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How to prepare for the spring evaluation period

By Rebecca Gray
Special to ESPN HoopGurlz

Since the spring evaluation period is this weekend, I thought I would tell you about my experiences and what I did to prepare. I played for The Family, a Nike travel team based out of Indianapolis. We always went to the Boo Williams Tournament in Virginia to play our spring basketball. Playing in the spring can be kind of difficult because your season just ended not too long ago. So if you're not careful, you could fall out of shape and your skills can get rusty.

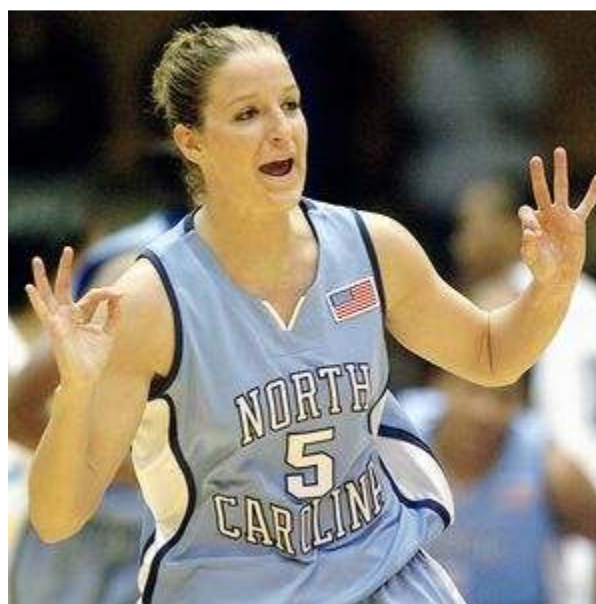
My advice would be to get in the gym this week and polish up everything you can. Whether you work on the mechanics of your jump shot or your working on your handles, it is all very important.

When I was preparing for Boo Williams, I spent every day in my high school gym shooting as much as I could. I would do drills that incorporated cardio workouts to go along with my shooting because shooting when you're tired is important. You are trying to simulate game-like situations and shooting when you're tired like in the fourth quarter.

Being physically fit is only a small part of becoming prepared for an event. Going into an event mentally prepared is the most important thing you can do for yourself. You want to enter each game confident and with a sense of readiness. You just have to keep telling yourself that you have been preparing for a while and you're ready to play. One major difference between spring and high school games is the fact that there will be hundreds of college coaches watching.

I understand you want to perform well in front of them, but be sure not to force things. Playing within yourself is another thing that you can do. If you are a great 3-point shooter, but your ballhandling skills might need work, show off your strength. Let the ball handlers do their job and get you the ball to you to knock it down. Trying to do too much often leads to players digging themselves a hole. It is extremely hard to dig out of that hole especially if this is one of the only times a coach will see you. So, stick to your strengths now and work on your weaknesses after the event.

Do not be overwhelmed by all the coaches. You just have to play the game with that glass covering over the court. Michael Jordan said it best in his quote about focusing on the court and the game. He said he puts a glass wall around the court where no one can get in his mind and no one can hurt him because it's just he and the game. It is just something that you have to do and there is no other way around it. It is really easy to do. Just go through warm-ups like you usually do and start focusing on the game. It is best not to look up there at them because you will just psych yourself out. Play relaxed like it is a regular



Rebecca Gray averaged 5.2 points per game in her freshman season at North Carolina.

game and you will be fine.

I wish everyone the best of luck with this spring evaluation period. If it is your first time, don't be too nervous and just take time to enjoy how incredible the recruiting process is. The coaches cannot interact with you at all, so don't try to spark up a conversation because they will just walk away. If you have already been there done that, best of luck to you as well. I will be helping out in the Deep South Classic at the campuses of UNC, Duke, and NC State. It will be very exciting for me and just as exciting for the rest of you.

Until next time, stay cool and keep ballin' y'all!

Rebecca "Bee" Gray is a freshman on basketball scholarship at the University of North Carolina. A 5-foot-10, sharp-shooting guard out of Georgetown, Ky., Gray was ranked 47th in the 2007 class and an Honor Roll selection by HoopGurlz.com. She was named Miss Basketball in the state of Kentucky after averaging 25.6 points, 6.3 rebounds, 4.1 steals and 4.8 assists during her senior season at Scott County High School, where she also finished as its career scoring leader with 2,907 points.

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