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### Daniels' presence eases Dunleavy's absence

Oct 27, 2008

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Marquis Daniels' presence has eased the pain of Mike Dunleavy's absence.

While Dunleavy – the Pacers' most complete offensive player – missed all but one quarter of one preseason game with lingering pain in his right knee, Daniels stepped into a more prominent role and thrived, averaging 17.3 points, 7.3 rebounds and .541 shooting in starting the final three preseason games.

With the regular season set to begin Wednesday in Detroit, Daniels will start at shooting guard while Dunleavy works on regaining his health. Not to minimize the impact of Dunleavy's absence, because his shooting, passing and instinctive movement without the ball were cornerstones to the team's offensive

surge last season, but Daniels has proven a pretty strong insurance policy.

"I feel like anybody can step up giving the right opportunity, come in and play good minutes and help out any way, whether it's scoring, rebounding, playing defense, whatever the case may be," Daniels said. "Mike's a great player for us. He'll be back real soon. I had to deal with the same problem with the knee. The trainers are great. He'll be back."

Dunleavy did not practice Monday and wasn't sure when he would be able to return. He thought he was ready to come back for the Oct. 13 preseason game against Memphis but landed awkwardly after his first drive to the basket, limped throughout a 12-minute stint and has not been back on the court since.

"I'm just not sure right now," he said. "I'm definitely not going to play Wednesday night and as far as past that we have no idea. I'm trying to get better, get healthier but right now it's just taking a long time.

"(I'm) pretty concerned, considering it has taken so long. We have great health care here so for it not to be working as well as we'd like is definitely concerning but you've got to stick with it."

Though Daniels isn't as much of a long-range threat, he has worked on becoming more of one. A career .252 shooter from the 3-point line, he worked on his mechanics during the summer under the guidance of former Cavs guard Mark Price. The early returns have been impressive. Daniels shot .353 from the arc in the preseason and was 6-of-14 (.429) in the final three games.

"(Price) helped me with a lot of stuff that a lot of guys probably don't know they should be doing: footwork, ball placement, getting the ball up -- a lot of things you should know coming out of college and high school," Daniels said. "A guy like myself, I was always penetrating to the basket, never taking time to shoot the three-ball."

Daniels is an active defender who frequently leads the team in deflections, is a good finisher in transition and moves well in the halfcourt offense, traits that ease Coach Jim O'Brien's angst over Dunleavy's absence.

"Marquis had a nice preseason, he had a strong last six weeks of last year, he really is a guy that gets a lot of things done with his defensive hands, which we emphasize a lot, forces a lot of turnovers and does not make a tremendous amount of mistakes," said O'Brien. "He's shooting the basketball well and he's providing good leadership for us."

Until Dunleavy returns, O'Brien said he will focus on what he has, not dwell on what is missing.

"I feel badly for Michael. We'd be a better team if we were all healthy but we're not so I just worry about the guys that have uniforms and making them the best I can," O'Brien said. "You can say it's day-to-day, week-to-week, whatever you want to say, I really don't know. It depends on how he's going to respond to treatment. It could be a week, it could be two weeks, it could be longer. But we think there's a chance it's going to be sooner rather than later."

Until then, the position will be in capable hands.

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Austin Croshere will have a job this season. The veteran forward, released by the Pacers on Friday, was claimed on waivers by the Bucks today and will open the season on their 15-man roster. To make room for Croshere, the Bucks waived Adrian Griffin.

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I read the above blog and i hear that we have a great medical staff. I dont know if someone else agree's with me but, we had guys out for a long period of time " J. oneal, Travis, tinsley, etc." Now we dont know when Mike's coming back. Thats a bad stretch of luck or a bad medical staff. Oh yeah and for croshere, fellow pacer's fans i like croshere . At the same time lets focus on the team at hand rather than former pacers. He didnt have a good preseason, and it might of been worse if it wasnt for T.J. Anyway lets start of the season with a bang, and Granger lets have a great shooting percentage to start of the season.

by Alexando Oct 28, 2008 2:32 AM  
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good to hear that croshere got a new job, hope he will find his way with the bucks!

by scorpion77 Oct 27, 2008 9:25 PM  
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Daniels will prove his worth these next several weeks. Without Dunleavy, he & Rush should flourish and maximize their abilities through scoring and defending. Hopefully he is fully healed from last season's injuries. Excited to get the season started... les't start it off with a bang by blowing out Detroit.

by dannydabounc.. Oct 27, 2008 6:04 PM  
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