

Greenberg making inroads in Carolina

The Hokies landed Jarell Eddie for next season and added Marquis Rankin for 2011-12.

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On the surface, the logic seems flawed.

What could Virginia Tech stand to gain by directing its recruiting attention at North Carolina, a state that serves as home to the last two NCAA men's basketball champions?

To Hokies coach Seth Greenberg, there's no better reason to recruit North Carolina than the iconic programs at Duke and North Carolina.



Virginia Tech
RECRUITING REPORT



Courtesy of NELL REDMOND | The Charlotte Observer
Four scholarship North Carolinians, including Jarell Eddie (above) from Charlotte, N.C., are on the projected Tech roster in 2010-11.

Hudson, J.T. Thompson and Victor Davila.

Hudson and Thompson will complete their eligibility with the 2010-11 season, but the Hokies already have another North Carolinian in the wings. Point guard Marquis Rankin, a junior this past season at Vance High in Charlotte, committed to the Hokies in April.

"I've been knowing the Eddies for about 10 years," said Lamar Rankin, Marquis' father and an AAU coach in Charlotte. "Once Jarell committed, he figured he needed a good point guard to play with and helped out in the recruiting of [Marquis]."

Most of Tech's recruiting success in North Carolina has come in the Charlotte area and along the Interstate 77 corridor north toward the Virginia line.

Hudson, Thompson, Eddie and Rankin are all from the Charlotte area, while Davila, originally from Puerto Rico, was an exchange student in Boonville, N.C., west of Winston-Salem.

"We really didn't have a con-

nection," Greenberg said. "Our connection with Dorenzo and J.T. was that Coach [Stacey] Palmore went to school with their uncle."

Palmore, now at Georgia, was a member of Greenberg's staff from 2004-09.

"Our connection with Jarell Eddie was his high school coach used to bring his teams to our team camp when he was coaching a I-A team in Florida," said Greenberg, previously the head coach at South Florida. "Now that we've won [at Virginia Tech], we've become a viable option."

"We've got good facilities, kids like the way we play. The Hokie Nation stretches well into North Carolina."

Greenberg said he thinks that new assistant John Richardson, a graduate of Elizabeth City State, should be able to increase Tech's influence.

But, no discussion of Virginia Tech and its recruiting successes in North Carolina can omit the two most notable Charlotte-based players not to play for the Hokies.

"Yeah, the Currys," said Greenberg, referring to Stephen and Seth Curry, sons of Tech Hall of Famer Dell Curry.

Stephen is now with the Golden State Warriors after a celebrated career at Davidson, and Seth is at Duke after transferring from Liberty. The perception is that Greenberg didn't devote enough attention to them.

"We did recruit them!" Greenberg said. "That's the greatest misnomer. No one saw those kids more than we did."

But, would he have changed anything about the Currys' recruiting if he had it to do over?

"No question," he said.

Greenberg has a reputation as being one of the hardest-working recruiters, and that does not go unnoticed.

Lamar Rankin said North Carolina showed interest in his son, but the Tar Heels said they were low on scholarships. Jesse Eddie said his impression was his son wasn't a high priority for UNC or Duke.

"Especially Duke," he said. "It looks to me sometimes that they'd rather go to Virginia for a kid than come to some place just down the road. There's a lot of talent in the Charlotte area, but I'm not sure the big schools want to tap into it."

"To me, Seth Greenberg is the man. Of all the coaches I've dealt with, I believe he's the one who will make my child a better basketball player."

The nature of recruiting is that an assistant will be sent to an area where he has a connection, but Tech has had several lead recruiters for the players signed out of North Carolina.

It's the people, but it's also the product.

"The kids are raised on the ACC; their parents grew up watching the ACC game of the week, their grandparents grew up watching the ACC game of the week," Greenberg said. "It's part of their culture. [Tech's] location is ideal. It's away from home, but it's close to home. It just makes sense."

Cavs grab another coach's kid

Despite being the son of Rhode Island's coach, Billy Baron opted for a different opportunity.

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They were an unlikely match, the former college star who had played for his father and the recruit whose college choice might mean backing out of a commitment to his father.

Somewhere in that dichotomy, Virginia basketball coach

Tony Bennett found the sensitivity that enabled him to connect with Rhode Island-bred point guard Billy Baron.

Baron is the younger son of University of Rhode Island coach Jim Baron, to whom he had made an oral commitment in November.

"I had a conversation with Jim Baron Sr. and I told him, 'Look, I understand what it's like playing for your dad,'" Bennett said. "I said, 'If this door is closed, I would never touch it.'"

Billy Baron had enjoyed a celebrated career at Bishop Henricks in Warwick, R.I., before heading to Worcester (Mass.) Academy following graduation in the spring of 2009. He had shown enough promise in high school to have received a scholarship offer from Stanford, but prep school had always been part of his plan.

"I think prep schools are great," Jim Baron Sr. said in an April interview. "It's just another year of advancement and development. I just think it's terrific."

His older son, Jimmy, also had gone to Worcester before selecting Rhode Island. Jimmy Baron scored 1,765 points during his career (2005-09) at URI and made 345 3-point field goals.

Brother Billy did not go to Worcester with the idea that he would play for his dad.

"I had made a name during the summer with a few big games," he said. "There were coaches coming to see me, but there wasn't much I could show them with my hand in a cast."

He had broken his right thumb while diving for a loose ball in a September pick-up game and could not play again until November.

"I think he got a little anxious," said Bennett, whose staff had been represented at Worcester during the first live period, "so, he committed [to URI]."

"But, I saw his dad somewhere and I talked to the [Worcester] coach. I said, 'If we're interested, is there any opportunity? Or, is this a done deal?' And his dad and the coach said, 'If it was the right situation, he'd consider it.'"

"Jim Baron Sr. was phenomenal."

Bennett went to watch Billy play in December and offered him a scholarship on the spot. Baron had been a shooting



Billy Baron
The son of Rhode Island's coach will attend Virginia.

guard up through his junior year at Bishop Henricks and offered the Cavaliers something they lacked, a scoring point guard. The 6-foot-1 Baron averaged 29 points this past winter at Worcester.

He vowed to let the season end before making his decision, but then it didn't take long. To him, the commitment to UVA was a no-brainer.

"Great school, great coach, great conference," he said. "There was nothing wrong with that picture. Virginia's trying to rebuild a prestigious program. That was something that caught my eye. My father's always rebuilt programs."

"The negatives? There weren't any really, [other than] leaving my father. I'm really close with him."

Jim Baron repeatedly has used words like "tough" and "difficult" to describe a situation that cost him one of his top recruits, who also happened to be his son.

Bennett likes to tell the story of his recruiting, when his father, Dick, basically gave him an ultimatum in the final days of the recruiting period.

"I knew I was going to play for him," said Bennett, who starred at Wisconsin-Green Bay from 1988-1992. "But, quite honestly, I wanted to go on another visit. Hawaii would have been fine. I wanted a school out west in a warm climate."

"But, there was something in me, if Wisconsin had really made a hard push or if Indiana when [Bobby] Knight was there, I might have paused on that one."

Although he was among the best players on the team, Bennett invariably would hear the "Daddy's boy" chants on

the road.

"My standing line is, 'the good is great and the bad is terrible,'" he said. "Everything is exaggerated. At practice, [Dick Bennett] was brutal on me. It wouldn't work nowadays. Guys would tell you, there was no preferential treatment."

But that was an era of unprecedented success for the program.

"Green Bay was sort of a storybook deal because that program was terrible. They had been Division II for a few years, but it just got better and better," he said. "We got to .500, then it was NIT, followed by the NCAA. The Packers were down those years, which helped."

Bennett was quick to point out that Virginia has won one NCAA Tournament game and has made a total of three NCAA appearances in 14 years.

"I don't know Rhode Island's roster," Bennett said, "but he might have more of an opportunity here than he would have there. The older brother adds a dimension that I wouldn't understand, but here he can blaze his own path, make his own way."

Baron points out that Rhode Island is a small state and comparisons with his older brother were inevitable, but any disparaging chants "would only push me," he said. "If the family connections would have created any pressure, he would have welcomed it."

"I was flattered when coach Bennett offered me," Baron said. "You could almost say I was shocked. No knock against the Atlantic 10 or URI, but with the numbers I put up in prep school, it finally came down to, 'Why sell yourself short?'"

COLLEGE BASKETBALL RECRUITING REPORT

By Doug Doughty | The Roanoke Times

BOYS The state's top 15 seniors

RANK/PLAYER	HT.	SCHOOL (LOCATION)	COLLEGE
1. Doron Lamb	6-4	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	Kentucky
2. Kendall Marshall	6-3	Bishop O'Connell (Arlington)	N. Carolina
3. Roscoe Smith	6-7	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	UConn
4. Travis McKie	6-6	John Marshall (Richmond)	Wake Forest
5. Mychal Parker	6-6	Miller School (Crozet)	Maryland
6. Josh Henderson	6-11	Cave Spring (Roanoke)	Vanderbilt
7. Pe'Shon Howard	6-2	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	Maryland
8. Hippolyte Tsafack	6-8	Miller School (Crozet)	Memphis
9. Davante Gardner	6-8	King's Fork (Suffolk)	Marquette
10. Baye Moussa Keita	6-10	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	Syracuse
11. Juwan Staten	5-10	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	Dayton
12. Dimitri Batten	6-3	Kecoughtan (Newport News)	ODU
13. Brice Kofane	6-8	Miller School (Crozet)	Providence
14. Jay Copeland	6-6	King's Fork (Suffolk)	Ball State
15. Brandon Britt	6-0	Atlantic Shores (Chesapeake)	Wm. & Mary

MR. BASKETBALL: Kendall Marshall, 6-3, Bishop O'Connell

SLEEPER OF THE YEAR: Martins Abele, 7-0, Oak Hill (Radford)

MR. BASKETBALL PREVIOUS WINNERS

2009 Tristan Spurlock	1999 Travis Watson	1989 George Lynch
2008 Ed Davis	1998 Ronald Curry	1988 Alonzo Mourning
2007 Julian Vaughn	1997 Ronald Curry	1987 Alonzo Mourning
2006 Vernon Macklin	1996 Jason Capel	1986 J.R. Reid
2005 Marcus Ginyard	1995 Marco Harrison	1985 Kevin Madden
2004 Marquie Cooke	1994 Curtis Staples	1984 Kevin Madden
2003 J.R. Reynolds	1993 Allen Iverson	1983 Tommy Amaker
2002 J.J. Redick	1992 Michael Evans	1982 Dell Curry
2001 Elton Brown	1991 Cory Alexander	
2000 Cliff Hawkins	1990 Grant Hill	

BOYS The nation's top 40 seniors

RANK/PLAYER	HT.	HOMETOWN	COLLEGE
1. Harrison Barnes	6-7	Ames, Iowa	N. Carolina
2. Jared Sullinger	6-9	Columbus, Ohio	Ohio State
3. Kyrie Irving	6-2	Elizabeth, N.J.	Duke
4. Josh Selby	6-2	Baltimore	Kansas
5. Enes Kanter	6-10	Tarzana, Calif.	Kentucky
6. Brandon Knight	6-3	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	Kentucky
7. Tobias Harris	6-8	Dix Hills, N.Y.	Tennessee
8. Cory Joseph	6-3	Henderson, Nev.	Texas
9. Perry Jones	6-10	Duncanville, Texas	Baylor
10. Deshaun Thomas	6-7	Fort Wayne, Ind.	Ohio State
11. Terrence Jones	6-8	Portland, Ore.	Kentucky
12. Reggie Bullock	6-6	Kinston, N.C.	N. Carolina
13. Tristan Thompson	6-9	Henderson, Nev.	Texas
14. C.J. Leslie	6-7	Raleigh, N.C.	N.C. State
15. Joe Jackson	5-11	Memphis, Tenn.	Tennessee
16. Fab Melo	7-0	Weston, Fla.	Syracuse
17. Josh Smith	6-9	Covington, Wash.	UCLA
18. Doron Lamb	6-4	Mouth of Wilson, Va.	Kentucky
19. Patric Young	6-9	Jacksonville, Fla.	Florida
20. Tony Mitchell	6-8	Dallas	Missouri
21. James Bell	6-4	Jacksonville, Fla.	Villanova
22. Ray McCallum	6-1	Beverly Hills, Mich.	Detroit
23. Adreian Payne	6-10	Dayton, Ohio	Mich. State
24. Dion Waiters	6-3	Burlington, N.J.	Syracuse
25. Jelani Kendrick	6-6	Marietta, Ga.	Memphis
26. Kendall Marshall	6-3	Arlington, Va.	N. Carolina
27. Jerome Richmond	6-7	Waukegan, Ill.	Illinois
28. Vander Blue	6-3	Madison, Wis.	Marquette
29. Keith Appling	6-2	Detroit	Mich. State
30. Meyers Leonard	7-0	Robinson, Ill.	Illinois
31. Jayvaughn Pinkston	6-6	Brooklyn, N.Y.	Villanova
32. Ryan Harrow	6-0	Marietta, Ga.	N.C. State
33. Tyler Lamb	6-5	Santa Ana, Calif.	UCLA
34. Cameron Clark	6-6	Sherman, Texas	Oklahoma
35. K.T. Harrell	6-5	Montgomery, Ala.	Virginia
36. Dwight Powell	6-10	Bradenton, Fla.	Stanford
37. Roscoe Smith	6-7	Mouth of Wilson	UConn
38. Terrence Ross	6-6	Portland, Ore.	Washington
39. Trey Zeigler	6-4	Mount Pleasant, Mich.	Mich. State
40. Keala King	6-5	Compton, Calif.	Ariz. State

THE NATION'S TOP 20 RECRUITING CLASSES

1. Kentucky	6. Syracuse	11. Mich. State	16. Florida
2. Ohio State	7. Duke	12. Tennessee	17. Virginia
3. Memphis	8. N.C. State	13. Illinois	18. G'town
4. N. Carolina	9. Texas	14. UConn	19. Stanford
5. Missouri	10. UCLA	15. Stanford	20. Villanova

GIRLS The state's top 15 seniors

RANK/PLAYER	HT.	SCHOOL (LOCATION)	COLLEGE
1. Arieal Johnson	6-5	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	Georgia
2. Jazmin Pitts	6-1	Cosby (Midlothian)	Virginia
3. Myisha Goodwin	5-4	Edison (Alexandria)	N.C. State
4. Samisha Powell	5-8	Princess Anne (Va. Beach)	Georgetown
5. Kyani White	5-6	Stonewall Jackson (Manassas)	Va. Tech
6. Andrea White	5-11	Lancaster	Georgetown
7. Becca Wann	5-10	Cosby (Midlothian)	Richmond
8. Chelisa Painter	6-0	Indian River (Chesapeake)	Geo. Wash.
9. Orii Szesci	6-3	Oak Hill (Mouth of Wilson)	Duquesne
10. Lauren Burford	6-1	Fairfax	Villanova
11. Marquel Davis	5-8	Stafford	Pittsburgh
12. Debbie Smith	5-10	Hampton	JMU
13. Tiasia McGeorge	5-4	William Fleming	American
14. Kelsey Freeman	6-3	Freedom (South Riding)	Delaware
15. Salesse Stovall	6-1	William Fleming	Marshall

MS. BASKETBALL: Elizabeth Williams (Jr.), 6-3, Princess Anne

SLEEPER OF THE YEAR: Breshara Gordon, 5-6, Lake Taylor (Radford)

MS. BASKETBALL PREVIOUS WINNERS

2009 Tierra Ruffin-Pratt	2000 Shareese Grant
2008 Tierra Ruffin-Pratt	1999 Kara Lawson
2007 Jasmine Thomas	1998 Kara Lawson
2006 Monica Wright	1997 Chalois Lias
2005 Kristi Toliver	1996 Katie Smrcka-Duffy
2004 Khadijah Whittington	1995 Katie Smrcka-Duffy
2003 Britney Anderson	1994 Tiffany Bower
2002 Shavon Earp	1993 La'Keshia Frett
2001 Erin Gibson	