

## Nichols Doing Well In Adjusting To Support Role with Seminoles

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TALLAHASSEE -- Florida State lost point guard C.J. Walker to transfer after their Elite Eight run in 2018. That led to the Seminoles going to the transfer market in search of a point guard to help alleviate pressure and provide minutes to assist Trent Forrest.

They found that player in the form of Albany grad transfer David Nichols - a 6-foot-1, 185-pound cerebral point guard with a physical style and competitive nature.

It was also the right fit for Nichols, who was looking for a place where he could flourish as a player while finding success in the team model.

"Just the culture," Nichols said of what led him to Tallahassee. "[Assistant] Coach [Dennis] Gates did a great job recruiting me. Really got comfortable with the guys on my visit and it just felt like home."

He chose FSU over interest from Oklahoma, Missouri, Xavier, SMU, DePaul and Nevada, among others. He became the second graduate transfer in Florida State history when he committed back in April.

For the Great Danes, Nichols was one of the primary go-to players on a nightly basis. Last season, he averaged 14.6 points (third on the team), 4.3 rebounds (third), 1.2 steals (first) and 3.5 assists (second) while shooting .394 from the field, .365 from the 3-point line and .772 from the free throw line. He started 31 of 32 games and averaged a career-high tying 33.8 minutes played per game.

So far at FSU, Nichols has come off the bench in all eight games playing an average of 15.9 minutes per outing. He is averaging 4.8 points, 1.2 assists, 1.0 rebounds and 0.6 steals per outing.

"I think it has to be a tremendous challenge for him and an adjustment for him," FSU head coach Leonard Hamilton said. "Because he has always been the lead dog wherever he has been."

"The adjustment to maybe playing consistent at the level that we are playing against the competition we are playing," Hamilton added. "Then with a new system and a new set of teammates, adjusting to a whole other coaching style. It has to be somewhat challenging for him. But I think taking that all under consideration, I think he has done an excellent job adjusting. I don't think he has come close to being where I think he will be with a few more games up under his belt."

Nichols has shown that growth in his last two outings. He played a total of 32 minutes in wins against Purdue and Troy, with 18 points, five assists, four rebounds and a steal in those two outings.

"It has just been a process," Nichols said of figuring out his new team. "Coming to a new school, learning a new coach and a new system defensively and offensively. My teammates and coaches have been good in helping me to transition. I am just really starting to feel comfortable in it."

Nichols said he felt more comfortable after the fifth or sixth game, after getting a feel for game flow, substitution patterns and things like that. But most of all, his transition has been aided by that culture that attracted him to FSU in the first place.

"Just how bought in everyone is really helped me buy in," Nichols said. "Just believing in Coach Ham and the coaching staff and the vision they have for us. Just going out there and executing on the court."

Hamilton added that he is trying to mix Nichols in more with the more experienced group of players in order 'to take a little more pressure off of David and let him be more who he is'.

Nichols has been the help that Trent Forrest looks for in the backcourt, providing crucial minutes to allow Forrest to get a breather and sometimes providing an opportunity for a two point guard look on the court as well.

"It has been very good. I feel like at first he was kind of iffy and undecided about what he kind of knew what to do and didn't want to do. But now I just feel like he is getting his groove back and playing with more confidence," Forrest said of Nichols before adding how much he has helped him through the first quarter of the season.

"A lot," Forrest added. "The other day in the other game, me and him played quite a few minutes together at the same time. I feel like that is just hard for teams to guard us when you have two [point] guards on the court at the same time."

Nichols, who is a strong student in the classroom, will earn a master's degree in Sport Management while at Florida State.