

Wilson, Toppin highlight missing tournament stars

BY JOHN MARSHALL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Top-ranked Duke earned the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament behind star freshman Cameron Boozer and an overpowering inside game.

But as the Blue Devils embark on what they hope will be a deep March Madness run, coach Jon Scheyer is having to make some adjustments with two key players dealing with injuries.

Point guard Caleb Foster

suffered a broken right foot in the regular-season finale against No. 21 North Carolina and likely will be out until the Final Four, should the Blue Devils get that far.

The news on big man Patrick Ngongba II is a little better. He missed the ACC tournament with a foot injury, but could be ready to play in Thursday's opener against No. 16 seed Siena.

"I can tell you he's improving," Scheyer said. "I feel very positive about it, but I can't say what that means as far as later in the week in terms of timing or readiness, because we have to take it step by step."

Duke isn't the only team

dealing with injuries.

Several teams, some with high seeds, will have to navigate March Madness without key players.

J.T. TOPPIN, NO. 20 TEXAS TECH

Toppin was one of the nation's best big men this season, earning first-team All-America honors from The Associated Press after being a second-teamer last year.

Toppin's torn ACL suffered against Arizona State on Feb. 17 leaves a hole in the No. 20 Red Raiders' lineup.

The 6-foot-9 junior averaged 21.8 points on 55% shooting from the floor and 10.8 rebounds while leading Texas Tech with 43 blocked shots. The Red Raiders went

3-3 without him, falling to a No. 5 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

Texas Tech faces No. 12 seed Akron on Friday in Tampa, Florida, in its opener.

CALEB WILSON, NO. 21 NORTH CAROLINA

The 6-10 forward was one of the nation's best freshman the first part of the season, leading the Tar Heels with 19.8 points and 9.4 rebounds while shooting 58% from the floor.

Injuries derailed his season.

Wilson first broke his left hand and was close to returning when he broke his right thumb in a non-contact drill in practice. He had season-ending surgery

in early March.

Wilson still was a second-team AP All-American, but his loss will leave North Carolina with a big hole as March continues.

The No. 6 seed Tar Heels play No. 11 VCU on Thursday in Greenville, South Carolina.

RICHIE SAUNDERS, BYU

Freshman AJ Dybantsa

led the nation in scoring and the sharp-shooting Saunders kept opposing defenses from paying too much attention to him by hitting a team-leading 64 3-pointers.

Saunders' season came to an end when he tore his ACL against Colorado on Feb. 14 and the Cougars lost three of their next four games.

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