



PAUL GEORGE
FRESNO STATE



Paul George

Position: Forward
 Height/Weight: 6-8 (2.03 m)/ 210 (95.3 kg)
 Birthdate: May 2, 1990 (Palmdale, Calif.)
 High School: Pete Knight (Palmdale, Calif.)
 College: Fresno State

Season	G	GS	FGM	FGA	PCT	FTM	FTA	PCT	REB	AST	STL	BL	PTS	AVG
2008-09	34	35	166	353	.470	92	132	.697	212	63	59	34	487	14.3
2009-10	29	38	154	363	.424	120	132	.909	210	88	64	24	487	16.6
Totals	63	110	320	716	.447	212	264	.803	422	151	123	58	974	15.5

Three-point field goals: 2008-09, 63-for-141 (.447); 2009-10, 59-for-167 (.353). Totals: 122-for-308 (.396).

An early entry candidate for the 2010 NBA Draft.

Career Highlights: Named to the 2009-10 All-WAC Second Team. Tied for 24th in the nation in steals per game (2.21). Ranked as one of the top 15 freshman scorers in Division I in 2008-09. One of 18 invited to attend USA Basketball's 2009 U19 World Championship Team Training Camp and compete for a spot on their 12-man roster following his freshman year.

Sophomore (2009-10): The Bulldogs' top scorer (16.6 ppg), rebounder (7.1 rpg), ball thief (2.2 spg) and free throw shooter (.906). A second team All-WAC selection. Recorded a season-high 30 points and seven rebounds vs. New Mexico State, going 9-of-9 from the line. Totaled 29 points, five rebounds, five assists, two steals and two blocks at Pepperdine. Tallied 28 points, 10 rebounds and three steals at Montana. In both performances, converted 6-of-10 three-pointers. Contributed 29 points, seven rebounds and three steals vs. San Jose State, shooting 12-of-19 from the field. Hit 15-of-17 free throws en route to 26 points and nine rebounds at Nevada. Totaled 24 points and 10 rebounds vs. Seattle. Registered 21 points, nine rebounds, six assists and four steals vs. Hawaii.

Freshman (2008-09): Averaged 14.3 points, a team-high 6.2 rebounds, 2.0 assists and a team-high 1.7 steals per game. Ranked as one of the top 15 freshmen scorers in the NCAA. Recorded the third-best season three-point field goal percentage (.446) in Bulldog history. Led team with six double-doubles. Paced the WAC in minutes played (1176) and finished second in the WAC in three-point shooting (.447) and steals per game (1.74), seventh in rebounds (212), ninth in scoring per game (14.3) and 10th in blocks per game (1.0). Scored a season-high 29 points, drilling 9-of-11 field goal attempts vs. Boise State. Forced a season-high five steals in the Bulldogs' quarterfinal bout with the top-seeded Utah State Aggies in the 2009 WAC Tournament.

Strengths: Good leaper. Has prototypical small forward size and length. Possesses the potential to stretch the defense at the NBA level. Solid rebounder. Comes up with a lot of steals. Potentially an all-around contributor at the next level.

Personal: Older sisters Teiosha and Portala played for basketball at Pepperdine and volleyball for CSU San Bernardino, respectively.

EYES AHEAD

Bulldogs star George presses on with rehab, life despite injury.

By Daniel Lyght
The Fresno Bee

Paul George's life has changed the last week and a half.

Instead of rising and dunking on a basketball court or being tutored by coaches about the opposing team's tendencies, the Fresno State star basketball player has been swimming, stretching and generally getting kicked in the pants verbally by an encouraging strength and conditioning coach.

Against Utah State on Jan. 21, George severely sprained his right ankle when Aggies forward Tai Wesley toppled him going for a loose ball. The ankle ballooned with swelling and George was sidelined, projected to be out two to three weeks. Now George will travel to Hawaii for Saturday's game.

George said he hopes to be ready, but a team doctor who evaluated the ankle Monday said while George seeing action is a possibility, he should remain benched. George said the doctor cautioned that there is a high risk of reinjuring the ankle, which would force six to eight weeks of recovery time.

"I don't want to lose three games in a row," George said Monday. "You definitely don't want to go super below .500. But it will be good either way if I can come back against New Mexico State [Feb. 11]."

Without George -- a possible first-round pick in this year's NBA draft and Fresno State's leader in points, rebounds and steals -- the Bulldogs (11-12, 4-5) have struggled. Fresno State crashed against Utah State, then bounced back in a home upset of Nevada on Jan. 23. But Idaho and Boise State both trounced the Bulldogs on the road last week.

"It's tough because I want to travel," George said. "At least travel just to cheer them on and be there for their support."

Sideline support would be nice, but the sophomore forward is needed on the court.

The Bulldogs' offense was clearly stunted in Idaho as they lost the two games by a combined 31 points and lacked a player who could create his own shot or consistently create for others. Defenses doubled post players and Fresno State missed 3-pointers. The team turned the ball over in bunches, totaling 46 turnovers to 16 assists.

George said he was hurt more emotionally than physically during the road trip. Fortunately, he had support: his family moved from Palmdale to Kingsburg last summer and his parents came over to watch Thursday's Idaho game.

George said the presence of his parents and one of his two sisters (Teiosha George, a 25-year-old former Pepperdine standout who is training for a tryout with the Los Angeles Sparks) means a lot to him.

"It's not like they're right in my backyard," George said, "but I still can get those home-cooked meals. They still come wash my laundry. There's a lot of benefits. It's a win-win."

In the weight room

With his right foot wrapped with ice and elevated on top of an ice chest at the end of the Bulldogs' bench, George watched Utah State pummel the guys he's spent the last two years of his life bonding with.

It was then that he told Moses Cabrera his plans for his rehabilitation time away from basketball.

"I'm gonna be in that weight room," George told Cabrera, the Bulldogs' assistant strength and conditioning coach.

True to his word, George got off his crutches and out of his boot on Jan. 25 and was in the weight room the next day.

He said he has hit the weights every day since.

"I know them playing without me is only going to make our whole team better," he said. "Hopefully, I can contribute more by me being out and having time to rest and get stronger and get a little faster."

Cabrera said he spent six hours putting together workouts specifically designed to limit the stress to George's ankle.

Despite George's potential as an NBA draft pick and the possible damage that could be done if George were to reinjure his million-dollar ankle, Cabrera said he doesn't hold any extra anxiety during George's workouts.

"He's just Paul George," said Cabrera, now in his eighth year at Fresno State. "It's like putting special privileges on him at practice. I don't worry about that."

Cabrera pushes George throughout his workouts with encouraging barbs.

"That bar's not going to raise itself," Cabrera said when George leaned over to take a quick breather before lifting another set of exercises.

Off to the side, Cabrera lets the truth slide: "I tell him he's a slacker, but he's not. He's always been a great workout guy. ... He's a competitor no matter where he is."

Cabrera put George through a nonstop circuit of workouts Friday. After warming up, George launched into sit-ups in which he held 26.6-pound weights in each hand and extended his arms vertically as his back tilted forward and backward from the floor.

Then it was on to the push press, where he squatted slightly before launching 135 pounds skyward. After that, it was time to work his shoulders with a series of chin-ups and dips as hip-hop, R&B and pop hits rang down from the room's speakers.

After an hour and 15 minutes of lifting or pedaling among football and lacrosse players, George headed to the swimming pool at the North Gym for conditioning and rehabilitation and then to the training room next door.

George sat on a training table, and student trainer Megan Nelson pressed against his right foot, as George pressed his foot against her hand.

All seemed well until he pushed his ankle inside against her palm.

"That's a little harder," Nelson said.

George smiled. "Yes."

In another exercise, the 19-year-old with the "King George" tattoo on his right calf, was asked to stand solely on his bum ankle while reaching out to touch a ball Nelson or graduate student trainer Megan Probasco held out for him at differing heights and positions.

That's when George used his height to his advantage.

"Cheater!" Probasco exclaimed as George took the hand he used to balance himself off the ceiling.

NBA future?

While the rehabilitation will soon cease, George said he would like to continue lifting weights during the season two to three times a week to add strength.

Before his injury, he had not lifted since before the season. But he knows in order to make it in the NBA, lifting is something he needs to do.

"It might be abnormal for this level," he said while pedaling on a stationary bike, Cabrera by his side. "But if I'm trying to get to the NBA, that's what those guys do. They lift constantly. During the season, preseason, postseason -- they lift during the whole time. And that makes them better and stronger. They put up more shots and they get adapted to it.

"If that's where I want to play later down the line, I know I have to start."

Asked Cabrera, "But not for another two years, right?"

George smiled and dipped his head, pedaling harder.

When it comes to George, the question seems to sit on "when" he will be drafted by an NBA team, not "if" he will be selected.

George said he hasn't thought about his professional career while he has been rehabbing his ankle.

"I just want to get back," he said. "What affects my rehab is us slipping or slumping or my teammates need me or something I can contribute to the team. That will make me want to get back early and get out there. We're in the hunt right now. It would suck to do all this hard work and let a good year go to waste."

When it comes to his readiness level for the NBA, George said Fresno State coach Steve Cleveland would have the answer for that.

"After this season is over, my family will sit down. We'll talk to Coach Cleveland about the whole situation that's going down right now, the NBA deal. If anyone should know, he will have a lot of knowledge in that category. If he tells me, 'Paul you should go,' then I'll hear it directly from the head coach."

If he doesn't leave early, the mass communications and journalism major will continue to be one of the most recognizable students on campus. He estimates he hands out about 200 handshakes and hugs a day.

"That puts a smile on my face," he said. "It's cool. I'm a people person, so if you surround me with people, I'm going to have a good time."

Sprained ankle or not, that part of his life hasn't changed.

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