

Whitewater Alum Cofer Making Early Impact At Florida State

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The nation was introduced to Florida State's Phil Cofer on Monday night with a vicious dunk over player of the year candidate Jahlil Okafor of Duke. As Cofer's highlight flooded the internet, Fayette County could smile because they've known for some time about the rising star.

Whitewater High School's most decorated basketball alum has already been making an impact in college. Phil Cofer is quickly becoming a fixture for the Florida State Seminoles as just a true freshman.

The 6'8" Cofer was his own highlight reel at Whitewater, piling up scores of dunks, vicious blocks, and high-flying rebounds. He led the Wildcat basketball squad to their first region championship in 2013 and only their second state playoff appearance. He averaged a double-double for his career, including 19 points and 12 rebounds a game as a senior, and earned All-State and County Player of the Year honors.

His blend of size and athleticism had big D-1 recruits scouting him. Cofer decided to claim Tallahassee, Florida as his new home. He's happy to be a part of the Florida State family. "Everyone acts like a family together," says Cofer.

His teammate, Devon Bookert, states that Phil fit into the family right away, "When we are going through a tough time, [Cofer] tries to pick us all up and always has encouraging words. He fits great with our team."

With March Madness quickly approaching, the team is working hard to stay in contention. Cofer is doing his part, averaging 7.4 points and 4.9 rebounds in 22 minutes a game. His biggest showing this season came against Pittsburgh when he notched 21 points and 11 rebounds.

Bookert praises Cofer's play, saying, "When you work with Phil, you know he is going to give 110 percent."

Cofer says his favorite moment at FSU so far was their rivalry showdown with Florida for its wild ending. The Gators tipped the ball into their own basket at the last second to win the game for the Seminoles.

Cofer has a simple goal for his FSU career. "I want to win an NCAA championship before I graduate."

Between practice, games, and trying to squeeze in downtime with video games, Cofer has to consistently stay on top of his school work. "The hardest thing is the deadlines, just getting everything in on time," Cofer emphasizes. He advises anyone that wants to play at the next level to stay on top of your work. "Work hard. I know everyone says that, but it is true. Class is a big thing."

Transitioning from the Wildcat gym to the Tucker Civic Center was its own big change. "It is way different. You have 25,000 fans. You get nervous until you get used to it," Cofer says. "Before every game, we freestyle and dance in the locker room." R&B and Drake get him pumped before a game.

Cofer continues to work hard and aspires to be in the NBA one day. "The best thing I learned from Whitewater Basketball was character," he admits. He carries those lessons with him every day.