

Broadus tackles tall task

Busy coach still analyzing Bearcats a month into job

By Brian Moritz - *Press & Sun-Bulletin* – May 2, 2007

This is what Kevin Broadus' month has been like:

At least three to four days a week he's on the Binghamton University campus. There are returning players to get to know, individual workouts to run, a coaching staff to assemble, a schedule to put together and a campus to learn his way around.

The rest of the time he's on the road and on the phone, calling old contacts and looking for players to be his first recruits.

Oh, don't forget the family still living in Maryland, the house there that needs to be sold and one up here that needs to be bought.

"You're in the office by 8:30, 9 a.m. and leaving 8, 9, 10 at night," Broadus said. "It's a lot of challenges. I can't say one is bigger than the other."

It's been a little more than a month since Broadus replaced Al Walker as the Bearcats' head coach, and the former Georgetown assistant is settling into his first head-coaching gig.

"I love it," Broadus said. "This is what I want to do. I want to make it work for these guys."

And the BU players who were a part of last season's 13-16 team and spent an anxious March wondering what was next with their program have welcomed the change April has brought.

"It's been a breath of fresh air," junior point guard Mike Gordon said. "It's like when you're gulping for air and you get your second wind. It seems like everybody's gotten their second wind."

Freshman forward Lazar Trifunovic added, "After a bad season, everyone is looking for a fresh start."

Broadus' hiring was announced on March 26 after he signed a five-year contract with a base salary of \$205,000 annually. At the time, he was still an assistant coach at Georgetown, which played in the Final Four five days after Broadus' press conference.

Adding to Broadus' busy month was a New York Times story, published just before the Final Four, that linked

him to the recruitment of a player with apparently questionable academic credentials. Broadus said he did nothing wrong and broke no NCAA rules in recruiting Marc Egerson from Lutheran Christian Academy to Georgetown.

It was April 3 — three days after Georgetown's semifinal loss to Ohio State — when Broadus came up here full time.

His focus the past month has been learning about the team he inherited and holding individual morning workout sessions at the West Gym.

"The best two players, hey, it's no secret, are Lazar and Mike Gordon," Broadus said. "They're special. They bring a lot to the table."

While that's no surprise, the play of centers Jaan Montgomery and Minja Kovacevic has been.

"Jaan, if he gets in shape and loses a little weight, the kid could be special," Broadus said. "He is a low-post presence and, once he loses some of the weight he has, he could be unstoppable. Other than Jaan, the biggest surprise is Minja. I can't even explain how happy he's made me. That guy has a chance to be a starter."

Guard Dwayne Jackson has also impressed Broadus in the workouts.

And then there's Richard Forbes. He was one of BU's top scorers last season but was dogged by inconsistency, especially on defense.

"The guy people told me that could be ... an issue is Richie Forbes," Broadus said. "He's been a pleasant surprise. He's working hard and he's really trying to please."

The individual workouts have given Broadus a chance to begin implementing his system.

"Now, I can say he's a good coach," Trifunovic said. "He's been teaching us the way he wants us to play, which has a lot more motion. Everyone's excited."

Broadus has spent plenty of time recruiting. Last week he left Binghamton at 5:50 a.m. on Thursday to fly to the West Coast to watch a player. Broadus said he's looking at both high school seniors and juniors, but NCAA rules prohibit Broadus from talking specifically about unsigned recruits.

"We're trying to get kids who you think are a little bit better than this level," Broadus said. "Sometimes you have to see more than a kid's showing and hope he'll grow as a player."

He continues to put together his coaching staff. Don Anderson and Julius Allen were hired this week, joining returning assistant Lawrence Brenneman. The schedule is coming together as well.

But while there's plenty of work in front of Broadus and the Bearcats, the goal is already established.

"This is my last year, and I told him that I want to go out experiencing some postseason play," Gordon said. "That's what he's been telling all of us. He's saying 'I don't want to win in two years, I don't want to win in three years. I want to win this year.'"