

Healthy Florida State Point Guard Trent Forrest Ready To Lead The Seminoles

By Wayne McGahee
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There's been a changing of the guard for the Florida State men's basketball team.

Terance Mann and Phil Cofer have graduated after leading the Seminoles for the last two seasons.

Enter senior Trent Forrest.

Forrest has been a key part of FSU's rotation since he arrived at FSU before the 2016-17 season. He came off the bench his first two years as a member of the "Boom Squad" and never complained.

Last year, he dealt with a debilitating toe injury that threatened his ability to play six games in to the season. He didn't miss a single game.

He's earned this role and he's ready to fill it.

"I feel like those guys were able to kind of respect that and see what type of guy I was," Forrest said.

"I would do kind of whatever to help the team win. I feel like that definitely helped me get to where I am now with those guys being able to lead them."

Pain was something Forrest got very used to last season.

Forrest had the cartilage torn completely off the bone of his big toe on his left foot against Villanova on Nov. 25, 2018.

The Seminoles played 31 more games before their season came to an end in the Sweet 16 against Gonzaga on March 28, 2019. Forrest played in all of them and averaged 29.9 minutes per game for the season.

He put the team on his back against the Bulldogs with 20 points, five rebounds, four assists, three steals, and a block in the final game of the season trying to carry them to victory on one foot.

"It's kind of hard to just because I'm just the guy that wants to play so bad," Forrest said.

"But just kind of looking back on it, it is kind of amazing... After talking to the doctors and them telling me how severe it really was, it's definitely amazing that I was able to play."

With every step, pain flared. Every landing was excruciating. Every trip down the court took every bit of his determination.

But he kept on taking those steps, unwilling to let his team down.

"He wasn't even supposed to be walking on it, let alone be able to play on it," FSU sophomore guard Devin Vassell told the *Democrat*.

"So it's being able to see him and how he is fighting for us to show us the love of the game that he has for us because he was risking playing on that one toe. It could have really been worse for him, but he was playing for us. So, I really respect that."

Forrest was third on the team averaging 9.3 points per game for the 2018-19 season and led the team averaging 3.7 assists per game. He also added 4.5 rebounds per game.

Overall, he was one of the most important players on the court for the Seminoles despite the injury limiting what he was able to do.

He had surgery to repair his toe after the season ended, and the doctors had to remove the cartilage that was in his toe and completely replace it.

"Trent's probably one of my closest friends of the team, so I knew like kind of what he was going through, but you actually don't know until you're in his shoes," redshirt sophomore forward RaiQuan Gray told the *Democrat*.

"But when he told the dudes how they had to go in and fix everything, I was shocked. I don't know how anybody can run on that for that long of a time period. He got through that so he's tough, He's a warrior. We've got so much respect for him. That's our guy."

Since then, he's been getting back slowly into shape.

He wasn't able to run, but that didn't stop him from putting in the work in the weight room to overcome the injury. He's finally started to get back to feeling like his old self in recent weeks, and he's going to be ready to go when the Seminoles start practice for the 2019-20 season Saturday.

"For the first couple months, while I was in my boot and my cast, I could really just weight train," Forrest said.

"So I would try to make sure I went as hard as I could in the weight room, just upper body stuff. So I could get kind of quick short bursts or like conditioning with that. And then just once I was able to kind of start back running and stuff to some light jogging and getting on the bike. And it was just a lot of stuff like that..."

Forrest already had the respect of his teammates before the injury, but his determination and effort last season took it to a completely different level.

Forrest has been a FSU-first type of player from the moment he arrived on campus.

FSU coach Leonard Hamilton even went as far as calling him a "True Seminole" last season as he went through his injury but kept playing.

This is his team and everyone is ready for him to lead it.

"Trent is definitely the leader of this team," Vassell said.

"I mean, you can see it in his actions. You can see it when he speaks to us. Everybody listens and has respect for him. He comes into practice, and whenever he says something, we all do it."

FSU may have lost three starters from a season ago, but the goal hasn't changed.

After making the Elite Eight two seasons ago and the Sweet 16 last season, FSU has its eyes on more than that. They want to win a national title.

And they want to do it for their senior leader, who's laid so much on the line for them the last three years.

"We want to send him out on the right note," Gray said.

"Our common goal, our main goal is to win a national championship for him and Coach Ham. So we want to send Trent out on a high note. Let him have season that he wants to have. We want to be behind him 110%. That's our leader and we want to go with him."