

## **Versatile Mann Emerging For Seminoles**

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**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Florida State assistant Charlton Young describes Terance Mann as a “jack of all trades, master of none” on the basketball floor.

And Mann, a freshman guard from New Hampshire, is working on that last part.

One-quarter of a heralded freshman class that also features guards Dwayne Bacon and Malik Beasley, Mann has done a little bit of everything for the Seminoles.

The 6-6, 204-pounder has proven an effective scorer (5.1 points per game), rebounder (4.0) and defender (six steals), all while giving FSU an obvious energy boost during his 15 minutes per game.

“He does everything well,” Young said. “He has tremendous size for his position. He’s a tremendous athlete. ... He’s the perfect complement for the guys in that class, because he’s so unselfish. Like, maybe too unselfish at times.

“But he plays to win, he plays like a coach and he can always impact the game.”

Mann plays like a coach in large part due to the fact that he’s spent most of his life living under a roof with one.

His mother, Daynia La-Force, is the head women’s basketball coach at the University of Rhode Island.

Which means basketball is woven into the fabric of Mann’s family. He was “born and raised in the gym,” La-Force said, and even learned to count by memorizing her players’ jersey numbers.

As he grew older, Mann took up basketball while getting a first-hand account of what coaches look for in a player.

“He knew you had to work hard, he knew you had to play hard, he knew you had to be a team player,” La-Force said. “He knew you have to listen to your coach. So he always had that and I think that’s what set him apart when the talent started to come.”

La-Force describes basketball as a “language of love” between she and Terance. Long hours on the coaching circuit, as well as a divorce from Terance’s father, Eustace Mann, sometimes made for a difficult relationship between mother and son.

Basketball, though, served as a bridge between the two.

La-Force said that, as a teenager, Terance would sometimes tune her out. But when the conversation turned to basketball, he was all ears.

“It was one of the only ways I could communicate with him sometimes,” La-Force said. “He wouldn’t listen to me if I was talking about anything else other than basketball.”

A 23-year coaching veteran, Young said it’s easy to spot a coach’s son when on the recruiting trail.

They tend to have better basketball smarts, and they’re critiqued on the finer points of the game – sound defending, making extra passes and thinking unselfishly – rather than just their scoring ability.

“When you come up with that in you, it makes you a better player,” Young said. “And you’ve got a better understanding of what your coaches want.”

Those parents have a better understanding of what they want in a coach for their sons, too.

Young and La-Force have a relationship that dates back to 2003, when the two were young coaches looking to network at a Black Coaches Association convention.

Young at the time was an assistant at Auburn, La-Force an assistant at St. John's. (La-Force would go on to become the head coach at Northeastern, where Young served as an assistant in 1999.)

The two hit it off and formed a long-lasting friendship that one day led to a discussion about La-Force's two sons, Terance and Martin.

"She said, 'Hey, I've got two sons that are going to be really good players,'" Young said. "But every now and then, they don't want to listen to me."

Young first met Terance as an eighth-grader, at the time a player who showed plenty of promise but who his mother believed needed an extra push to reach his full potential.

She and Young would often go back and forth about Mann's game, La-Force pointing out that he would miss free throws or turn the ball over, while Young brushed off those critiques and noted that, more often than not, Mann was scoring 50 points in a game.

"I was critical and hard on him growing up, and I remember 'CY' would say, 'Leave that boy alone!'" La-Force said with a laugh. "But that was the coach in me, always trying to push the players to a higher level."

For the next several years, through the end of middle school and on through high school, Young kept close contact with Mann.

The two would often talk on the phone, both about basketball and about life.

And every time Young would check in on Mann's progress on the floor, he found that he had always improved in a different area.

"There was a time when he wasn't a great ball-handler, then I went to see him as a sophomore and said, 'Man, he can play back-up point,'" Young said. "There was a time when he wouldn't take any shots outside the 3 (point line) and last year, his junior year, he shot 38- to 42-percent from the 3.

"And he continues to get better."

As Mann's skills blossomed, it became clear that he had what it took to play college basketball.

And when it came time to sift through offers from schools around the country (Maryland, Florida, West Virginia and others came calling), Mann knew exactly where he wanted to be.

Or, rather, whom he wanted to be with.

Young was the head coach at Georgia Southern from 2009-13, and it was Young who gave Mann his first Division I scholarship offer.

When he moved south to Tallahassee, he made sure that Mann knew to come along, too.

"(Young) made you feel comfortable, he made you feel like he was your friend," Mann said. "It wasn't like those coaches who call (and say), 'We want you, we're going to offer you a scholarship,'" and then hang up the phone. He was wondering how your day was going, how you're developing on and off the court.

"I was the first one to commit out of anyone (in the 2015 freshman class) because I knew I was going with him."

FSU's season hasn't even reached the quarter-pole, but the Seminoles are already enjoying the effects of their youth movement.

Bacon and Beasley are among the highest scoring freshmen in the nation, and Mann recently had the best game of his young career in FSU's 76-71 victory over Virginia Commonwealth last week.

Not only did he score nine points, but he also added five rebounds and an assist in just 14 minutes of work.

Perhaps an appropriate stat line for a jack-of-all-trades looking to master his craft.

"He's like a Scottie Pippen. He does everything," Young said. "I really don't think people realize how good he's going to be."