

Gavin Schilling key to Michigan State basketball's success

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Gavin Schilling has had an up and down career. He has had his fair share of good games, but he will need to be more consistent this season if the Michigan State basketball team wants to achieve its goals.

Schilling has the build to be an elite big man in college basketball. He is 6 feet 9 inches tall, weighs 240 pounds, and is very muscular. Muscle wise, Schilling is one of the biggest guys on the team and he needs to use his muscle around the basket. Last season, Schilling averaged 3.8 points, 3.1 rebounds, and had a 50 percent field goal percentage. Those averages are all lower than his sophomore season averages.

He battled injuries and foul trouble last season, but he can't do that again this season or the team will struggle. MSU has a lot of inexperienced big men and Schilling will need to lead the young group, but he can't lead them if he is on the bench in foul trouble. The only returning big men that have experience are Kenny Goins and Matt Van Dyke. Goins is coming off of a knee injury and Van Dyke saw limited playing time all season, which makes Schilling so valuable to the Spartans this season.

The Spartans will bring in a top tier recruiting class that features big men Nick Ward and Miles Bridges. The Spartans also landed graduate transfer big man Ben Carter and the team is currently trying to land a commitment from four star big man Taurean Thompson. The Spartans are in the top three for him and he recently visited campus. Schilling will be relied upon heavily to teach these young guys the playbook and get them ready to play in the season opener.

In the past, Schilling was able to let guys like Denzel Valentine, Matt Costello, and Branden Dawson lead the front court guys, but now there is no one to take control and lead that group of guys. That responsibility now rests on Schilling's shoulders.

Losing Deyonta Davis to the NBA Draft leaves MSU with Schilling as the only true back to the basket player on the roster. Ward will be a back to the basket player, but as a freshman, he will need to mature before he can be considered a true threat. Schilling can't average three points and three rebounds per game again this season.



Michigan State Spartans forward Gavin Schilling (34) dunks against the Ohio State Buckeyes during the Big Ten Conference tournament at Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

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He doesn't need to lead the team in scoring, because the team will have a lot of scorers like Eron Harris and Bridges, but he does need to lead the team in rebounding. MSU is going to be very undersized next season and with Schilling being the biggest player on the team, he will have to be a rebounding machine.

Schilling was making huge strides last offseason before he suffered an injury. He recovered and then ended up getting turf toe in an exhibition game before the regular season. Schilling needs to work on staying out of foul trouble. If Schilling can stay out of foul trouble, he can have a great season. Fouls have hampered him his entire career. It is hard to be productive when you are sitting on the bench. The Spartans need to have him on the court this season, so he can't be getting into foul trouble so early into games.

Schilling is huge to MSU's success this season, because of his experience and leadership. Schilling needs to take on more responsibility and teach the young guys what he has learned over his four years at MSU. The team will be good, but Schilling will take the team from good to great if he can rebound and produce more on the inside.