

David Nichols Getting Adjusted To life In The ACC

By Pete Dougherty
Albany Times Union
February 4, 2019

Bus trips to Maine and New Hampshire and other America East locales are in the past these days for David Nichols.

After three basketball seasons for the University at Albany, Nichols transferred in the spring to Florida State of the Atlantic Coast Conference. Although the ACC footprint is much wider than that of the America East, the travel is a bit easier. Nichols and the Seminoles arrive at most places by charter plane.

"It's nice not having to fly commercial and being able to walk right on the plane (bypassing security checkpoints) and get where you need to be from game to game," Nichols said.

Florida State is making its first trip to Syracuse in two years for an ACC game Tuesday night.

Nichols, a first-team all-America East point guard as a UAlbany sophomore, capitalized on the NCAA's graduate transfer rule to enroll at the Tallahassee school, where he is averaging 18.3 minutes and 6.9 points per game.

I pretty much expected what it is — bigger guys, more athleticism, faster game," he said. "You have to make decisions much quicker in the game.

"The biggest adjustment in the game is how roles can change from game to game. I knew that going in with this team. It's a different guy contributing every night. You can shoot 15 shots one game and then maybe shoot two the next. That's just what's needed with the way that we play. It's a different guy stepping up every night."

Nichols is one of 10 players averaging more than 11 minutes per game for the 22nd-ranked Seminoles (16-5, 4-4 ACC), who are seventh in the highly competitive, 15-team league.

He was selected MVP of Florida State's victory over St. Louis in the Orange Bowl Classic, scoring 19 points in 25 minutes.

"It's pretty much what they said (during his recruitment), being that sixth or seventh man," Nichols said. "We play 11 or 12 guys, so nobody's going to be playing 34 or 35 minutes. It's a good balance of bench to starters a lot of times. It has been around 18 or 20 minutes, and that's what I was told coming in."

He left UAlbany after receiving his undergraduate degree in communications, with a minor in business. Twice selected to the America East's all-academic team with a 3.88 grade-point average, Nichols said he is carrying a 3.6 GPA — "almost 3.7" — as he pursues a master's degree in sports management.

"I pretty much expected what it is — bigger guys, more athleticism, faster game," he said. "You have to make decisions much quicker in the game.

"The biggest adjustment in the game is how roles can change from game to game. I knew that going in with this team. It's a different guy contributing every night. You can shoot 15 shots one game and then maybe shoot two the next. That's just what's needed with the way that we play. It's a different guy stepping up every night."

Nichols is one of 10 players averaging more than 11 minutes per game for the 22nd-ranked Seminoles (16-5, 4-4 ACC), who are seventh in the highly competitive, 15-team league.

He was selected MVP of Florida State's victory over St. Louis in the Orange Bowl Classic, scoring 19 points in 25 minutes.

"It's pretty much what they said (during his recruitment), being that sixth or seventh man," Nichols said. "We play 11 or 12 guys, so nobody's going to be playing 34 or 35 minutes. It's a good balance of bench to starters a lot of times. It has been around 18 or 20 minutes, and that's what I was told coming in."

He left UAlbany after receiving his undergraduate degree in communications, with a minor in business. Twice selected to the America East's all-academic team with a 3.88 grade-point average, Nichols said he is carrying a 3.6 GPA — "almost 3.7" — as he pursues a master's degree in sports management.

From a basketball perspective, Nichols said he wanted to see if he could compete at a higher level than the America East.

"Just the experience I've had so far this year," he said, "the difference between a high and mid-major is something I needed to experience, and I'm glad I'm able to."

His departure from UAlbany coincided with that of backcourt mate and Scotia native Joe Cremo, now at Villanova. The two friends talk often and were on the same court Nov. 25 when the Seminoles and Wildcats met in the final of the AdvoCare Invitational in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Villanova won the game, 66-60. Nichols had six points in 18 minutes, Cremo two in 16.

"I was used to it," Nichols said of playing against his one-time teammate. "We played against each other all the time in practices and pick-up. It was nice. His family was down there for the game, and I got to see them, too."

"I watch what I can (of Villanova). We're always checking each other on the box scores. I'll text him or call him, he'll do the same. We'll facetime the night before we each have a game, talk about who we're playing, what to expect, stuff like that."

He said he also keeps close watch on his former team, the Great Danes, talking to Ahmad Clark — who inherited the point guard position when Nichols left — on a regular basis.

"He's doing his thing," Nichols said of Clark, who leads UAlbany in points. "I tease him all the time about his scoring. He's telling me he's going to break my scoring record and different things like that. I'm proud of what he's doing because I saw it in him in practice going against him and knowing how good he was last year. I'm not surprised at all what he's doing."