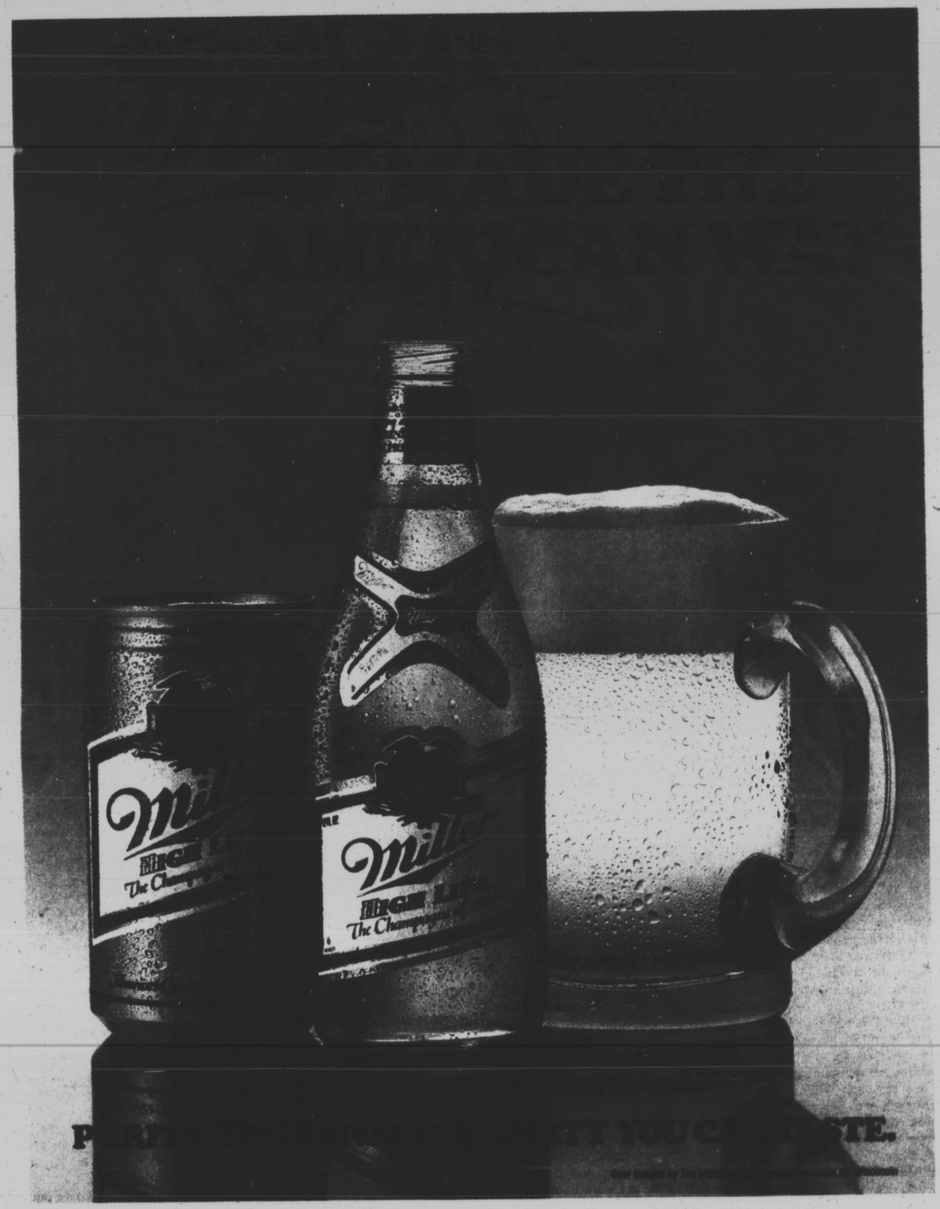


MILLER PRESENTS BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PROFILE

Shaw's high-scoring Lacy: It's all in the genes

By SAM DAVIS
Chronicle Sports Editor

If it's true that parents' genes determine what type of children they'll have, then Shaw University's Dave Lacy has every right to be a star basketball player.

Lacy, who hails from Philadelphia's renowned Overbrook High School, was born to a basketball family. His father, Carl Sr., was a basketball standout at West Philadelphia, another Philly high school that's well-known for producing talented players.

Lacy's mother, Rosa Lee, was a cheerleader during her high school days at West Philly and has since become one of the city's finest amateur bowlers. And Dave's older brother, Carl Jr., starred in basketball at Overbrook before heading to Raleigh, N.C., and Shaw.

It was only natural that Lacy picked up the game as a youngster in the playgrounds of Philadelphia.

"I come from a very sports-minded family," says Lacy. "My mother and father have stayed behind me all the way. My father instilled the game of basketball in me. When I was little, he used to take me with him to the playgrounds and I would see him and his friends play.

"I think he wanted me and my brother to play basketball, but he didn't push us," Lacy says. "He stayed behind us and told us the things that it takes to be successful in sports."

Having a former high school standout for a father had other benefits for Lacy and his brother as well.

"My father would pick up the flaws in our game and give us tips to work on," says Lacy. "He taught us to take pride in the way we played."

Though there were countless other lessons his father taught him about basketball, Lacy says, there is one that stands out among the others.

"He said you can always be a good basketball player if you can put the ball through the hoop," says Lacy. "If you can score, you can play with anybody."

And that philosophy is what has helped Lacy become one of the top scorers in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA).

With just a few games remaining in his senior season, Lacy's average this season stands at 20.5 points per game, third in the strongest NCAA Division II basketball conference in the country. Even more impressive are his 57-percent field goal accuracy and his more than six assists per game.

"Dave Lacy is an electrifying, exciting and very dedicated player," says Warren Reynolds, Lacy's coach at Shaw. "He's quick, has great moves and is an outstanding shooter. Very seldom do you find all of those traits in a player.

"It's good to have a super athlete like him," Reynolds says. "He's very unselfish and determined to succeed."

Since arriving at Shaw, Lacy has had a lot to do with the program's development. When he arrived there, the Bears were in the throes of a 39-game losing streak, the longest in the nation.

During his freshman year, the team broke the losing streak and won a total of five games. As a sophomore, Lacy helped the Bears finish 10-16 and last year they improved to 10-16. So far this season the Bears are 12-5 and in first place in the CIAA's Southern Division.

Signing Lacy was at least one turning point for the program.

"From the time I signed him, I knew he was definitely a Division I player," says Reynolds. "A lot of people underestimated him because of his physical size.

"Dave has the moves of Earl Monroe and an excellent shot like Sam Jones," Reynolds says of his 6-3, 165-pound star. "Those are two typical Philadelphia basketball players that were outstanding, but Dave combines both the moves and shooting."

One reason Lacy ended up at Shaw was because he was only 16 when he graduated from high school and most of the major colleges wanted him to spend a year at a prep school to mature more physically.

"Some of the coaches in the city wanted me to go to prep school," says Lacy, now a 20-year-old senior. "But I wanted to go on to college somewhere that I thought I could play right away."

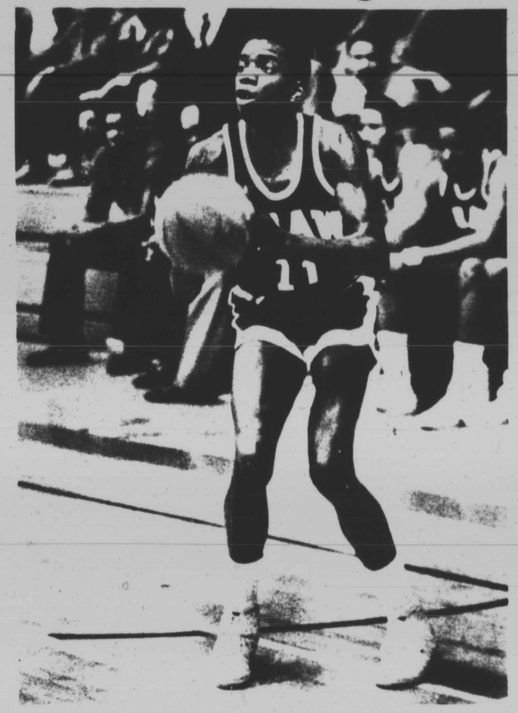
Another factor was that Lacy wasn't exactly a superstar in high school. Though he did make an impact on the team at Overbrook, Lacy didn't get to start until his senior season.

"My junior year, we were 34-0 and were considered the best team in the nation," says Lacy. "Just making the team was a big thing in the city. Even if you didn't get much time, people knew that you could play."

Among Lacy's teammates were Tony Costner, who later starred at St. Joseph's, and Steve Black, who went on to LaSalle.

"It was a senior club," says Lacy. "I was more of a practice player. I knew what my role was, and that was to make the starters work in practice."

The next year, when Lacy finally moved into the starting lineup, the team was made up of mostly inexperienced players and struggled through a .500 season, far below the norm for Overbrook teams.



Shaw University's Dave Lacy (photo by James Parker).

When coaches at the major colleges in Philadelphia suggested he try prep school for a year, Lacy says Reynolds and Shaw welcomed him with open arms.

"The coaches and players made me feel at home," he says. "I was ready to leave Philadelphia and get away from some of the things that were happening there."

When he arrived at Shaw, Lacy says, the Bears' losing streak was more psychological than anything else.

"It was mostly a confidence thing," Lacy says. "Shaw had been down for awhile and everybody sort of expected us to lose."

With the addition of Lacy and Andre Sheppard, a point guard from New York City, the program made an about-face.

"Andre and I came in at the same time and we dedicated ourselves to helping build the program," Lacy says. "We've been working hard to help the program ever since."

Lacy also has continued to refine his individual skills. He's worked on the areas of his game he felt weakest in and also put more emphasis on his physical stature. Though he stjll looks thin at 165 pounds, Lacy's added a lot more bulk to his frame than he had coming out of high school, when he tipped the scales at 140 pounds.

"I was very slim in high school," he says. "I've been lifting weights and exercising to improve my physique. I eat a lot more now, but I'm not putting on fatty weight. I think I've put on more strength than anything else."

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