

## Cofer's Return Adds Inside Presence For Seminoles

By Wayne E. McGahee III

Tallahassee Democrat

Nov. 2, 2016

Florida State forward Phil Cofer went into the start of the 2015-2016 season with high expectations that followed him after an excellent freshman season.

He started 24 games as a freshman and averaged 6.9 points and 4.5 rebounds per game during the 2014-2015 season. That didn't translate over from his first year to the second.

Through the first 11 games of the 2015-2016 season Cofer averaged just 3.8 points and 2 rebounds per game, and it came out that he had been battling injuries.

Those injuries ended his season before the Christmas break.

"It was actually two injuries on my right ankle and my left," Cofer told the *Tallahassee Democrat*.

"My right ankle had tissue that was overgrown or something like that from rolling my ankle so much, and it turned into a cyst. So I had that surgery then two weeks after that, I had a screw put in my left foot."

The Seminoles struggled to rebound and defend the paint for the rest of the season after Cofer went out.

"You don't ever like to complain or make excuses, but we missed him," FSU coach Leonard Hamilton said.

"Phil is athletic. He's passionate. He's a very integral part of our program and we missed him tremendously."

Now, Cofer is back and ready to contribute once again to a team that desperately needs an inside presence.

"He brings a big rebound and scoring inside presence," FSU guard Dwayne Bacon said. "It was a big loss for us last year. So getting him back on the court is going to be outstanding for us."

The Seminoles held their first exhibition of the season last Thursday against Southeastern. Cofer led the team in points with 20 and added 9 rebounds as well.

"It was pretty good to be able to play with my guys," Cofer said.

"Just being able to play with my brothers. It's been a long time from sitting on the bench since I got into the game. I'm just trying not to think about it too much and just think about it like I played last year."

He doesn't have a set position at power forward or center because he can play either one despite not having the prototypical size for a center.

"Usually I'm that energy guy that you can put at any position," Cofer said.

"In the exhibition game he put me at the four and the five. It really doesn't matter. I'll just play hard wherever the coach puts me. I get it from my dad because he was a dog back in the day too. I don't look at myself being 6'8. I look at myself being like Christ or Ojo."

He isn't just limited to being a low post player though. His return allows Florida State to do a lot of different things on offense because he's so versatile in what he can do.

"He's a guy that can be down low and dribble the ball," Bacon said. "He can be down low and kick it out to shooters on the perimeter. He can create his own shot. He's powerful and can jump out the gym. When you have a

guy that's versatile like that it helps out a lot for the perimeter guys because they don't know what he is. He can be a big or a guy on the perimeter for us."

Cofer will get another chance to play on Thursday at 7 p.m. when Florida State takes on Valdosta State in the Aubry Boyd Benefit Game at the Tucker Civic Center.