

Collins Talks a Good Game But Raymond Lewis Plays It

COLLEGEVILLE — Doug Collins is a 6-5 rookie guard and Gene Shue says, "He's going to play a lot of basketball for Philadelphia."

Raymond Lewis is a 6-2 rookie guard, and after watching him in practice sessions up here you've got to make him a 20-point favorite over Doug Collins in a none-on-one contest. Gene Shue says, "Raymond Lewis is a nice guard with a lot of talent" and then the new 76ers coach will change the subject if you let him.

It's a strange tale of two guards that is being unfolded in this rookie camp. It's also probably the only legitimate newsworthy thing about the camp.

THERE ARE 22 BODIES here, see, and Gene Shue will be the first to admit that none is going to turn the franchise around.

The 76ers need big, talented bodies to change their 9-and-73 picture. None is here.

Oh, a 7-footer named Caldwell Jones looked great in blocking shots the first day. "He blocked more shots in one day than the team did all last season," grunted an impressed Al Domerico), but he's a skinny 200 pounds and he didn't look like anything but tired yesterday. Darryl Minnefield is 6-8 and 195 pounds and he can rebound very well, but that's about all. Allan Bristow is 6-7 and gung-ho. He can pass very well but he doesn't shoot much and he couldn't outrun your Aunt Matilda's grandma. Even Gene Shue wouldn't dare suggest that any of them are franchise savers.

"Let's put it this way," Shue says in his most diplomatic manner. "There are a lot of nice ball players here. There are even some ball players here with NBA talent, ball players I think you're going to like. But I don't think there are ball players here who are going to step in and win ball games for us immediately. They will be the kind of ball players who will HELP us WIN ball games when we get some big players."

SHUE TENDS TO TALK in capital letters so you can't miss his trend of thought. "I like Doug Collins because I think he HAS loads of talent and he IS coachable," Shue said. "He CAN play defense and he CAN pass and he CAN score. You are going to like him very much."

Maybe Collins can do all those things. His college credentials certainly tend to say he can (All-American at Illinois State, 26 points a game last year, 32.6 year before last, star on the Olympic team, etc.). But Doug Collins has been doing little up here except maybe impressing you with his friendliness.

He'll grant interviews to anybody from the weekly newspaperman to the big city daily guy. Of course he gives both men the same interview, which sounds carefully rehearsed with just the right amount of humility ("I don't think I'm better than anybody else")



Collins

them when they make a good play and sometimes when they don't. He pats everybody on the back or playfully punches them on the arm. He reminds you of a guy running for class president. He is handsome in a rugged way and the five gal students at Ursinus College cut classes yesterday. "They came to see Collins," said an Ursinus official who came down to get Collins to pose with the school president and with a couple players and a small kid or two.

Collins did it gladly.

BUT WHEN IT CAME to playing the game of basketball Collins wasn't as impressive. He walked more than he ran and his passes, while fancy, missed more than they hit. So did his shots. He didn't follow the path of the ball too well, keeping his head ducked too much and tending to stay away from the heart of the contest. He botched three fast-breaks by not filling the lane right, and he later admitted he didn't feel too good because he had been bothered with a sprained ankle and tonsil removal and actually had lost eight pounds in one workout.

Lewis, on the other hand, was doing everything but talk. He looks a little like Lucious Allen from a distance, except Allen could never dribble like Raymond Lewis can. He also could never shoot that well. You watched him closely for the flaws a college junior should have (he was a sophomore this year at LA State, remember, before he decided to be a hardship case). You saw absolutely none on offense. He could do it all and do it so much better than the next best that he was in a class by himself. His defense was almost non-existent, but you could easily see what Dick McGuire was talking about.

"Raymond Lewis has more raw basketball talent than any college player in the country and that includes Bill Walton," said the Knicks scout during the playoffs. "He scares you, he has so much ability. But he also has problems, or so everybody says. I don't know. He might be the best draft choice Philly made since Billy Cunningham."

McGUIRE'S SCOUTING REPORT differs little from other NBA reports. Shue says his report was about the same. "I like a player I can coach," he said. "I was told that Lewis was an undisciplined player and I thought of him in the mold of an Earl Monroe or Mike Davis or Freddie Carter. But that isn't the case. Lewis is a very disciplined player. He has a lot of speed and a lot of moves, but he makes all of his moves before he takes his shot or misses his pass. Then he has everything together."

Shue shook his head and smiled when he talked about Lewis but he wouldn't say anything more. "It's better that I don't," is all he would say.

"Gene knows that Lewis was a coaching problem in college," said one observer. "He knows that the boy has had everything his way for so long that he might be spoiled. He doesn't want to make it the same way here."

Lewis, who had some brushes with the law in his earlier days, doesn't talk much and he doesn't smile much. "I'm glad to be here I think I can make this team or any