Written by Mike Flynn
Friday, 23 July 2010 18:11

Appalachian State University men's basketball added a pair of transfers to the program as Briam Okam and G.J. Vilarino are enrolled for the fall, head coach Jason Capel announced on Wednesday.

The new Mountaineers have three years of eligibility remaining and come from Rutgers and Gonzaga, respectively. The pair will sit out the 2010-11 season per NCAA transfer rules, before playing as sophomores the following year.

Capel said, "We are excited about the addition of both young men. They bring experience, a lot of athleticism and depth to what we already have. To have them sit out this season will be as valuable to the two of them as it is for the rest of the team. They are good people and good students, and will have a chance to get on the court a lot, so we are happy to have them. Brian and G.J. are going to contibute to the overall fabric of what we are doing here at ASU."

A 7-0, 245-pound center, Okam saw action in 16 games for the Scarlet Knights in 2009-10. He shot 45.5 percent from the field and averaged 1.1 points and 1.1 rebounds in 76 minutes for Rutgers. The Enugu, Nigeria native scored a season-best six points against NJIT and hauled in three rebounds three times. Defensively, he swatted eight blocks and swiped one steal as a freshman.

Okam was rated ESPN's 15th-best prospect when he graduated from Orlando's Lake Highland High School in 2009. The honor student transfered to LHPS after playing the 2007-08 season at the Montrose Christian School in Rockville, Md., where he helped the team to a 21-4 record and the No. 10 East Coast ranking in the National Prep Poll.

"With Brian, we have a kid with a lot length and such a high ceiling to grow," said Capel. "With a year to sit out, he can continue to develop and we look for him to grow into quite a player in our league."

Vilarino is a 6-0, 175-pound guard who saw action in 25 games for Gonzaga as a freshman. He averaged 2.3 points in 7.8 minutes per contest. The McKinney, Texas native added five assists, eight steals and 13 boards on the season as well. He scored a season-high 10 points against

Augustana and added six more against Santa Clara. Vilarino grabbed a season-best three rebounds against Syracuse.

At McKinney High, Vilarino averaged 19.5 points, 5.1 rebounds and 4.0 assists per game as senior to lead the team to a 24-11 record. The squad finished second in District 9-4A play to finish second and advanced to second round of 2009 Conference 4A State Tournament. He earned all-state honors.

“G.J. brings quickness and athleticism that you don’t see from many point guards and has a solid year of experience already,” commented Capel.

The defending Southern Conference North champions graduated five seniors from 2009-10, but return SoCon Player of the Year Donald Sims and 65 percent of the team’s scoring from last season.