

2006-07 SEASON PREVIEW



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2006-07 LADY VOL SEASON PREVIEW

FULLCOURT FILL-UP

Of late, there's been a fuel crisis in the United States, compounded by hurricanes, the conflicts in the Middle East, rising costs, broken supply pipelines and the like. The fuel problems have impacted all phases of society, and even the University of Tennessee Lady Vol basketball team has felt the crunch. To be honest, the Lady Vols suffered a critical fuel shortage at season's end in 2006. It's not that they totally ran out of gas, it was more like the strength of their fuel had been compromised by a myriad of maladies from injury to attrition.

In light of this situation, and in preparation for the 2006-07 campaign, the Tennessee women's basketball staff went back to the drawing board to perfect a new fuel formula for the upcoming season.

To assist in the process, Lady Vol coach Pat Head Summitt, who begins her 33rd season at the helm, and her staff revisited the high octane NCAA Championship campaigns of '87, '89, '91, '96, '97 and '98. Summitt's goal? To perfect a new fuel based on the successful components found in the former championship formulas. Ready to be tested in the coming season is the hybrid fuel you never saw coming — the 07 octane — a fuel formulated to go the distance.

At the ready is the 2006-07 Tennessee Lady Vol basketball squad, which is primed at the pump for the "FULLCOURT FILL-UP." Although just 11 players strong, this multi-talented team has all of the key ingredients to make a clean burn of the 07 fuel in the two scheduled exhibitions, 29 regular season games featuring 13 pre-season ranked opponents and potentially 9-10 games in the SEC and NCAA Tournaments.

"We learned a very valuable lesson last season regarding energy letdowns," explained Summitt. "We started out the season with high energy, pushing tempo and being very aggressive at both ends of the floor. However, injuries and attrition caught up with us, and we had no margin for error. In the end, it was more than we could overcome."

"Entering into this season, we have a better understanding after going through that experience. I think our players learned that by keeping a consistent high level of intensity in their game, that the team as a whole wouldn't be as prone to an energy crisis," said Summitt.

At the start, the '06 fuel blend looked like a sure winner, as Tennessee raced out to an 18-0 record. Just as quickly, UT sputtered and backfired in four of its next 10 games, including going down in defeat to two unranked opponents. The Lady Vols rallied to win the 2006 SEC Tournament Championship but fell in the NCAA Tournament's Elite 8 to top-ranked North Carolina.

Almost one-half of the 2005-06 squad doesn't return. The Lady Vol starting seniors, guard Shanna Zolman (15.4 ppg and 2.9 rpg) and post Tye'sha Fluker (9.3 ppg and 4.9 rpg), graduated in the spring and were drafted to play in the WNBA for the San Antonio Silver Stars and Charlotte Sting, respectively. Sophomore starting point guard Sa'de Wiley-Gatewood (8.0 ppg and 2.6 rpg) abruptly left the squad in December and transferred. At season's end, sophomore reserve post Sybil Dosty (2.9 ppg and 2.9 rpg) and rookie reserve guard Lindsey Moss (2.0 ppg and 0.7 rpg) elected to transfer to schools closer to their homes in Arizona and Georgia, respectively.

"Shanna brought us great outside scoring for the past four seasons and shattered practically every Tennessee three-point record, while Tye was a solid force in the paint. Despite the transfer losses, we still return six solid veterans and added much-needed guard play through our recruiting," said Summitt.



The top scorer and rebounder from last year's squad, sophomore Candace Parker, returns with her multi-dimensional game that is invaluable to any Lady Vol lineup.

The head mentor of the Lady Vols has always displayed a high octane approach to coaching. Summitt and her staff, have always been full-service coaches with a bumper-to-bumper (well, baseline-to-baseline) approach to the game. "I'm excited about the energy of this team. They want to go, push it every time, and capitalize on every scoring opportunity."

"However, to play that style, we have to become a great rebounding team. For some reason, we're not instinctive rebounders. So the trade-off to being a running team is becoming a rebounding team first," said Summitt.

For the rebounding-to-equal-running formula to work, Summitt emphasized the commitment to defense. "Defense and rebounding have always gone hand-in-hand in my coaching philosophy," said Summitt. "This team's strength will be in an uptempo, fullcourt game. Last season, we got caught too much in a halfcourt game. We didn't generate points off our defense, and we didn't allow ourselves many early scoring opportunities."

"This season, with a pair of true point guards, I see us more suited and better equipped to the up and down game. Our optimum efficiency will be realized in the fullcourt game," said Summitt.

When the '87 blend took the Lady Vols to their first NCAA Championship 20 years ago, nine of the current UT players were toddlers at one and two years old, while this year's rookies weren't yet born. To be successful in the coming season, the 2006-07 Lady Vols need to embrace the ingredients in the '07 hybrid fuel which will find its genesis in the '87, '89, '91, '96, '97 and '98 super premium NCAA Championship fuels.

Culling through the make-up of the championship fuels, Summitt hopes the 07 version will contain the following:

"From the 1987 championship team, I would take their leadership, belief in their individual roles, competitiveness and togetherness," said Summitt. "They were overachievers who would not be denied — they were on a mission."

"From the 1989 champions, I would take their methodical way of winning, team defense, board play and their smarts. Each player on this team understood her role, and went to the 'go-to' player in Bridgette Gordon, all the way to the title."

"The 1991 championship team mirrored many of the qualities in the '87 and '89 teams," said Summitt. "Everyone contributed and each player knew what her teammates expected from her night-in and night-out. They knew to get the ball to their 'go-to' in Daedra Charles. Everyone played to her strength, whether it was a defensive specialist, a key rebounder, or an experienced leader in the backcourt."

"In 1996, our players worked together and shared the basketball. Their unselfishness and big-game experience were some of their key qualities. They were smart enough to let a very young and talented rookie in Chamique Holdscaw do her thing. This team took pride in pounding the glass — they fought for every rebound."

"The 1997 team was stubborn (in both good and bad ways), fearless and tenacious. They won potluck style; each player brought her best dish every night. They crawled through adversity, losing 10 games, but they believed that they could still achieve their goal of winning a title."

"There are so many things I would take from the 1998 championship team to add to the fuel mix. Those players had fun on and off the court, and their success was contagious. They out-worked everyone, displayed dominance, brought it every night and dictated tempo with their defense and rebounding. Tamika Catchings, Chamique Holdscaw and Semeka Randall became the three-headed monster by checking their egos at the door and sharing the basketball," said Summitt.

A mix of the key ingredients from the six NCAA title teams would no doubt make a super premium hybrid fuel to power the '07 team. A gallon of regular gasoline contains about 132x106 joules of energy, which is equivalent to 125,000 BTU or 36,650 watt-hours. Imagine what a gallon of the super 07 fuel would mean to a team that wants to go the distance!

In a number of ways, the 2006-07 squad already possesses many qualities of the previous

STATS OF INTEREST

WHAT'S BACK

Category	Percent Returning
Games Started.....	66.1 (119 of 180)
Minutes Played.....	61.5 (4,440 of 7,225)
Field Goals.....	60.7 (610 of 1,005)
3-Point Field Goals.....	36.8 (81 of 220)
Free Throws.....	65.9 (388 of 589)
Rebounds.....	62.2 (882 of 1,418)
Assists.....	66.9 (372 of 556)
Blocks.....	82.2 (166 of 202)
Points.....	60.3 (1,700 of 2,819)

RETURNING 2005-06 LEADERS

Category	Leader (#)
Points per game.....	Candace Parker (17.3)
Field Goals.....	Candace Parker (230)
Field Goal Percentage.....	Candace Parker (.552, 230-417)
3-Point Field Goals.....	Sidney Spencer (53)
3-Point Field Goal Pct.....	Sidney Spencer (.434, 53-122)
Free Throws Made.....	Candace Parker (159)
Free Throw Percentage.....	Sidney Spencer (.925, 37-40)
Rebounds per game.....	Candace Parker (8.3)
Assists per game.....	Alexis Hornbuckle (3.9)
Blocks per game.....	Candace Parker (2.4)
Steals per game.....	Alexis Hornbuckle (3.1)

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six NCAA title teams. For this group, correct combustion of the fuel is the key. "The 'Big Three' – Candace Parker, Alexis Hornbuckle and Nicky Anosike – all have to be on the same page at the same time, game-in and game-out," said Summitt. "Their combined play should greatly impact the direction of this team."

"In order for Candace, Alexis and Nicky to be true leaders for this team, they have to bring it everyday. Players like Sidney Spencer, Dominique Redding and Alex Fuller need to help extend the defense by stepping up and scoring from the three. Our junior college transfers, point guard Shannon Bobbitt and guard Alberta Auguste, along with newcomers Cait McMahan, Nicci Moats and Elizabeth Curry, all must find ways to immediately contribute to the total attack," said Summitt.

The 2007 Lady Vol seniors, 6-3 forward Spencer (9.4 ppg and 3.4 rpg), 6-1 forward Redding (3.7 ppg and 1.3 rpg) and 5-6 walk-on guard Curry, will be expected to set a solid example for the team. In their final go-round, Spencer and Redding will look to tap their fullest potential for a memorable senior season.

Spencer appears to be on course for a great year. In the middle of her sophomore season, she earned a starting position and was playing her best hoops when she went out with a torn anterior cruciate ligament. As a junior, she came back with a vengeance and practically equaled her combined two-year stats in a single season. The Hoover, Ala., native registered 18 games in double-figure scoring, including two huge career-high games of 21 points each in the win over Connecticut and the SEC Tournament title game victory over LSU.

She is the heir-apparent to Zolman to step in as the team leader from the three-point line and the charity stripe – two key areas for the Lady Vols in the coming year. "Sid needs to be prepared to play a bigger role for us as a senior. We have greater expectations, more now than ever before, for her to be a great perimeter scorer," said Summitt. "Last season, she demonstrated the ability to be successful at multiple positions as an offensive 'go-to.' She is the kind of player who can quickly stretch the defense and take pressure off the inside players. Just as important as her ability to be a scoring threat, we need Sid to help lead this team by example," Summitt said.

Spencer's senior sidekick is fellow forward Redding. Last season, Redding extended her range and saw a significant increase in her playing time. Her progress as a junior saw her nab her first career starting assignment against #22/20 Vanderbilt. In postseason play, Redding came up with some big-time, crucial buckets.

"Dom came along last season, and benefited from some valuable big game experience. She proved to us that she wants to be counted on to make some big shots in close games and pressure situations. As a senior, our team is looking for her to be more consistent and productive. If she makes a commitment to solid defense and board play, her effort could speak volumes to our success," commented Summitt.

"Now is the time for Dom to bring an all-around complete game to the court every day. We expect our seniors to demonstrate the total skill set package," she concluded.

The Lady Vols will welcome their first walk-on in two years, as Curry joins the squad in a playing capacity. She is no stranger to the program, having served as a manager for the two previous seasons including a stint as the head manager last year. Curry was a four-year starter at Interstate 35 H.S. in New Virginia, Iowa.

"We're excited to have Elizabeth move into a new role as a member of our team. She came to the University of Tennessee to be a part of the program as a manager. For her final year we are giving her the opportunity to finish out her experience with the Lady Vol basketball team as a walk-on," said Summitt.

No matter how good your fuel is, it won't ignite without a spark plug, and that's where the Lady Vol junior class is at its collective best. Whether you need a spark on offense or plugging a play on defense, 5'11" guard Hornbuckle (9.9 ppg, 5.3 rpg and 3.0 apg) is capable of doing both at a moment's notice. The All-Southeastern Conference standout looks to be 100 percent after suffering a broken right wrist and missing a month and the final seven regular-season games last year. Somehow Hornbuckle made it back for the four NCAA contests and definitely gave her team a spark down the stretch.

"Alexis brings an enormous amount of energy and consistency in her game, night-in and night-out. She is a positive leader and a true sparkplug on the court," said Summitt. "With her move back to her true position as a two-guard, I believe we'll see more consistency in her scoring. She is an outstanding rebounding guard and is aggressive and attacking on defense. Offensively, she finds a way to create points for herself and others."

Extremely versatile on both ends of the floor, Hornbuckle almost registered the first triple-double in Lady Vol history with 10 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists in the win over Connecticut in Knoxville on Jan. 7, 2006. "It's easy to see why she is definitely a key player to our success," said Summitt.

Another key player to the team's success is fellow junior Anosike (7.1 ppg, 5.4 rpg). The 6'4" post evolved into an intimidator on defense as a sophomore, by recording 47 blocks on the season. She even rejected five shots in the NCAA Tournament loss to North Carolina. This season, a balanced attack from Anosike, from both ends of the floor, would bode well for the Lady Vol fortunes.

"Nicky has to play at a different level for us this year," said Summitt. "She needs to find a way to keep herself on the floor and to stay out of foul trouble. Nicky is an extremely smart player who needs to develop self-discipline to keep herself in the game."

"We are a different team with Nicky on the floor. She is a tremendous presence in the paint, and we will be looking to her as a 'go-to' player," said Summitt.

Blending in with the junior veterans are a pair of highly-touted junior college transfers in diminutive point guard Bobbitt (16.4 ppg, 7.5 apg at



Junior Alexis Hornbuckle is the top defender for the Lady Vols. In just two seasons she has 155 steals, including 91 last year.

Trinity Valley [Texas] Community College) and off-guard Auguste (23.6 ppg, 7.9 rpg at Central Florida Community College). While both were Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) Kodak All-Americans, the 5'2" Bobbitt was crowned as the 2006 WBCA Junior/Community College Player of the Year. Both players will provide instant relief to UT's depleted guard corps.

"Shannon brings a great deal of high energy to the court," said Summitt. "She has quickness at both ends of the floor and is great in the open court. She has a full bag of tricks...she shoots the three-ball, pulls up, penetrates and is always looking to score or dish to a teammate. Shannon is dialed into the attack mode," continued Summitt, "but what sets her apart is her great blend of creativity and unselfishness at the same time."

Whereas Bobbitt will be more of a vocal leader, the 5'11" Auguste should lead by example. Her impressive credentials include NJCAA second leading scorer (23.6 ppg) and third in steals (5.03). "Bird" will tell you, she likes to start her offense with her defense.

2006-07 WOMEN'S COLLEGIATE BASKETBALL PRESEASON POLLS

ATHLON	LINDY'S	STREET & SMITH'S
1. North Carolina	1. Maryland	1. Maryland
2. Maryland	2. North Carolina	2. North Carolina
3. Oklahoma	3. Stanford	3. Oklahoma
4. Stanford	4. Connecticut	4. Stanford
5. Ohio State	5. TENNESSEE	5. TENNESSEE
6. Duke	6. Oklahoma	6. Ohio State
7. TENNESSEE	7. Duke	7. Duke
8. Georgia	8. Georgia	8. Connecticut
9. Louisiana State	9. Rutgers	9. Texas A&M
10. Baylor	10. Ohio State	10. Georgia
11. Arizona State	11. Purdue	11. Vanderbilt
12. Vanderbilt	12. Louisiana State	12. Arizona State
13. Connecticut	13. Arizona State	13. Louisiana State
14. Kentucky	14. Vanderbilt	14. Rutgers
15. UCLA	15. Texas A&M	15. Kentucky
16. Purdue	16. Southern California	16. New Mexico
17. BYU	17. New Mexico	17. Texas Tech
18. Rutgers	18. Kentucky	18. Old Dominion
19. California	19. BYU	19. DePaul
20. Bowling Green	20. Michigan State	20. Virginia
21. DePaul	21. Bowling Green	21. George Washington
22. N.C. State	22. St. John's	22. Purdue
23. Louisiana Tech	23. Louisiana Tech	23. Iowa State
24. Texas A&M	24. Iowa	24. Pittsburgh
25. Western Kentucky	25. California	25. USC



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Junior Nicky Anosike's 6'4" height and quick hands are a deadly combination for Tennessee opponents.

"Alberta is a long rangy guard who brings a lot of quickness to the floor at 5'11". She is an offensive slasher, has a solid mid-range game and can get to the rim," said Summitt. "She will add to our rebounding efforts and should complement Alexis and Shannon, bringing pressure defensively," said Summitt.

Auguste and Bobbitt become the first Lady Vol junior college signees since 1977 when 5-11 forward Zandra Montgomery transferred from Cleveland State (Tenn.) Community College and played for UT from 1977-79.

Juniors academically, but with sophomore eligibility, Candace Parker and Alex Fuller (2.1 ppg, 2.0 rpg) look to continue to build on the momentum they generated last season when they made their collegiate debut. Parker, a Kodak All-American as a rookie, returns as UT's leading scorer (17.3 ppg), rebounder (8.3 rpg) and shot blocker (2.4 bpg). As a freshman, she was called upon to play all five positions on the floor, which she handled with ease. She tallied double-figure scoring in 33 of 35 contests and registered extra-digit rebounding a dozen times. After a pair of stints with the USA National Team last spring (Australia) and this fall (World Championships in Brazil), the 6'4" Parker has added even more dimension to her game.

"This season, I see Candace impacting the way the game is played from both ends of the floor," said Summitt. "A proven go-to as a freshman, versatility in her game will be a key this season. We will be asking her to take on a bigger defensive load.

"Her experience with the national team improved her overall defensive play," said Summitt. "She is certainly capable of controlling the boards and changing her opponent's shot. We want her to be an anchor on the boards and accept a bigger role as a defensive standout.

"Candace has tremendous offensive skills and great court vision. Something exciting is going to happen when she has the ball on the offensive end."

Not only did Parker elevate her game in the off-season, fellow sophomore Fuller was praised for her work ethic over the summer. Fuller, slowed at the start of last season by a hip injury, never seemed to round into form. This year will be a different story for the smooth 6'3" forward.

"Alex appears to be one of our most improved players over the summer," said Summitt. "I truly believe that Alex could make a significant impact on our frontline scoring this season. She's been working in the gym on her range, and she's at the

best fitness and health level she's been at since early in her high school career.

"I'm excited about her dedication and the improvement in her all-around game. She will bring a great deal of versatility to us offensively."

Shoring up the line-up was a key for Summitt and the Lady Vols coming into this season. Added depth at key positions will ensure that the gas tank will not reach empty in 2007. Rookies for the Orange & White are 5'5" point guard McMahan from nearby Maryville, Tenn. (Heritage H.S.) and 6'2" forward Moats from Daleville, Va. (Lord Botetourt H.S.).

McMahan (22.9 ppg, 5.1 rpg and 6.1 assists) grew up going to Lady Vol basketball games and appears to be a point guard in the mold of former Lady Vol Tennesseans and point guard standouts Kellie Jolly, Jody Adams and Holly Warlick.

"Cait is a little sergeant," said Summitt. "She is advanced in her leadership skills as a freshman. She has a take-charge attitude and knows how to direct traffic. Combine that with her competitiveness and her tremendous work ethic, and you've got an outstanding young player.

"Cait is going to be a great vocal leader for us," said Summitt.

'Caity-Mac's' rookie running mate is Moats (15.4 ppg and 11.3 rpg), who is a solid frontliner. As a freshman, Moats will be tutored in the nuances of post play by veterans Anosike, Fuller and Parker. Nicci can play the three or the four for us," said Summitt. "She is a skill-player who can step out and shoot the three or post up and bang the boards. Her size and skill will definitely add to the depth of the frontline game."

The 07 blend promises to be long on mileage while providing great fuel efficiency. With the Lady Vols schedule in 2006-07, miles per gallon will be almost as important as points and rebounds per gallon. "To be the best, we schedule the best year-in and year-out," said Summitt.

"This schedule is very ambitious and challenging. It is the kind of line-up that will prepare us for anything the SEC slate or postseason tournament will throw at us," indicated Summitt. "Obviously, this kind of schedule generates a lot of excitement for our players and fans. This team has to step up every night and accept the challenge of our opponents."

Tennessee will take on 11 teams (in 13 games) picked in the preseason Top 25 in 2006-07. The Lady Vols will face: #1/2 North Carolina (A, Dec. 3), #4/3 Stanford (H, Nov. 24), #6/7 Duke (H, Jan. 22), #8/8 Georgia (A, Jan. 14 and H, Feb. 5), #9/12 LSU (A, Feb. 19), #11/13 Arizona State (A, Nov. 19), #12/14 Vanderbilt (A, Jan. 25 and H, Feb. 25), #13/4 Connecticut (A, Jan. 6), #14/18 Kentucky (H, Feb. 11), #15/NR UCLA (H, Nov. 16) and #23/23 Louisiana Tech (A, Nov. 28).

Also included on the schedule are three other games against in-state foes Chattanooga, Middle Tennessee and Summitt's alma mater UT-Martin. Heading into the season, the television schedule features a record 21 regular season televised contests, including six nationwide dates on ESPN, ESPN2 or ESPNU, five national opportunities on FOX Sports Net and one on CBS. Additionally, CSS will pick-up seven dates, while local CBS affiliate WVLT jumps into the fray for the first time with two television games.

The increased regular season television opportunities are a sure indicator that everyone wants to see the Tennessee Lady Vol 07 super premium high octane perform. Even more excitement and anticipation have been created by Parker's resounding dunks in the 2006 NCAA Tournament. Parker was the first women's player to dunk in the NCAA Tournament and the first to throw it down twice in a game when she pulled off the double against Army on Mar. 19, 2006. Tennessee, having led the NCAA attendance parade in nine of the last 10 years, will certainly maintain that position with all of the excitement generated by Parker's quest to become the first female player to dunk on "The Summitt," in Thompson-Boling Arena.

This multi-talented Tennessee Lady Vol team is ready to be tested in the coming season. They are confident that they won't suffer vapor lock and have all of the key ingredients to make a clean burn of the 07 fuel. They are primed at the pump for the "FULLCOURT FILL-UP" and the hybrid fuel you never saw coming — the 07 octane — a fuel formulated by coach Summitt and company, could help them go the distance.

LADY VOLS BY HEIGHT

6'4"	NICKY ANOSIKE CANDACE PARKER
6'3"	ALEX FULLER SIDNEY SPENCER
6'2"	NICCI MOATS
6'1"	DOMINIQUE REDDING
5'11"	ALBERTA AUGUSTE ALEXIS HORNBUCKLE
5'6"	ELIZABETH CURRY
5'4"	CAIT McMAHAN
5'2"	SHANNON BOBBITT

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POINT GUARDS

Shannon Bobbitt
Cait McMahan

FORWARDS

Sidney Spencer
Dominique Redding



POSTS

Candace Parker
Nicky Anosike
Alex Fuller
Nicci Moats

TWO GUARDS

Alexis Hornbuckle
Alberta Auguste
Elizabeth Curry