

Former Boilermaker Joins Mountaineers

Written by Ryan Bower

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Appalachian State University men's basketball head coach Jason Capel has announced the addition of former Purdue forward Jacob Lawson (Reidsville, N.C./Oak Ridge Military) to the Mountaineer roster on Wednesday. "We are really excited to add Jacob to our basketball program," said Capel. "Jacob is a young man who comes from a great family and I feel will be big part of what we continue to build. He brings great athleticism to both ends of the court and the ability to change ends with great quickness. Defensively, Jacob will be a force for us with his knack for blocking and altering shots, his ability to defend multiple positions and rebounding the ball, both above the rim and out of his area."

Lawson, who will sit out the 2013-14 season in accordance with NCAA transfer rules, will have two years of eligibility remaining after appearing in 58 games for Matt Painter's Boilermakers over the past two seasons.

During his time at Purdue, Lawson earned the start in 14 contests, including 10 during the 2012-13 campaign, and led the Boilermakers in blocks five times as a sophomore while posting a career-high 10 points in a win over then No. 11/14 Illinois on Jan. 2, 2013.

A member of Purdue's NCAA Tournament squad as a freshman, Lawson averaged 11.1 minutes, 2.4 points and 1.9 rebounds per game in his first season in West Lafayette, Ind., earning his first collegiate start in an 81-56 win over IPFW on Dec. 20, 2011. In his two seasons with the Boilermakers, Lawson shot a gaudy 56.5 percent (56-of-99) from the floor while tallying 133 points, 118 rebounds and 35 blocks.

"I think Jacob has grown as an offensive player and will be utilized in our system to compliment his strengths. His strength right now is finishing plays above the rim and using his quick first step to blow past defenders; but I think his improving jump shot is something that will surprise many, especially with a year to continue to work on it," said Capel.

Ranked as one of the top high school prospects in the nation as a senior, Lawson helped lead Oak Ridge Military Academy to a 33-6 record in his final season after averaging 14.5 points, 12.4 rebounds and 5.5 blocks per game as a junior. Prior to his time at Oak Ridge, Lawson helped lead Northern Guilford to a North Carolina 3A state title in 2009.

A former high school teammate of current Mountaineers Jay Canty (Oak Ridge Military/Jamestown, N.C.), Mike Neal (Oak Ridge Military/Greensboro, N.C.) and Michael Obacha (Edo State, Nigeria/High Point Christian), Lawson was graded as a 91 overall by ESPN.com and ranked as the No. 25 power forward in his class. A former three-star prospect, as ranked by ESPN, Rivals.com and Scout.com, Lawson also received scholarship offers from Georgetown, Ole Miss, Seton Hall, Virginia Tech and Wake Forest before signing with Purdue. "Jacob has an infectious personality and plays with such great energy that he will be a fun player to watch as he continues to grow," said Capel. "Moving into the Sun Belt, we knew we needed to continue to add players with great athleticism; Jacob gives us that type of player on our front line."

Lawson joins a Mountaineer squad that returns 11 players from last year's team that finished as the runner-up in the Southern Conference's North Division and advanced to the semifinals of the SoCon Tournament.

Photo Courtesy: Jacob Lawson, ASU Athletics