

Florida State Basketball Signee Scottie Barnes A Special Mix Of Talent, Character

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Ask Florida State assistant men's basketball coach Charlton Young how long he's been recruiting Scottie Barnes and he'll tell you since birth.

It's a joke, obviously, but based in some truth. Each member of the FSU coaching staff identified Barnes as a future star at a young age.

"Scottie Barnes was born in West Palm Beach and J. Leonard Hamilton, Charlton Young, Stan Jones, Dennis Gates, we were recruiting him like the next day," Young told the *Democrat*.

"He was a Florida State special since the day he was born. I'm joking when I say that, but really, we all identified him as a seventh or eighth-grader."

As it turned out, this early identification and heavy recruitment paid off for the Seminoles. Barnes turned into one of the best players in the country before committing to FSU last October and signing in November.

He'll arrive at FSU whenever campus reopens for student-athletes as the highest-rated recruit in the modern era program history (0.9979 according to the 247Sports composite) narrowly ahead of 2016 signee Jonathan Isaac.

Barnes finished as the No. 6 overall prospect and the No. 1 power forward in the 2021 recruiting class. But he's expected to play point guard for the Seminoles.

"He is 6-foot-eight and a quarter, he can literally play all five positions, he has a motor that's out of this world," Young said of Barnes.

"People don't realize that being a high-motor, high-energy player is a talent and a skill and for Florida State, it's the most important. We want high-energy guys that can affect the game in a non-ball-dominant way."

As the renown of FSU's basketball program has grown over the last few years, the caliber of recruits the Seminoles have been able to pursue has also shot up considerably.

But that hasn't changed the Seminoles' recruiting mentality. Yes, they're more likely to be taken seriously by the best recruits in the country, but the coaches still need to be sure that these top-notch players are a culture fit, something the staff still values despite the program's larger platform.

It's safe to say they were grateful that Barnes is a perfect fit in this regard.

"Scottie fits in. I think the biggest characteristic of these guys that has allowed them to succeed at Florida State and allows Florida State as a team and a program to succeed at a high level is humility," FSU assistant coach Stan Jones told the *Democrat*.

"These guys are not the guys that are anxious about themselves. They're very confident in who they are, the talents that they've been blessed with and they really value winning. When you're humble, you really want to win because you realize it's bigger than just you.

"Jonathan was that way, Trent (Forrest) was that way, Terance Mann was that way, Patrick (Williams) this year was almost a carbon copy image of Jonathan in terms of his approach to the game and never thought he was

good enough yet. He never panicked because he didn't have a great game a time or two and he never got too high when he had a great game. He was just about making progress."

The FSU coaches have known Barnes plenty long enough to know that his talent is legitimate. He'll arrive at FSU with plenty of hype as a member of a team that again lost a few key pieces and will have a lot to prove.

It's likely that Barnes will be another one-and-done player for the Seminoles, their third in five years. He'll have a definite chance at being the highest-drafted FSU player in program history, a distinction currently held by Dave Cowens, who went fourth overall in the 1970 NBA Draft.

All of this makes Barnes' character all the more remarkable, just like it did for Isaac four years ago.

"Not only does Scottie have all this talent and all this motor, but he's one of the most unselfish guys probably in the country. He might be the most unselfish McDonald's All-American that I've ever seen in my 26 years of basketball. He just always wants to make the right play," Young said.

"He rebounds, he does all the dirty work, he's just special. He's a throwback. He's the kind of guy that comes once every 25 years, just his size, athleticism, talent, unselfish mentality, and willingness to (help)...It's just how he's built. He's built for success. He's one of those guys, a Florida State guy."