

Florida State's Turpin Will 'Embrace' Second Chance At Senior Season

By Corey Clark
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He hasn't played a college basketball game since a first-round NIT loss to Louisiana Tech on March 18, 2013. That's going to change soon for Florida State senior center Kiel Turpin, who was awarded a sixth year of eligibility by the NCAA after missing all of last season with a leg injury.

"For me this season is going to be about having high confidence and doing what I do best," Turpin said. "Just playing as hard as I can."

The Illinois native redshirted for the Seminoles in 2011-2012 and then started 25 games as a junior in 2012-2013, averaging 5.4 points and 3 rebounds and 1.3 blocks per game.

He was expected to be a valuable piece for FSU last season, but instead was forced to miss the entire year with an injury. It wasn't fun. Especially with how close the Seminoles came to making a return trip to the NCAA Tournament.

"It was pretty hard not knowing if you're able to come back and play for your last year," Turpin said. "You get kind of stressed." But the coaches told him all along they were confident he would get his sixth year of eligibility from the NCAA. He did. And now he's into his second full week of practicing with the team again.

Turpin says he's 100 percent health-wise and he's getting his body adjusted back to the grind of Division I basketball practices. It's not quite there, though.

"He's shaking the rust off," FSU head coach Leonard Hamilton said. "He's not there yet. ... Kiel is smart, he's heady. He makes good decisions, but he still hasn't played in a while. He's probably been one of our more consistent guys, so I'm pleased with what he's doing.

"But he needs the time we have left in practice to get back into playing shape."

The Seminoles start the season on Nov. 15 against Manhattan.

Turpin knows this year will be his last. And he plans to enjoy it as much as possible.

"I'll definitely embrace it," Turpin said. "I kept thinking (last season) if this is my last year playing I didn't like how my career ended at Florida State. I would have been pretty much heartbroken. Because I played a lot better at the end of (2013) and I just kept improving. So hopefully this time around I start off strong and end strong.

"I'm really hoping to have a great year and finish strong and get to where we need to go as a team."