

# Men's basketball's trio of freshmen set high goals



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Rock basketball's three freshman guards Simon Mulaa (left), Evan Chandler (center) and Karlyn Garner (right) are the first true freshmen for The Rock since 2014.

**By Karl Ludwig**  
Rocket Contributor

For any first-year athlete to make their respective team is a noteworthy achievement, but for the Slippy Rock men's basketball team, it is downright rare for a single freshman to be on the team which makes this year's class of three freshmen even more remarkable.

Since the 2011-2012 season, only three freshmen have been on the men's basketball team with most of the players being upperclassmen or transfer players. This

year's team features three freshmen players although it is likely two of the three will be red-shirted.

"I think I'm red-shirting this year, it'll just be a learning year," freshman guard Simon Mulaa said when asked about his role in this year's team, "I just want to play as much as I can as early as possible."

Mulaa, freshman guard Karlyn Garner and freshman guard Evan Chandler are the players that coach Kevin Reynolds thought could help the program unlike any others from years past.

"We didn't go in with a plan of what classes we were going to

recruit, we just knew we needed better depth," Reynolds said. "We just needed more guys, so practices would be more competitive."

For a team with Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) championships hopes, potentially having a freshman guard make an impact in competitive games will be an invaluable experience. The two who will likely end up red-shirted will contribute more behind the scenes, providing competitions in practice and moral support while also maturing as players and learning the playbook. Having these three players at The

Rock as freshmen will help build a foundation unlike any other that has been seen with Reynolds in charge.

"You never really go in with an idea saying we need to bring in this many seniors, this many juniors, and so on, we need to bring in the best players we can get who can help us win and continue to win," Reynolds added.

With their roles on this year's squad pretty much cemented only a few days before the official start of the basketball season, Mulaa, Garner and Chandler each have their own specific goals, hopes,

responsibilities and roles. Their individual and team goals and hopes will all likely be the same in getting playing time and winning the PSAC championship, but their roles and responsibilities will all be different and how they adapt and handle the rigors of this season will hopefully lead to growth as people and players.

No matter what happens this season, these three players can and should be proud to say that they are members of the select few who have made the Slippy Rock men's basketball team as freshmen.



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