

## Spencer Mason Hawes

**Freshman, Center, University of Washington, Ht. 7-0, Wt. 230**

**High School: Seattle Prep, Seattle, Wash.**

**Birthdate: April 28, 1988 (Seattle, Wash.)**

### University of Washington

One-year letterman ... All-Pac-10 honorable mention selection for the 2007 season ... A first-team All-Pac-10 Freshman Team honoree in 2007 ... A second-team NABC District 14 selection ... Honored as a freshman All-American by *CollegeInsider.com* and *Rivals.com* ... A 2006 McDonald's and *Parade* All-American ... The most prominent recruit in Husky history ... Former prep teammate at Seattle Prep (Wash.) High School of Martell Webster, the No. 6 selection in the 2005 NBA Draft who is currently playing with the Portland Trailblazers ... College choice came down to a decision between Washington and North Carolina ... Son of former Husky basketball player Jeff Hawes (1972-74) ... The nephew of Steve Hawes (1970-72) who was named to Washington's All-Century team ... Steve Hawes was UW's 2006 inductee into the Pac-10 Basketball Hall of Honor and averaged 8.4 points per game over 10 NBA seasons (1974-85) with Cleveland, Houston, Portland, Atlanta and Seattle.

**2006-2007:** As a freshman, played 31 games for the Huskies who posted a 19-13 record and finished seventh in the Pac-10 standings with an 8-10 mark ... Started 24 games ... Missed one game due to a left ankle sprain, the road contest at Washington State (Jan. 20) ... Led the team with a 14.9-point scoring average, a figure that ranked 10th among Pac-10 players ... His 53.2-percent field goal accuracy was the league's fourth-best figure ... Washington's all-time leading freshman scorer and shot blocker ... His 461 points eclipsed the previous UW freshman record of 406 established in 1988 by Mike Hayward ... Hawes owns the freshman record for blocked shots with 54, surpassing the previous standard of 32 set by Todd MacCulloch in 1996 ... The 54 blocks placed Hawes fourth among UW's all-time single-season leaders, behind the 67 of both David Dixon (2002) and Chris Welp (1986) and the 63 of Welp (1987) ... Ranked third among Pac-10 players with 54 blocked shots ... Honored as the Dec. 26 Pac-10 Player of the Week after leading UW to an 88-72 upset of 12th-ranked LSU ... Helped defend LSU star Glen Davis, putting an end to "Big Baby's" 48-game double-figure scoring streak ... Registered three double-doubles, with 23 points and 12 rebounds against LSU (Dec. 20), 12 points and 12 rebounds at Pittsburgh (Feb. 17) and 13 points and 15 boards against UCLA (Mar. 3) ... Registered double-figure points on 25 occasions, including nine 20-point performances ... Ranked second on the team and No. 9 among Pac-10 players with 6.4 rebounds per game ... Grabbed collegiate-high 15 rebounds against UCLA (Mar. 3) ... Led UW in scoring on nine occasions, rebounding five times and assists eight times ... Staged a stellar collegiate debut, tallying 12 points, five rebounds, seven assists and four blocks in 19 minutes against Pepperdine (Nov. 12) ... Scored a collegiate-best 24 points and hit his first 3-point attempt at the buzzer, forcing a second overtime at USC (Dec. 28) ... Hawes lost 20 pounds while battling a stomach virus the entire month of January ... Blocked six shots against Sacramento State (Nov. 19).

### Seattle Prep High School

A 2006 McDonald's and *Parade* All-American ... The No. 1 prospect in the Best in the West poll compiled by the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* ... College choice came down to a decision between Washington and North Carolina ... The nation's No. 2 prep prospect in the Bob Gibbons' *All-Star Report* ... Named preseason second-team High School All-American by *Street & Smith's* magazine ... Also garnered All-America accolades from *Parade Magazine* and EA Sports ... Selected to the five-member 2006 *USA Today* All-USA Prep Basketball first team ... Honored as the 2006 Gatorade Player of the Year for the state of Washington ... Averaged 19.9 points, 11.3 rebounds, 3.1 blocks and 3.0 assists as a senior ... Led the Panthers to the 2006 state Class 3A championship ... The MVP of the 2006 state tournament ... Named the *Seattle Times*' State High School Male Player of the Year following the 2006 season ... Averaged 16.5 points, 11.5 rebounds and 2.4 blocks as a junior ... Graduated with a 3.70 grade point average ... Received academic accolades as a member of the Dean's List, President's List and the Honor Roll.

### USA Basketball

Topped all scorers with 24 points and added 10 rebounds, leading the United States under-18 men's team to a 104-82 triumph over Argentina (July 2, 2006) in the gold medal game of the 2006 FIBA Americas under-18 Championship ... Averaged 12.0 points and 7.5 rebounds during the tournament ... The U.S. team was coached by Hawes' college coach, Lorenzo Romar ... Debuted for USA Basketball in April of 2006 as a member of the 2006 USA Junior National Select Team that defeated the World Select Team 109-91 at the Nike Hoop Summit in Memphis, Tenn. ... Tallied eight points, three rebounds and one assist in 17 minutes.

## Spencer Hawes Game-by-Game 2006-07 Season Statistics

Opponent	Date	GS	Min	---TOTAL---		---3-PTS---		---REBOUNDS---													
				FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off	Def	Tot	Avg	PF	FO	A	TO	Blk			Stl
PEPPERDINE	11/12/06		19	4-5	.800	0-0	.000	4-6	.667	2	3	5	5.0	1	0	7	2	4	0	12	12.0
NICHOLLS STATE	11/13/06	*	16	2-4	.500	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0	2	2	3.5	1	0	0	4	0	1	4	8.0
NORTHERN IOWA	11/14/06	*	30	6-13	.462	0-0	.000	4-4	1.000	3	4	7	4.7	3	0	1	4	3	0	16	10.7
SACRAMENTO STATE	11/19/06	*	23	7-7	1.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0	3	3	4.3	0	0	1	1	6	1	14	11.5
EASTERN WASHINGTON	11/24/06	*	25	7-12	.583	0-0	.000	0-3	.000	3	2	5	4.4	3	0	2	4	1	1	14	12.0
IDAHO	11/29/06	*	22	2-8	.250	0-0	.000	3-4	.750	3	6	9	5.2	3	0	2	1	2	0	7	11.2
SOUTHERN UTAH	12/04/06	*	21	9-14	.643	0-0	.000	3-5	.600	1	2	3	4.9	4	0	1	4	3	0	21	12.6
at Gonzaga	12/09/06	*	28	8-15	.533	0-0	.000	4-4	1.000	1	5	6	5.0	3	0	3	4	0	0	20	13.5
PORTLAND STATE	12/16/06	*	23	7-8	.875	0-0	.000	2-3	.667	1	3	4	4.9	2	0	1	4	5	0	16	13.8
LSU	12/20/06	*	30	10-16	.625	0-0	.000	3-4	.750	4	8	12	5.6	0	0	1	2	1	0	23	14.7
WEBER STATE	12/22/06	*	32	10-14	.714	0-0	.000	3-3	1.000	2	7	9	5.9	3	0	3	1	2	1	23	15.5
at USC	12/28/06	*	47	10-16	.625	1-1	1.000	3-4	.750	2	3	5	5.8	1	0	2	3	2	0	24	16.2
at UCLA	12/31/06	*	33	6-12	.500	0-0	.000	9-10	.900	2	4	6	5.8	3	0	2	6	1	2	21	16.5
ARIZONA	01/04/07	*	29	8-16	.500	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	2	3	5	5.8	3	0	3	2	0	1	16	16.5
ARIZONA STATE	01/06/07	*	32	4-12	.333	0-0	.000	1-1	1.000	3	4	7	5.9	3	0	2	2	1	2	9	16.0
at Stanford	01/11/07	*	29	3-12	.250	0-1	.000	0-2	.000	3	5	8	6.0	5	1	3	3	1	1	6	15.4
at California	01/13/07	*	30	6-12	.500	0-0	.000	1-2	.500	0	5	5	5.9	3	0	0	2	0	0	13	15.2
OREGON	01/25/07		29	7-10	.700	0-0	.000	1-2	.500	1	3	4	5.8	2	0	1	1	0	1	15	15.2
OREGON STATE	01/27/07		18	6-11	.545	0-0	.000	1-1	1.000	0	3	3	5.7	0	0	1	0	1	0	13	15.1
at Arizona State	02/01/07		30	5-9	.556	0-0	.000	3-4	.750	1	6	7	5.8	5	1	1	0	0	2	13	15.0
at Arizona	02/03/07		25	3-11	.273	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	2	4	6	5.8	1	0	1	3	2	0	6	14.6
CALIFORNIA	02/08/07		25	7-12	.583	0-0	.000	2-3	.667	0	5	5	5.7	3	0	1	1	3	0	16	14.6
STANFORD	02/11/07	*	30	7-13	.538	0-0	.000	4-4	1.000	3	4	7	5.8	1	0	2	1	1	0	18	14.8
WASHINGTON STATE	02/14/07	*	38	7-12	.583	0-0	.000	8-11	.727	2	3	5	5.8	2	0	2	2	1	0	22	15.1
at Pittsburgh	02/17/07	*	36	6-16	.375	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	4	8	12	6.0	1	0	4	2	3	1	12	15.0
at Oregon State	02/22/07	*	32	10-15	.667	0-0	.000	2-2	1.000	4	0	4	5.9	2	0	1	2	3	1	22	15.2
at Oregon	02/22/07	*	36	8-17	.471	0-0	.000	4-5	.800	5	2	7	6.0	2	0	6	4	1	0	20	15.4
USC	03/01/07	*	36	4-11	.364	0-1	.000	5-6	.833	1	6	7	6.0	1	0	0	4	1	1	13	15.3
UCLA	03/03/07		33	6-12	.500	0-0	.000	1-1	1.000	3	12	15	6.3	2	0	3	3	5	0	13	15.2
vs ASU	03/07/07	*	37	5-13	.385	0-0	.000	3-4	.750	3	6	9	6.4	3	0	3	3	1	0	13	15.2
vs Washington State	03/08/07	*	22	3-5	.600	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0	5	5	6.4	4	0	0	3	0	0	6	14.9
Totals.....		24	896	193-363	.532	1-3	.333	74-98	.755	61	136	197	6.4	70	2	60	78	54	16	461	14.9

Games played: 31  
 Points/game: 14.9  
 FG Pct: 53.2  
 3FG Pct: 33.3  
 FT Pct: 75.5

Rebounds/game: 6.4  
 Assists/game: 1.9  
 Turnovers/game: 2.5  
 Assist/turnover ratio: 0.8  
 Steals/game: 0.5  
 Blocks/game: 1.7

### Single-Game Career Highs

**Points** – 24, at USC, Dec. 28, 2006  
**Rebounds** – 15, vs. UCLA, Mar. 3, 2007  
**Assists** – 7, vs. Pepperdine, Nov. 12, 2006  
**Blocks** – 6, vs. Sacramento State, Nov. 19, 2006  
**Steals** – 2, three times, last at Arizona State, Feb. 1, 2007  
**FG Made** – 10, four times, last at Oregon State, Feb. 22, 2007  
**FG Attempted** – 17, at Oregon, Feb. 22, 2007  
**3-Pt. FG Made** – 1, at USC, Dec. 28, 2006  
**3-Pt. FG Attempted** – 1, three times, last vs. USC, Mar. 1, 2007  
**Free Throws Made** – 9, at UCLA, Dec. 31, 2006  
**FT Attempted** – 11, vs. Washington State, Feb. 14, 2007  
**Minutes** – 47, at USC, Dec. 28, 2006

### Hawes' Washington Statistics

YEAR	GP/GS	MIN	AVG	FG-FGA	PCT	3FG-A	PCT	FT-A	PCT	OR-DR	TOT	AVG	PF-DQ	AST	TO	BK	ST	PTS	AVG
2006-2007	31/24	896	28.9	193-363	.532	1-3	.333	74-98	.755	61-136	197	6.4	70-2	60	78	54	16	461	14.9

# Hawes won't look back – and neither should Huskies

By John McGrath

SEATTLE — To the surprise of nobody, and the consternation of almost everybody at the University of Washington, center Spencer Hawes announced Thursday that he was making himself eligible for the NBA draft.

It's a nonbinding formality – as long as Hawes doesn't hire an agent, he can return to school – but how long will it take the 7-foot freshman to be smitten by the rave reviews of pro scouts? A week? A day?

Hawes' status as a lottery pick is underscored by the Seattle SuperSonics' selection last summer of Mouhamed Sene at No. 10. If you put a blindfold on Hawes and chained his ankles together, he could hold his own against Sene in a game of 21. Without the blindfold and the ankle shackles, Hawes pitches a shutout.

The more intriguing matchup would be Hawes going one-on-two against Sene and the Sonics' first-round draft choice from 2005, Johan Petro. Heck, make it one-on-three. Throw in Robert Swift, the first of three long-term project centers drafted by general manager Rick Sund.

Hawes owns a deadly jump hook he releases with either hand, delivers unforced passes out of double coverage, and savors any chance to block a shot with an authoritative swat. He's not yet a rebounding force, but he'll be a one-man clearing house once he develops the strength to keep his ground in the low post.

And Huskies fans are hoping this uniquely versatile package of talent stays put for a sophomore season? Dream on.

This might buck conventional wisdom, but I'm convinced jumping to the NBA now would be best for both Hawes and his soon-to-be-former team.

Hawes pointed out Thursday that an NBA career was "a lifetime goal." There's not a lot to misunderstand about those words. He didn't go to college to complete a degree. He didn't go to college to have fun and collect once-in-a-lifetime memories. He went to college because he wasn't able to play in the NBA for a year.

Well, the year is up, and so is the waiting.

As for the Huskies, Hawes' return would guarantee that all the conjecture about his turning pro in 2007 is rendered a stark reality in 2008. Despite his athletic gifts, it's difficult to build a team dynamic when potentially your most dominant player is an underclassman donating his services through a one-year rental agreement.

There was something troubling about how the Huskies underachieved this past season. Even when they were at their best – during their inspired home-finale performance against UCLA, for instance – I watched them and thought: Enjoy the show, because these guys aren't destined to stay together.

And I was a mere observer; the notion of a team in flux had to permeate the team in flux.

Perhaps that self-inflicted sense of urgency explains the severe mood swings of coach Lorenzo Romar's team. It was as if the Huskies were in a race against time – a race to make things click before the NBA lured Hawes from campus.

"We have always prepared as if he might be gone, knowing that he could stay as long as two or three years," Romar told reporters Thursday. "I didn't ever think he'd be here four years.

"We've always had it in the back of our mind, being prepared if he left early."

But also in the back of Romar's mind – in the back of everybody else's mind, too – was the suspicion Hawes couldn't put his lifelong dream on hold longer than eight months.

If I were Spencer Hawes? I'd stay in school, because I had a blast in college. But then, I'm not a 7-foot center who can shoot jump hooks with either hand. It was never a lifelong dream of mine to play in the NBA.

Whatever happens, his decision won't be determined by money. He stands to make a fortune, either now or next year.

His decision will be about his fulfilling his dreams, which is why any attempt to sell him on the benefit of the college experience figures to be futile.

He knows what he wants, and he won't be inclined to hem and haw and second-guess himself. After all, his nickname is Spence. Not Suh-Spence.

And you know what? He'll be fine. He'll begin a sophisticated weight-training program the moment he puts down the pen he uses to sign his contract.

Furthermore, the NBA will enable Hawes to work with some of the best coaches in the world. Nothing against Romar and his staff, but the NCAA monitors the amount of time athletes can participate in formal practices. Not so in the NBA, where he can polish his craft all day, every day of the year.

Sure, he'll succumb to the midseason blahs that await all rookies – he'll get tired of room service in Houston and midmorning shoot-arounds in Milwaukee – but he's a mature, well-rounded kid composed of the right stuff. He'll never embarrass himself off the court.

The NBA will have a profound affect on Spencer Hawes. It will make him instantly wealthy and, within two or three years, very famous. He'll miss the Dawg Pack and the pep band – and even the obnoxious hecklers at Oregon – but he won't regret the most monumental decision of his young life. He won't look back.

But his leaving school after one season won't hurt the Huskies. They just might find the race to return to the NCAA tournament more fulfilling than a race against time.

# Days like this might make UW's Hawes stick around

By Steve Kelley

SEATTLE — For the first time since he came to Washington, for the first time since NBA scouts started attending his games, swapping notes and stories and expectations, the idea of 7-foot freshman Spencer Hawes returning for another season of college basketball doesn't feel like so many purple-blooded pipe dreams.

Deep into his first year of college, Hawes is digging life on Montlake. The game is slowing down. The pressure isn't quite as intense. And all the unique, personal spoils of college life remain his to spend.

One-and-done might turn into one-more-run.

"The pieces are falling together," said his best friend, sophomore Jon Brockman, who had 20 points and 13 rebounds in Washington's 61-51 win Saturday over second-ranked UCLA. "Spencer's loving college basketball. He's loving college right now."

Paradoxically, Hawes played like a first-round pick against UCLA.

Early in the game he caught a pass, turned quickly and hit a fallaway jumper. Then he pump-faked UCLA's Lorenzo Mata into the air and made a jump hook as Washington scored the game's first nine points.

And with every spin, every rebound, every blocked shot, the building shook as if a conference championship were hanging on the outcome.

In the din of Hec Ed, on a day when the building was as hot and as loud and as electric as any gym in the nation, Hawes hung 13 points, 15 rebounds and five blocked shots on the Bruins.

And if a day like this, in an atmosphere this fervid, can't lure him back for another season, nothing will.

"If he leaves and does whatever he'll do in the NBA, he'll never have another day that compares with today," said Bill Frieder, the former Michigan and Arizona State coach who called the game for Westwood One radio. "I'll be pulling for him to stay."

"I always pull for kids to stay because you can never replace this college experience. My advice would be for him to stay another year at least. The opportunity to go to the NBA will always be there."

One-more-run. It no longer seems preposterous.

For instance, Brockman and Hawes went to the Tacoma Dome on Wednesday night to watch Franklin High School senior Venoy Overton, the Huskies' point-guard-in-waiting, in the first round of the state tournament.

"He [Overton] is a quick dude who can pass the ball big time," Brockman said. "And when Spencer was watching, his eyes kind of lit up and got real big like, 'Wow, I could be catching those passes next season.'"

Hawes has been plagued by a career's worth of bad breaks in this showcase season in the Pac-10. He had knee surgery in October. And an ankle sprain later. He got sick in January, losing some 20 pounds and all of the momentum he had built from strong games in late December against Louisiana State and USC.

He withstood the wrath of the bloggers, who expected him to be a combination of Bill Walton and Bill Russell from the get-go. He survived the inconsistencies of this 18-12 season. And learned to relax and enjoy life inside his hoop crucible.

"He's finally seeing how much fun college basketball is. Games like this are what we've worked for all these summers," said Brockman, an AAU teammate of Hawes' with Friends of Hoop. "He's starting to see that this is what makes it worthwhile."

This was a game that belonged in March and a day when Hawes showed off his entire hoops repertoire.

"He's a big guy who's got nice skills," Frieder said. "He has a lot of good moves inside, but he can go outside, handle the basketball, good passer. He's a big guy who knows how to play. Sets screens. He'll be a good pro, when he decides to go."

But now the urgency to leave might be lifting.

Hawes could stay for the fun of it, like Florida big man Joakim Noah did this season. Like Noah, Hawes doesn't need the money. And he has seen enough NBA basketball to know that the game becomes a business and the business isn't always flaming-hot afternoons in front of adoring peer groups.

"I'm not going to start getting ahead of myself and start looking forward to that," Hawes said of the NBA. "I'm not worrying about that. If we win and I play well, that will take care of itself."

As he walked across the court yesterday for a postgame radio interview, the Washington student section chanted to Hawes, "Three more years! Three more years!"

He waved back at them and pumped a fist in the air.

"When they started chanting that, it kind of made me stop and think a little bit," Hawes said.

Then he shrugged and said, "We'll see."



## Healthy Hawes helps revive UW

**By John McGrath**

SEATTLE — They may not qualify for the NCAA tournament berth we once assumed would be there for them in March, but give the Washington Huskies this much: The growing-pain phase of their season appears to be over.

More to the point, they've survived the "What's Eating Spencer Hawes?" soap opera.

To recap: Hawes got floored by a cold bug he couldn't shake, hurt his ankle, sat out the Washington State game at Pullman on Jan. 20, then lost his job as starting center against Oregon on Jan. 25.

The local rumor mill, of course, donated more intriguing details to the saga: Hawes was upset with coach Lorenzo Romar. ... He had misgivings about staying in school beyond this season. ... Romar was unhappy with his defensive intensity. ...

About the only theory that wasn't posited is how the Seattle Prep graduate was fighting a bout of freshman homesickness.

Turns out, Hawes wasn't playing to his potential — and didn't start six straight games — because he wasn't at full strength.

"From Day One, anyone who asked, 'Why isn't Spencer in there?' — anyone who was asking all those questions about 'there must be something else' — the answer I always gave is, 'Spencer's not in there because he's not healthy,'" Romar said Sunday night. "He couldn't practice. ...

"To avoid a lot of disruption in the lineup — and we have enough lineup changes as it is — we decided to bring him off the bench," Romar went on. "If he could go 30 minutes, he'd go 30 minutes. If he could go 20, he'd go 20. The last two weeks, he's missed only one practice, so he's back in there."

Hawes corroborated Romar's version of the events that found the presumptive NBA lottery pick replaced in the starting lineup by

sophomore Artem Wallace, who despite his admirable work habits and dedication, well, is not an NBA lottery pick.

"We talked about it. He made it clear," Hawes said. "I agreed with the reasons he told me. I've been able to practice and get back at it.

"Just as he said it would go, it went."

The last chapter of Hawes' unexpected midseason struggle was played out Sunday against Stanford. Actually, it was played out during the pregame introductions, which found Hawes — not listed in the starting lineup distributed to the press — sharing chest-bumps with his fellow starters.

It sounds preposterous to identify player introductions as a momentum-shifting key to a basketball game, but that's what happened during the Huskies' 64-52 victory over the Cardinal. From the moment Hawes took the floor as surprise starter to his raised-fist exit in the final minutes, the freshman turned Hec Edmundson Pavilion into the House of Spencer.

Some of this was about personal payback. Hawes had gotten schooled by Stanford's own impressive freshmen, Brock and Robin Lopez, in their first meeting on Jan. 11. When he learned on Saturday that he'd regained his starting role, Hawes and assistant coach Paul Fortier went to the videotape, looking for ways the 7-footer could more effectively assert himself against the twin brothers from Fresno he'd faced as a high school player.

Hawes finished with a game-high 18 points, collected seven rebounds, passed the ball flawlessly — in a game distinguished by several errant feeds on both sides — and drew the loudest cheers of the game for his back-door block of a Fred Washington putback.

His deft footwork on the afternoon's first score — a baseline drive — set a tone for an offensive virtuoso who is as dangerous with his left hand as he is with his right. (To borrow Marques Johnson's description of Gary Payton, the ambidextrous Hawes is "amphibious.")

"It's not coincidence," Romar said of Hawes breakout effort. "If somebody all the sudden is getting healthy, he's probably going to play better than if he's really sick — if he has a lack of strength where the average person couldn't get out on the floor. Spencer was out there battling the best he could. But now he's stronger and, consequently, he had a better performance.

"It's hard in sports to ever make excuses, but sometimes you've got to the point out the facts."

Hawes called the difference between the cool-hand hoss who dominated Sunday and the shell-shocked kid who struggled at Stanford as "night and day," adding: "It feels like my energy's back. My wind's back. I'm putting on more weight."

During that previous encounter against the Cardinal in Palo Alto, Hawes went 3-of-12 from the field, missed both his free throws, and turned the ball over three times.

The contrast from that Jan. 11 nightmare was put on display during a revealing second-half sequence, when Hawes attempted a shot from the low block, had it rejected, got the ball back for a second shot — it missed — and then retrieved the rebound, finally scoring on a shot released from his left hand.

How would that sequence have gone at Stanford?

"I probably would have missed my first shot," Hawes said, "dribbled off my foot out of bounds — and gotten a technical foul for being mad about it."

The reporters around him laughed, and Hawes was able to smile, too. The worst midseason crisis of his basketball life — the first midseason crisis of his basketball life — was behind him.

# Hawes back just in time to show up the critics

**By Steve Kelley**

SEATTLE — The blogs have been beating on him for weeks.

The e-mailers have questioned every missed jump hook, every rebound they thought Spencer Hawes should have grabbed and didn't.

The talk-show callers have found ways to hang every Washington loss on his broad shoulders.

All of it has been grossly unfair.

The real Spencer Hawes is just emerging.

Hawes is good. NBA draft good. No 7-footer in Huskies history has possessed anything close to the array of jump hooks and slip passes Hawes has. No big man on this huge campus has ever had game like Hawes has game.

Yo, bloggers, you've got it all wrong.

Think about the 20-plus pounds he lost during an illness that struck in the second week of the Pac-10 season and lingered like an unwanted party guest.

Look at the numbers. Hawes is Washington's leading scorer, averaging 14.8 points a game, and is second in rebounds at 5.8

"It was a battle. I was pretty sick," Hawes said of his illness. "I couldn't really sleep that well. I was always trying to catch up. But the toughest part was not eating anything. When you don't eat, you don't sleep, you don't have any energy. But still, I don't think being sick is an excuse or anything like that."

Look at Sunday's 64-52 victory over Stanford. Check the numbers — 18 points, seven rebounds, two assists and one timely block. It tells you where Hawes is and where he's heading.

"Today he made a name for himself," point guard Justin Dentmon said.

What we saw against Stanford is the next big step in the maturation of Spencer Hawes.

During a late second-half flurry, his first shot was blocked by Brook Lopez. Hawes grabbed the rebound, switched hands and missed a contested left-hander, got another rebound and scored.

"I probably would have missed the shot [a month ago in the first meeting against Stanford]. Then dribbled the ball off my foot," Hawes said. "And then gotten a technical [foul] for being mad about it."

That was then. This is now. This is Hawes finally almost healthy. This is Hawes back in the starting lineup for the first time since the overtime loss to California seven games ago on Jan. 13. Back on his game.

"During the game I wasn't thinking, 'Wow, Spence is playing really good tonight,'" said forward Jon Brockman. "I was just thinking, 'This is Spence.' That was him, right there."

This is what has NBA scouts lining up for a second and third look. This, not the stuff you read from the misguided bloggers, is the truth.

With Hawes slowly getting back to playing and feeling like himself, Washington has won five of its past six games. It has gone from RIP to a much-improved RPI.

Hawes has been the difference.

"Whenever you have perceived greatness, there are a lot of expectations," Washington coach Lorenzo Romar said. "That kind of comes with the territory. I think it's unfortunate that people were criticizing Spencer when he wasn't able to play at full strength. But that's just life in the big city when you play sports at a high level. You don't get to take a seminar to prepare for it."

Against Stanford's highly regarded Lopez twins, Hawes played as angry as a jealous astronaut.

In his best half of the season and his best game since the December win over Louisiana State, he scored eight of Washington's first nine points in the second half.

He worked the right baseline, took a pass from Ryan Appleby and scored. He spun on the baseline, went into the air, switched the ball to his left hand and converted. He hit a jumper off the glass and made two free throws.

"You don't see many guys in this league go one-on-one with those guys [the Lopez twins] and come out on top," Romar said.

Several times this season, Hawes has admitted being frustrated with the inconsistency of his play. He played summers against all of his game's wunderkindren. He played against Texas' Kevin Durant and North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough and Brandan Wright, against Brook and Robin Lopez. And he was as good as they were.

But summers are fantasy rides. This is the real world, a brave, new world, where every missed shot, every bad pass, every shrug and scream are analyzed by bloggers from Biloxi to Blaine.

And while Durant et al have been praised on every Internet service and on every ESPN show, Hawes, unfairly, has either been skewered or forgotten.

"It's like everybody watches your every move," Hawes said. "If you make one bad play, somebody's writing about it. That's been a tough adjustment, but you just can't buy into what everybody says. I felt a lot better tonight and, hopefully, I can get back into form."

Pay attention. These next five or six weeks you'll get the best of Spencer Hawes. The best is yet to come.

## Enjoy watching UW's Hawes while you have the chance

By **Blaine Newnham**

SEATTLE — I just can't get my arms around it.

Washington freshman Spencer Hawes could be playing his first and last game in Pauley Pavilion today against UCLA.

It wasn't all that surprising the Huskies would lose to USC on Thursday night in a tense, almost awkward, league opener.

After all, Washington started three freshmen and two sophomores and only one of them finished the game.

Wait until next year.

Sure, wait until the NBA draft, that's what you wait for.

"Things aren't so different," said Lorenzo Romar, the Washington coach. "You prepare to win a game with as many good players as you can recruit, that's all."

But it is different in today's world of college basketball. There is no tomorrow, no dreams of what might be, only what is, and you'd better take advantage of it.

Romar thinks you have to change your attitude. Or at least I have to change mine. Sooner or later, they all move on.

Appreciate, he says, that if Nate Robinson had stayed for his senior year at Washington and Martell Webster had gone to Washington instead of the NBA, the basketball world might not have witnessed the emergence of Brandon Roy.

Enjoy watching Hawes, who could be playing professionally next year, as long as you can.

For me, it was enjoyable watching Roy and Bobby Jones and Will Conroy and Mike Jensen develop during their four years in college. But then I date back to an era when the only reason Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) played just three years at UCLA was because he spent the fourth playing for the Brubabes, the school's freshman team.

For fans, the new NBA rule requiring high-school players to wait a year before being seduced by the draft is better than the old one that let them go straight from prep to pro.

One year of Hawes playing at Washington is better than none.

When Hawes struggled early this season, I'll have to admit that I wondered if his NBA stock might drop enough that he'd stay in college longer.

"This isn't the NBA," said Romar with a chuckle. "It's not like you'd try to lose games so you can get in the lottery."

Romar explained that Hawes was a freshman who had missed weeks of practice following knee surgery.

"We didn't think he was struggling at all," said the coach.

He also said he felt no pressure to win while he could, while he still had Hawes. Or change his approach to a team's overall development.

"You try to win games, that's all," he said.

Quincy Pondexter, one of Hawes' young teammates, seemed to understand the new era.

"You don't sit around thinking about the draft," he said. "If you get a chance to play at the next level, you'll take it, and try to win as many games as you can along the way."

Who knows what will happen?

The various mock drafts have Hawes going as high as No. 7 in the spring — last year's No. 7 choice got a first-year salary of \$1.3 million. Another scenario has Hawes waiting until the 2008 draft when he could be a top-five pick.

It is interesting to look at the different routes Roy and Webster have taken. Clearly, Webster, the No. 6 pick two years ago out of Seattle Prep, got as much money as he could get, and probably more than if he had gone to college and come out later.

The NBA chases potential, not performance.

But who will play longer and make more money in the end, Roy, with the groomed game, or Webster, who still is trying to find his game and will be a free agent after another year?

Joakim Noah, the Florida star, chose to play a second year in college. So might Hawes.

I'd like to wonder what this group of Huskies might look like with Isaiah Thomas, the Tacoma-area star now in prep school, joining them. And 6-9 Matthew Bryan-Amaning. Just how dominant inside they could be as Hawes and Jon Brockman reach physical maturity.

To see if Adrian Oliver is as good as I think he is, or Phil Nelson as versatile.

But these days it's not about looking ahead. It's about today, not tomorrow. About not knowing if they'll all ever see Pauley Pavilion again.

## Hawes up to challenge

**By Jon Naito**

SEATTLE — Spencer Hawes set himself in the post. It was a textbook seal just outside the key, and the Washington freshman demanded the ball.

He got it, spun and released a pretty jump hook from the baseline.

Net.

What made the play all the more remarkable for the 7-footer was the fact he wanted the ball with Louisiana State All-American Glen Davis draped on him.

It should have come as little surprise. The former McDonald's All-American and last year's consensus state player of the year at Seattle Prep is as competitive as they come, never one to back down from a challenge, especially against a future first-round draft pick.

"Those are the matchups you look for," Hawes said. "I said the same thing going up against (Gonzaga forward Josh) Heytvelt. Those are the matchups you use to test yourself. Tonight, I just wanted to do whatever I could to help my team. I think I did a pretty good job."

Wednesday night, Hawes looked like the player everyone expected to see the moment he stepped foot on campus, breaking out with a career-high 23 points (on 10-of-16 shooting) and 12 rebounds against 12th-ranked LSU.

It would be difficult to argue he wasn't the best player on the court much of the evening.

Using a dizzying array of post moves and displaying a nice perimeter touch, Hawes looked for each of his 30 minutes on the floor to be thoroughly enjoying himself.

He had 14 points in the first half, as the Huskies raced to a 50-36 lead. Hawes opened the second half by scoring six of the UW's first seven points -- two jumpers from the top of the key and another from the baseline.

Not bad for an 18-year-old still rounding into form after missing a month following offseason knee surgery.

"Spencer being out, it takes a while to learn where to get him the ball, where to move when he has the ball, it takes time," UW coach Lorenzo Romar said. "He'd been looking forward to this game tonight."

Combined with 19 points and 14 rebounds by forward Jon Brockman, the Huskies frontcourt made moot all the pregame talk about a matchup with Davis, last season's Southeastern Conference player of the year, who had eight points.

"It was just from 6 to 8 feet from the goal where we got it handed to us," Tigers coach John Brady said. "Hawes and Brockman showed our guys what it is all about playing hard the whole time. And that is the game, the rest of it does not mean much to me. Those guys just beat us every which way tonight."



# Hawes ready to take game on the big stage

**By Bob Condotta**

SEATTLE — He is the tallest of the Huskies (those healthy enough to play, anyway) and the one of whom the most is expected, termed in the school's media guide as "Washington's highest-rated recruit ever."

Spencer Hawes is also the youngest Husky, having turned 18 last April 28.

And like everyone else growing up, he's grappling with what sounds like conflicting advice.

Often times, he's told to hurry up. Others, to wait.

"Things just happen so much quicker," Hawes said. "You have to react that much more quickly [than in high school]. At the same time, you have to be patient and not rush things. It's all about finding that balance."

And as he's nearing the first big test of his college career Saturday night at Gonzaga, Hawes appears to be toeing the bar with increasing ease.

Sure, he has had a couple of slip-on-the-ice moments (2-for-8 shooting against Idaho, for instance), and some areas where he admits he's still finding his footing (a rebounding average of just 4.9).

But along with the youth, there is also the caveat of minor preseason knee surgery that caused him to miss a month of practice and caused his teammates to miss a month of practicing with him. He said the knee still serves as an annoyance, and he's had to work his way back to optimum playing shape.

"You sit out a month, you lose your rhythm," said his teammate and close friend, Jon Brockman. "You lose the feel for the pace of the game. But I think he's back on track now and getting used to it."

As proof is UW's last game, when Hawes scored a career-high 21 points, 15 in the second half, hitting 9 of 14 shots in a win over Southern Utah.

"I just settled down and went more at my own speed and didn't try to rush through things," said Hawes, who is averaging 12.6 points.

Conversely, he has continued to adjust to the more frantic pace at the Division I level, something that is a particular challenge for bigger players.

"A guy like [teammate] Quincy [Pondexter], his athleticism makes it a lot easier for him to get acclimated to that maybe a little quicker than I do," Hawes said. "But it's coming along. It's something I've always had to deal with, not being the most athletic guy out there. But I think I've gotten a pretty good hold of it now."

He'll find out Saturday when he will almost certainly spend much of the night matched up against Gonzaga's 6-11 sophomore, Josh Heytvelt. Hawes faced Ohio State's Greg Oden, who may be the No. 1 pick in next June's Draft, at the McDonald's All-American game last spring. He matched up against Heytvelt a few years ago at a summer camp.

But he has never faced a player of Heytvelt's caliber in a setting of this magnitude against a coaching staff scheming ways to defend him.

Washington coach Lorenzo Romar said he has no concerns over how Hawes will respond to the setting.

"He's a feisty winner," Romar said. "The bigger the stage, the bigger he gets."

As for the game serving as an early litmus test on Hawes' ability, Romar said, "We will know where he is today. But is that going to be Spencer in January or February? I don't know. We'll see."

The Hawes of today is shooting a team-high 58.7 percent from the floor, leads the team in blocks with 19, and has the third-most assists with 14.

Rebounding is his main area of needed improvement.

"He just needs to move out of his area to go get the ball and read where the ball is coming," Romar said. "He has a tendency to stand flat-footed when the ball goes up and not reading and moving to go get it."

That, too, has required a balancing act, Hawes said, explaining that he has sometimes waited too long to go after the ball while concentrating so much on blocking out.

Maybe the biggest test of his patience, however, has come in negotiating UW's early schedule, which has included a couple of tests but mostly easy pop quizzes, when many other teams have advanced straight to mid-terms.

"It's difficult to watch all these games early because you're like, 'Man, that looks like so much fun out there,'" Hawes said of catching contests such as Gonzaga's win over North Carolina on TV.

Saturday, what he calls "my biggest challenge" finally arrives.

"This is what you sign up for, games like this and rivalries like this," he said. "I can't wait."