

## **Hoops Star Forrest Set To Graduate on Friday**

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**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Not all that long ago, Trent Forrest's friends and family would pack the gym at Chipley High School to watch the talented guard rack up points, assists and, by the time he was finished, two state championships.

Come Friday, those friends and family will head 90 mile east to pack the Donald L. Tucker Center. The main attraction – Forrest – is the same as it ever was. But they've got a new reason this time.

Still in the midst of a star-studded career with the Florida State men's basketball team, Forrest, a senior point guard and All-ACC candidate, will pause to participate in commencement ceremonies.

He'll walk across a stage positioned atop the basketball court on which he plays, shake hands with Florida State President John Thrasher and officially receive his bachelor's degree in sports management.

And Forrest will have done it in just three and a half years, thanks to a collection of Advanced Placement and dual-enrollment courses that he took in high school.

"It means a lot," Forrest said. "A lot of my hard work and effort paid off. ... Not just for me, but my family as well. That was one thing they definitely wanted me to do, get my education."

Consider it done, in a sense. But ongoing in another. With plenty of games left to play for the No. 21-ranked Seminoles, Forrest will begin work on his master's degree in the spring.

"It's kind of amazing to me," Forrest said. "The time definitely flew by."

When Forrest arrived at Florida State in the fall of 2016, he couldn't help but be a little star-struck.

A quiet kid from a town of about 3,000 people, Forrest joined a team that featured future pros Dwayne Bacon and Jonathan Isaac, and that would play against some of the best teams and players in college basketball.

Forrest averaged 15.4 minutes per game that year, and the Seminoles reached the NCAA tournament for the first time in four years.

"I came in very quiet, very reserved," Forrest said, "kind of still in awe at being at this school."

Since then, though, this school has often been in awe of him.

The 6-4, 210-pound Forrest has seen both his role and his production increase in each of his subsequent seasons, and the Seminoles' success has followed suit.

He helped lead a run to the Elite Eight as a sophomore in 2018, then a No. 4 seed and a Sweet 16 appearance a year later.

Now in his final campaign at FSU, Forrest is the key figure for a team that lost its top two scorers from a year ago but is still positioned among the sport's upper tier.

"Going through each year, learning and improving, if you would've told me I would have been in the position that I am now (back) then, I'd have been like, 'You're crazy.'"

Forrest already has enough on-court achievements to achieve legendary status in his basketball-loving hometown. But, from Day 1, he's had higher aspirations than that.

"Not too many times do they see athletes go off and then get their degrees," he said.

So Forrest sought to break that mold and show the youth of Chipley, Fla., that it's possible to succeed in athletics and academics in kind.

So while he's proud of those 12.1 points, 3.9 assists and 3.8 rebounds he's averaging this season, Forrest is just as pleased with his 3.46 grade-point average, his three appearances on the ACC's All-Academic basketball team and his 2017 Golden Torch Award for men's basketball, which is presented to the member of the team with the highest GPA.

"Personally, that's who I kind of wanted to do it for – the kids," Forrest said. "And show them that you don't have to just be an athlete. You can, and that's part of it, but still, at the end of the day, you've got to get your degree. ...

"And, being from a small community, it means so much more. Because you're kind of like a hero to the kids back home. So they understand that it's not just about athletics. You can get an education as well, and that's the 'cool' thing to do."