

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Virgin Islander Nicolas Claxton Chosen By Brooklyn Nets In 2019 NBA Draft

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The Brooklyn Nets on Thursday at the Barclays Center in New York selected Virgin Islander and professional basketball player Nicolas Claxton -- a power forward hailing from the Georgia Bulldogs -- with the No. 31 overall pick.

Mr. Claxton, 20, while at the University of Georgia as a sophomore, averaged 13.0 points, 8.6 rebounds, 2.5 blocks, 1.8 assists and 1.1 steals across 32 appearances for the Bulldogs.

In his high school years at Legacy Charter School in Greenville, South Carolina, he averaged 17.4 points, 7.8 rebounds, and 2.9 blocks per game and became the fourth

player in the school's history to record 1,000 career points.



About 30 Virgin Islanders, some waving USVI flags when Mr. Claxton was drafted, were in the Barclays Center in New York showing their support. "They mean the world [to me]. They've always been my support system, so all of them being here, that's my reason to keep growing and stay positive," he said during an interview following the draft.

Stats, according to The Bleach Report

Offensive Strengths

He has center size at nearly 7 feet and the ability to face up and score using dribbles and footwork. He's not a shooter, but he hit 18 threes last season and shows the potential to

make open jumpers.

Offensive Weaknesses

According to The Bleach Report, Mr. Claxton lacks the strength to play through contact. He isn't as dominant inside as he should be for a player with his height and athleticism. And he isn't a shot-creator or reliable shooter.

Defensive Outlook

Defense will drive his value. Scouts are drawn to his potential to be a switch defender who can guard in space and make plays on the ball.

In May, Mr. Claxton said during an interview with DraftExpress that his defensive game will be his calling card while he rounds out his offensive repertoire. "Early on, I would definitely say defense. Defense and being an energy guy," he said. "Coming in, rebounding, defense and continuing to work on my shot in the offensive game and continuing to develop that."

The Bleach Report says Mr. Claxton "is a worthwhile investment at this stage of the draft. He's good enough defensively to fill the spark-plug role off the bench to give him value as a rookie, and if the jump shot does develop over the next couple of years, he could emerge as one of the class's biggest steals."

In 2014, Mr. Claxton played for the U.S. Virgin Islands basketball team at the Centrobasket Under-15 Championship in Panama City, averaging a double-double of 10.6 points and 11.8 rebounds per game. He made another appearance for the Virgin Islands at the 2015 Centrobasket Under-17 Championship in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he averaged 11 points and eight rebounds per game. Mr. Claxton competed at the 2016 FIBA Americas Under-18 Championship in Valdivia, Chile. He averaged a team-high 12 points and 7.2 rebounds per game, leading his team to seventh place. In the summer of 2018, he joined the senior Virgin Islands national team at qualifying competition for the 2019 FIBA World Cup, according to information gathered from his official Wikipedia page.