

Singin' in the Lane

The women's basketball team is counting on Chelsey Lee, and her tough inside game, to return the Scarlet Knights to the top.

● With no seniors in her midst for the new season, head coach C. Vivian Stringer is looking to Chelsey Lee to lead the Scarlet Knights women's basketball team, now that the 6-2 junior has developed into one of the top forwards in the Big East. A rebounding stalwart on both ends of the floor, Lee can score—and cause problems in the paint for opponents. She was the bright spot during the 2009–10 season, when the team went 19–15 before losing to number-eight seed University of Iowa in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

Lee's competitiveness, work ethic, and athleticism grabbed Stringer's attention when the coach was courting another recruit, forward April Sykes, at an AAU game in Lee's home state of Florida. As a first-year student, Lee averaged seven minutes of playing time, which last year jumped to more than 27 minutes. She also led the team in rebounds with 238—85 more than anybody else on the team. This year, Stringer is expecting Lee to step out of the lane, bury some key jump shots, and improve her passing when she is posted up, even if she is double-teamed. Stringer concedes that the charismatic Lee is unlikely to improve in one respect: her singing, off-key reveries that make the coach and teammates wince and laugh—but Lee wins votes for her self-possession. She has a much better chance, Coach Stringer will tell you, of developing into a WNBA draft choice than she does becoming the next Beyoncé.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK ROMANENKO

