

Taylor Echols—Class of 2011

Taylor Echols: 'silent assassin,' 'steadfast ambassador'

By J. Gerald Harris, Editor
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ATHENS — University of Georgia basketball coach Mark Fox referred to him as “the Silent Assassin.” That is a rather unusual moniker for a quiet, unassuming, gentlemanly scholar-athlete, but that is apparently how the coach sees his senior guard, Taylor Echols.

Prior to the last home game Fox was assessing the quality and character of his seniors and said of Echols, “Taylor is the quiet assassin. He is very quiet. He seldom speaks. He is a very soft-spoken young man, but a terrific shooter. He has made a lot of big baskets for us and helped us win games.

“How often do you find a walk-on that comes to the try-outs, then is able to get on the floor and help your team win? That is exactly what he has done.”

Echols was a two-time All-region player at Eagles Landing Christian Academy in McDonough, where he scored over 1,000 points in his career. The Bulldogs did not have an open roster spot his freshman year and did not hold walk-on try-outs.



At work every day

Echols was determined not to let his dream of playing college basketball die. He diligently worked out and played basketball in the gym every day. He made the Georgia basketball team as a walk-on sophomore and won a full athletic scholarship last summer at the beginning of his senior year.

Prior to his sophomore year Echols had the opportunity to have former UGA basketball All-American James Banks coach and mentor him in preparation for his walk-on opportunity. Banks said, “He had a great attitude. I threw a lot of stuff at him and he handled it very well. He got better because he worked and if you have a passion and work at it, then you get better at it everyday.”

When Taylor finally got the call and found out the UGA basketball team had space for another walk-on, he joined six other competitors for the spot but he alone made the cut as a sophomore.

Echols recalled, “The coaches brought me in for a meeting and told me how it would be and how the experience would be. It was definitely an awesome feeling when they told me I made it.”

During that first year on the team Echols stated, “I would say my main job was to try to make everyone on the team work as hard as they could. My job was to help prepare the starters to excel in the games.”

Starting center Nemi Djuricic stated in the *The Red and Black*, UGA's student newspaper, “I don't know how [Echols] finds the energy everyday to be so humble. He is very grateful about the opportunity to be with us and around us everyday. He is a very humble young man and a great shooter. You would be surprised. He is a smart point guard, and he helps the other point guards get better.”

