

# My Christmas wish list

Staff writer Dan Wiederer has a long list of things related to ACC basketball he'd like to get this holiday season.

There's a certain agony that comes with getting older. I turn 31 tomorrow and in addition to the gray hairs sprouting up all over my head and the debilitating stiffness I've developed in my left hip, there's all this grown-up mental anguish to sort through.

The escalating financial responsibilities, the non-stop career planning and the realization that nowadays a Friday night spent with Captain Morgan leaves my brain foggy until Monday afternoon.

Some days I wake up, realize how fast my youth is escaping and flip out like O.J. trying to repossess his 1972 football cards.

Worse, every year it becomes harder and harder to fashion a holiday wish list. It's not like the '80s when, as a rambunctious kid at Christmas, I could deliver a "What I want" soliloquy that never seemed to end.

Now my wants include such exciting treasures as cooking utensils, golf balls and V-neck undershirts.

"But we have to buy you gifts for your birthday *and* Christmas," my family members protest. "There has to be something else you really want."

So I take a deep breath and reconsider. Here goes.

■ What I really want is for my life to be a blur of fast breaks, fight songs and filthy slams as it has been for the past three college basketball seasons.

■ I want Deon Thompson's agility, Marcus Ginyard's affability and Danny Green's dancing ability.

■ I want Gavin Grant's honesty, the openness to say exactly what I'm thinking without fearing the spin some knuckleheaded outsider might put on it.

■ I want Ish Smith's charisma, L.D. Williams' wit and James Johnson's martial arts expertise. Ya know, just in case.

■ I want more face paint in the stands, fewer sweater-vest ensembles.

■ I want Gerald Henderson's athleticism, if only for a couple hours at the rec center. Just so I can come from behind on defense, leap above the backboard and reject a shot into the locker room water fountain.

■ I want Woody Durham's nostalgic memory, Jay Bilas' confident insight and Dick Vitale's ageless energy.

■ I want Sidney Lowe's dapper red blazer fully laced with the aura that says, "I believe big

things can happen and that's all that matters."

■ I want Kyle Singler's grace, Greg Paulus' hustle and Taylor King's fearless mentality.

■ I want Dino Gaudio's resolve and J.J. Hickson's strength and continued press row discussions on the performances of the dance teams.

■ I want goosebumps from watching as the first three notes of N.C. State's fight song turn the RBC Center into a sea of exuberant overhead clapping.

■ I want defenders to stop flopping when a ballhandler bumps into them and I want refs to stop calling it a charge every time it happens.

■ I want the camaraderie from the ACC tournament hospitality room and the mystique of Cameron Indoor Stadium and one more chance to tell Skip Prosser, "Thanks for everything."

■ I want Tyler Hansbrough's tenacity, his wide-eyed, open-mouth stare that alerts everybody else to get the hell out of the way or else.

■ I want more bench decorum, less incessant griping. More mascot crowd-surfing, less pre-game Bojangles'. More Erin Andrews, less Pat Forde.

■ I want Roy Williams' simplicity, the ability to reach the pinnacle of my profession by fine-tuning fundamentals and concepts I learned in middle school.

■ I want crisper passing and better shot selection and a Duke-Carolina game that tips off more than three hours before deadline.

■ I want it to be March six months out of the year, when work becomes an enthralling carnival of road trips, overcrowded press rooms and bracketed insanity.

■ Mostly, I want shotgun on the road to the Final Four — this year at San Antonio's Alamodome — where, if I get what I really want, multiple teams from Tobacco Road will be playing and treating us all to the best college basketball on the planet.

That's not too much to ask, is it? It's what I want.

So write it down and make it happen. I'd really appreciate it.

Staff writer Dan Wiederer can be reached at [wiedererd@fayobserver.com](mailto:wiedererd@fayobserver.com) or 486-3536.



DAN WIEDERER



Staff illustration