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Brooklyn Nets With Virgin Islander Nicolas Claxton Becomes First Team in East to Clinch Playoff Berth

Sports / **Published On May 02, 2021 07:42 AM /**

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Nicolas Claxton By. COREY SIPKIN VIA NEW YORK POST

The Brooklyn Nets (42-20) became the first team in the Eastern Conference to clinch a spot in the 2021 NBA Playoffs with a 116-103 victory of the Toronto Raptors last week Tuesday. On the roster is Nicolas Claxton, a member of the Virgin Islands National Team.

Mr. Claxton made his V.I. Senior National Team debut in June of 2018 versus the Bahamas. He comes from a basketball family and is eligible for the V.I. National Team because his father, Charles Claxton, was born in St. Thomas. Charles also played in the NBA. His brother, Chase Claxton, is a V.I. National Team prospect and made the NCAA tournament with Winthrop this March.

In 2019, Nicolas was selected in the first pick of the second round (31st Overall) by the Nets out of the University of Georgia.

This year he returned from a right knee injury and made his season debut on February 23 against the Sacramento Kings. He started his first NBA game against the Minnesota Timberwolves on April 13. His season high for points in a game is 17, which he scored against the San Antonio Spurs on March 1.

Nicolas played in 25 games this season and averaged 6.6 points and 5 rebounds per game. On average he plays 18.5 minutes a game. Nicolas did not play in Tuesday's contest due to the NBA's Covid-19 protocols.

On April 10, Bleacher Report's Dan Favale claimed Nicolas was the Nets secret weapon but [questioned](#) what his usage would be down the final stretch of the season. Since the article was published, LaMarcus Aldridge, who was starting for the Nets at that time and lowering Nicolas's minutes according to the Bleacher Report, retired due to health concerns. Mr. Favale broke down Nicolas's ability to guard multiple positions on defense, citing it as a key reason that he deserves play time. Even so, Mr. Favale said Nicolas's offense was "underdeveloped."

SB Nation on Friday reported that Nicolas will miss his seventh straight game but had rejoined the Nets after a lengthy stint on the league's health and safety protocols. Nicolas will likely need at least another week to ramp up and get his conditioning back before returning to play, said Nets Head coach Steve Nash, according to SB Nation.

"Nic is back and working out. He'll probably need a ramp-up period for him," Nash said. "Don't expect to see Nic for at least a week. He's healthy but he just needs to get his fitness."

On making the Berth, Nash said, "I think we have our eyes on bigger things, but it's a nice first step to clinch a berth. For this group, facing all we've faced, to be in this position with 10 games left is very positive," (via ESPN) after Tuesday's night game. There have been only 7 games this season in which the Nets star trio of James Harden, Kyrie Irving, and Kevin Durant have all played.