

## **Koumadje's Healthy Diet Allows For Expanded Role As A Senior**

**By Kristen Smith**

**Florida State Sports Information**

**Graduate Assistant**

Standing at 7-foot-4, senior center Christ Koumadje knows how to command a room without having to say a word.

Koumadje has proven to be a valuable member of the Seminole men's basketball team since he stepped foot on Florida State's campus in 2015. As a freshman, he was one of the Seminoles' top rebounders and distinguished himself as an elite shot blocker. He has assisted his team with many victories in non-conference and conference play, appeared in two NCAA tournaments, and helped lead the Seminoles to an Elite Eight appearance in 2018.

Koumadje and the No. 15 Seminoles will open their 2018-19 campaign at home Tuesday against rival Florida (9 p.m., ESPN2) in the Fresh from Florida Sunshine Showdown.

During his career at Florida State, Koumadje's game has continued to evolve along with his physical stature.

When he began his Florida State basketball career Koumadje weighed 220 pounds. While his height, talent, and incredible work ethic set him apart, his weight still presented a challenge when going against the big, physical bodies that come with ACC play.

"As a center playing in the paint, you have to be prepared for people pushing you while you're trying to get rebounds," said Koumadje. "I've always had the height, but I didn't have the weight."

At the start of his senior season, things started to shift for Koumadje. He was able to put on an extra 40 pounds of muscle and now stands at a solid 270 pounds for the 2018-2019 basketball season.

"At the end of last season, Coach Hamilton wanted me to gain some weight," said Koumadje. "But no one expected for it to be like this."

This was no overnight phenomenon. The process required a combination of discipline, a healthy diet and perfect timing.

For Christ, there was no down time during this past off-season. Over the summer, he remained in Tallahassee and focused on his goals. He committed to being in the weight room at least five times a week and constantly met with the team's nutritionist to make sure that he was eating right.

Florida State's men's basketball athletic trainer, Amanda Robinson, explained that over the years Christ, a Chad native, has really learned how to properly eat American food.

"He learned what he should eat and what is actually healthy to eat, which can sometimes be difficult with American foods," said Robinson. "Once he got on the right page and found some things that he liked, that definitely helped."

Nutrition was a key component of Koumadje's weight-gain journey. His diet placed an emphasis on healthy carbohydrates and proteins. He consciously stayed away from processed foods and instead opted for cooked meals from the dining halls on campus. When he needed quick snacks, he would grab them from the snack room at the basketball training facility.

Gaining weight is not as easy as it may sound, especially for a Division I student-athlete.

"It gets hard with our lifestyle," said Koumadje. "You have to plan your days because the times that we eat have to work with when we have classes and practice."

“He also had to learn how much to eat in order to maintain all of the energy that he expends throughout practice and games,” added Robinson. “Once he grasped that concept, that was one of the main reasons he has been able to keep the weight on.”

Along with everything that Koumadje had the ability to control such as his workouts and eating habits, there was also the element of perfect timing that just worked out in his favor.

“We all have genetic dispositions where our bodies start holding mature body weight at different ages of our lives,” said FSU Associate Head Coach Stan Jones. “It took a little longer for Christ, but it came at a great time for him.”

Beyond his weight, Koumadje has been able to develop other skills that set him apart from other players on the court. Now, he expects to expand upon those skills in order to contribute to his team even more.

“Along with being able to hold people off, he’ll be able to take collisions,” said Jones.

He is now equipped with not only the physicality but also the confidence to face anyone on the court more effectively.

“I still want to continue getting my weight up,” said Koumadje. “I don’t want to get too big to the point that I hurt my knees, but I do want to have lean muscles and be toned overall.”

At the rate he’s going, there’s no doubt that Koumadje will be able to accomplish and surpass all of his goals. Things are certainly looking up for Koumadje this season – both on the court and on the scale.

Said Jones: “The nutrition, weight training, and time are all starting to work positively for him.”