

Jamison makes quick leap to NBA

North Carolina's Antawn Jamison is the 13th player to declare early for the NBA draft

By David Droschack
The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Antawn Jamison is convinced he's ready for pro basketball, and he'll be heading to the NBA with degree in hand.

The national player of the year said Monday he will forgo his senior year at North Carolina, passing up a chance to become the Atlantic Coast Conference's career scoring leader to enter the NBA draft on June 24.

"When it was time to leave it was difficult to swallow because these three years have probably been the best three years of my life," Jamison said. "It is a lot more difficult than I thought it would be."

The 6-foot-9 forward was joined at a news conference by head coach Bill Guthridge, former coach Dean Smith, parents Albert and Kathy Jamison and several teammates.

"A big reason you are in coaching is you want what's best for your players," Guthridge said. "There aren't many that get this opportunity. So you are thrilled for him."

Jamison is the 13th player to declare early for the NBA draft, joining such players as Mike Bibby of Arizona, Paul Pierce of Kansas and Robert Traylor of Michigan. Among the 13 are two high school players.

Smith will advise underclassmen to turn pro if they're projected in the draft's top five. The former coach did most of the legwork for Jamison, calling at least 16 NBA teams to gauge interest. He likes what he heard.

Jamison, the school's first national player of the year since Michael Jordan in 1984, said he would get his college degree in African studies after two sessions of summer school, meaning he will graduate two semesters ahead of his class.

"The most important thing for me is no matter what happens I have the opportunity to graduate this summer," he said.

"That was the most important thing about coming to school, to get a degree and maybe having a chance to play in the NBA. I am so close to getting them both at the same time it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

Jamison, the ACC player of the year, averaged 22.2 points and 10.5 rebounds this season, becoming the first North Carolina player since Billy Cunningham in 1964-65 to average a double-double.

He finished seventh on North Carolina's scoring list and fourth in rebounding. This year he set season marks for field goals and rebounds and was second in points in leading the Tar Heels to a 34-4 record and their second straight Final Four. North Carolina lost to Utah in the semifinals.

Jamison said there was no chance he would withdraw his name before the draft, even if the NBA owners lock out the players.

"I have made my decision and there's no turning back now," he said. "I am aware there could be a negative thing with the lockout but I'm willing to take that chance."

Golf: Croskrey shoots second-round 69

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The Ducks' Andrew Tredway and Derek Croskrey both trail their teammate Crane by one stroke and are tied for 15th with 146.

Nosler said he was pleased with Croskrey's rebound from morning difficulties that included a two-stroke penalty for accidentally hitting another player's ball to post a second round 69. That score was the low round for any Oregon player on the day.

Chris Cone, Adrian Burtner and Ryan Lavoie round out the Ducks' six-man lineup. However, only the five lowest scores count toward the team total for a given round.

Cone shot 75s in both rounds for a six-over-par 150

that left him tied for 35th. Burtner finished with a 151 to claim 42nd place. Lavoie recovered from a disastrous 79 in the first round to post a second round 73 and find himself tied for 43rd in the 60-man field.

No. 14 Arizona State ended the first day of play two strokes behind Oregon in fifth place with a 737. Oregon State is sixth at 739. No. 23 UCLA and No. 35 Washington are tied for seventh at 742. Washington State shot a 746 that put it in ninth place, and No. 24 Southern California finds itself at the bottom of the standings with a 757 total.

Following today's 18-hole third round, the tournament will conclude with Wednesday's 18-hole final round.

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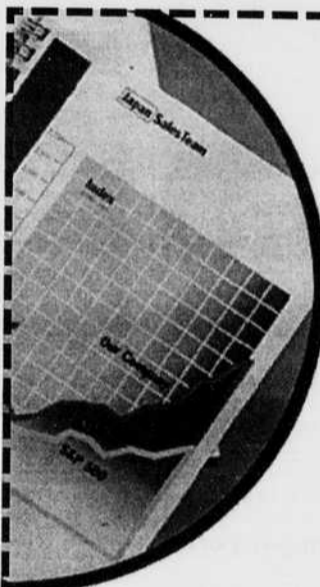


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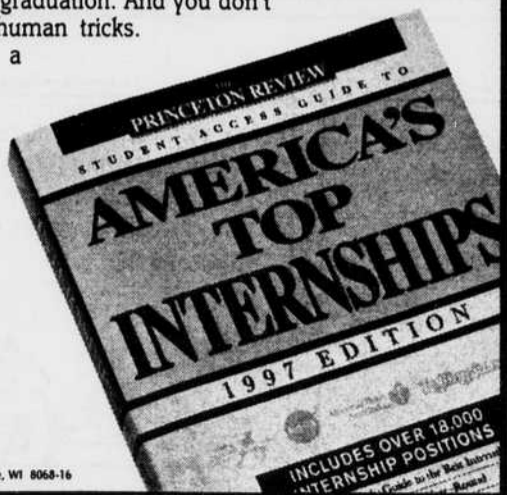
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