilmington	7
28	Towson	8
March	6-9 CAA tournament	TBA

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
2	G	Xavier Alexander	So.	6-7
33	G	Matt Allbritton	Fr.	6-4
4	G	Jeff Alston	Sr.	5-9
52	G	Michael Conward	Fr.	6-3
5	F	Rob Diggs	Sr.	6-9
13	F	Jabari Edwards	Fr.	6-10
22	F	Damian Hollis	Jr.	6-8
42	C	Joseph Katuka	So.	6-11
1	G	Travis King	So.	6-2
32	F	Peter Laplante	Jr.	6-8
12	G	Johnny Lee	Jr.	5-10
21	F	Hermann Opoku	Jr.	6-10
3	G	Tony Taylor	Fr.	6-1
15	G-F	Aaron Ware	Fr.	6-5
31	G	Noel Wilmore	Sr.	6-4
11	F	Wynton Witherspoon	Sr.	6-7

Month	Opponent	Score
November	14 at Boston U	7
19	Binghamton	7:30
22	at Auburn	2
26	UMBC	7:30
December	7* Maryland*	7:30
13	Harvard	2
17	American	7:30
23	at Sac. St.	10
27	Vermont**	10
29	Col. St./Hawaii**	TBA
30	TBA**	TBA
January	3 at Longwood	7
10	Richmond	2
14	at Duquesne	7
17	at Saint Louis	8
22	Dayton	7:30
25	Rhode Island	2
28	at La Salle	7
February	4 at Saint Joseph's	7
7	Fordham	1
11	La Salle	3:30
14	at Charlotte	3
19	St. Bonaventure	9
22	at Xavier	1
25	Charlotte	9
28	at Richmond	7
March	4 at U-Mass.	7
7	Temple	7:30
11-14	Atlantic 10 tourn. in Atlantic City	
**BB&T at Verizon Center		
**Rainbow Classic, Honolulu		

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
32	C	Nate Cooper	Jr.	6-8
10	F	Randy Hampton	Sr.	6-5
54	C	Paul Kirkpatrick	Jr.	6-9
3	G	Chris McHenry	Fr.	5-11
1	F	Kandi Mukole	Jr.	6-8
33	G	Eugene Myatt	Sr.	6-5
25	G	C.J. Prince	Jr.	6-3
15	G	Kyle Riley	So.	6-3
21	F	Anthony Thomas	Fr.	6-6
22	G	Calvin Thompson	Fr.	6-3
11	G	Torrance Timothy	So.	6-5
5	F	Adam Walker	So.	6-8
0	G	Curtis White	Jr.	6-4

Month	Opponent	Score
November	14 Oregon St.	7
16	at Navy	1
19	American	7
22	at St. John's	2
25	Ill.-Chicago	7
December	1 Canisius	7
6*	Hampton*	7
20	at Oregon St.	10
22	at Portland	10
29	Utah St.**	10
30	Wyoming**	7:30
31	Houston Bapt.**	7:30
January	3 at La Salle	2
10	at Florida A&M	4
12	at Beth.-Cook.	7:30
17	Win.-Salem St.	4
19	S.C. State	7
24	at Morgan St.	4
26	at Coppin St.	7:30
31	N.C. A&T	4
February	2 Norfolk St.	8
7	UMES	4
9	Delaware St.	8
14	at W-Salem St.	4
16	at S.C. St.	7:30
18	Morgan St.	7
23	Coppin St.	8
28	at N.C. A&T	4
March	2 at Norfolk State	8
5	Hampton	8
9-14	at MEAC tournament in Winston-Salem, N.C.	
*Big Apple Classic in New York		
**Duel in the Desert in Logan, Utah		

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
23	G	O.J. Avworo	So.	6-0
32	F	Scott Brooks	Jr.	6-6
10	G	Greg Brown	So.	6-4
11	G	Clif Colbert	Sr.	6-4
1	G	Ted Connolly	Fr.	6-1
15	G	Romeo Garcia	So.	6-4
5	G	Chris Harris	Jr.	6-2
24	G	Kaleo Kina	Sr.	6-4
22	F	Brian Richards	Sr.	6-9
25	G	Jordan Sugars	Fr.	6-3
33	F	Adam Teague	Sr.	6-8
21	F	T.J. Topercer	Jr.	6-7
44	C	Mark Veazey	So.	6-11
40	C	Jeremy Wilson	So.	6-10

Month	Opponent	Score
November	14 at Towson	7
17	at Lafayette	1
18	St. Francis (N.Y.)	7
22	at Wm. & Mary	7
25	UMES	7
29	Radford	7
December	2 Texas-San Antonio	7
5	at Penn	7
7	Va. Tech*	5
9	at Mt. St. Mary's	7
20	at Canisius	2
22	at Villanova	7:30
30	Longwood	7
January	2 Wofford	7
5	at Elon	7
10	Bucknell	5
14	at Lehigh	7
17	at Lafayette	1
21	Holy Cross	7
25	at Army	Noon
28	American	7
31	at Colgate	7
February	7 at Bucknell	