# **PANTHERS PREVIEW**





An intense, hard working, athletic and fierce competitor, Sam Young returns for his senior season. Young completed a breakout 2007-08 season that saw him earn All-America, All-Region, All-Big East First Team, Big East Tournament Most Outstanding Player and Big East Most Improved Player accolades. Young, who continues to entertain Pitt fans with his spectacular dunks, incredible blocks and amazing athleticism, averaged 18.1 points per game, scored over 20 points in 15 contests and set the school's season scoring record (668 points) last year. The multi-dimensional Young can score in a variety of ways. He uses quickness to score inside, ball-handling and athleticism to get to the rim and an effective jumper to keep opponents off-balance. Look for Young to solidify his place among the school's all-time great players. SEASON PREVIEW



# *Pitt returns three starters and seven of its top 10 players from a team that overcame adversity, went 27-10 and captured the Big East Tournament title*

Pitt Basketball has become a model for consistent high level success. Its accomplishments over the last seven seasons have formed the foundation for its "Culture of Success." Pitt has:

- Compiled a 189-51 record over the past seven seasons (2001-08) and a .788 winning percentage, which ranks among the nation's top-five best winning percentages during that span.
- Captured five Big East Conference titles over the last seven seasons (2002 Big East-West, 2003 Big East-West, 2003 Tournament, 2004 Big East regular season, 2008 Tournament).
- Advanced to the NCAA Sweet Sixteen four times in the last seven years. Only three programs nationally have advanced to more Sweet Sixteens during that period.
- Appeared in the NCAA Tournament in each of the last seven seasons, one of only nine schools nationwide and the only Big East program to achieve that mark.
- Surpassed 20 wins overall and 10 wins in Big East regular

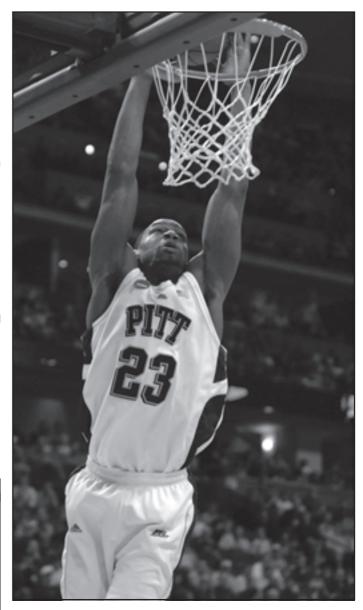
season play for a school record seven consecutive seasons. Pitt also is the only Big East program to have won over 20 overall games and 10 league games in each of the last seven seasons.

Advanced to the Big East Championship title game in seven of the last eight seasons. That success ties for the most title game appearances in Big East history.

Even more impressive is the way Pitt has amassed those achievements. Each year, Dixon adjusts to differing personnel and trying circumstances. Last year, the program overcame serious injuries to two starters. Dixon finds a way to play to his team's strength. One year, Pitt wins with a guard-oriented approach. The next, Pitt wins with the offense operating through the low post. Pitt also develops players to fit its needs. Each year, new players emerge and produce to continue the program's high level success. And Pitt achieves it all with student athletes that work toward earning a degree from the University. That is why the Pitt Basketball program has becom a "Culture of Success."

### PITT'S PRESEASON STORYLINES

- Pitt begins its quest for an eighth consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance and eighth straight season with 20 or more wins.
- Pitt enters the 2008-09 season as a preseason top 10 team.
- Pitt returns three starters, each of its top three scorers and seven of its top 10 players from a team that battled injuries all season long, finished 27-10 overall, captured the 2008 Big East Tournament title and advanced to NCAA Tournament play for a school-record seventh consecutive season.
- Pitt's three returning starters include 2007-08 Big East Most Improved Player Sam Young, 2007-08 Big East Rookie of the Year DeJuan Blair and point guard Levance Fields.
- Head Coach Jamie Dixon enters his sixth season at Pitt with a 132-40 overall record. The 132 wins tie for the third most wins for an NCAA Division I head coach after five years. Dixon also became the first coach in school history to guide Pitt to five straight NCAA Tournaments, five consecutive 20-win seasons and five straight 10-plus league win years.
- Once again, Pitt will play a difficult schedule in 2008-09. Combining the last six seasons, Pitt has ranked No. 3 nationally in average RPI. The Panthers will play an 18-game Big East schedule for the second consecutive season. Pitt will also face nine non-conference opponents that ranked among the nation's top-100 in RPI last year, nine opponents that advanced to post-season play in 2007-08 and five opponents highlighting Pitt's non-conference slate include Texas Tech, Mississippi State, Siena, Washington State and Florida State.
- Pitt's five newcomers including junior college transfer Jermaine Dixon and freshmen Ashton Gibbs, Dwight Miller, Nasir Robinson and Travon Woodall join Pitt after having been ranked among the nation's top 25 recruiting classes by Scout.com, Rivals.com and hoopscooponline.



The athletic and ever-improving Sam Young returns for his senior season as an All-America candidate. Last year, Young raised his scoring average from 7.2 to 18.1 points per game and set the school's single season scoring record with 668 points. Young also improved both his field goal percentage and 3-point percentage. Young will see action in 2008-09 at both forward positions.

Pitt enters the 2008-09 season with high expectations. Preseason publications have the Panthers ranked somewhere among the nation's top-10 teams.

Experience, depth and teamwork all remain keys to Pitt's success. Pitt returns three starters in forward Sam Young, point guard Levance Fields and center DeJuan Blair, along with seven of its top 10 players from last year's Big East Tournament champion squad.

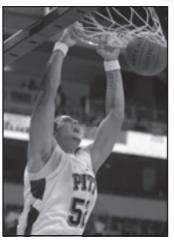
Pitt returns one of the nation's top frontcourts comprised of

starters Young and Blair, along with senior Tyrell Biggs. Young had a breakout 2007-08 season as the senior increased his scoring average from 7.2 ppg. to 18.1 ppg. After a summer of continued improvement, the athletic and entertaining Young could be primed for an All-America season. Blair is back after an impressive freshman year that saw him average 11.6 points, 9.1 rebounds and post 14 double-doubles. Biggs gives Pitt versatility and consistency at either center or power forward. Sopho-

2008-09 PITT BASKETBALL

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#### WHAT PITT RETURNS IN 2008-09

Category	Percent Returning
Last year's starters:	
Last year's total starts:	61% (112 of 185)
Team's top-10 in minutes played:	
Total minutes played:	66% (4927 of 7450)
Points scored:	
Field goals made:	73% (724 of 997)
Field goal attempts:	70% (1523 of 2185)
3-point FG made:	44% (99 of 225)
3-point FG attempts:	
Offensive rebounds:	85% (453 of 533)
Defensive rebounds:	79% (685 of 866)
Total rebounds:	
Personal fouls:	
Assists:	58% (335 of 578)
Turnovers:	69% (309 of 445)
Blocked shots:	
Steals:	
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UPPER LEFT: Levance Fields holds Pitt's career record with a 2.47 assist:turnover ratio. He ranks among school leaders in virtually every assist statistic. Fields also enters the 2008-09 season needing just 140 points to surpass the 1,000-point mark for his career.

**UPPER RIGHT:** Sophomore center Gary McGhee returns for his second season at Pitt after providing valuable minutes off the bench in 2007-08.

**ABOVE:** Power forward Tyrell Biggs will be counted upon for productive post-play. With 105 career games, Biggs returns as the team's most experienced post player.

LEFT: The dynamic and athletic DeJuan Blair averaged 11.6 points and 9.1 rebounds per game last year as a freshman. He also ranked fourth in the Big East Conference with 14 doubles-doubles. more 6-10 center Gary McGhee provides Pitt a different post-up option.

Even though Pitt must find a way to replace three departed guards in Keith Benjamin, Ronald Ramon and Mike Cook, the backcourt returns both experience and leadership. As Pitt's leader and clutch player, Fields is back for his senior season after suffering through an injury-filled 2007-08 year. A three-time Bob Cousy Award candidate, Fields has scored 861 points, dished out 375 career assists and currently owns the school's record for career assist:turnover ratio (2.47). Redshirt sophomore Gilbert Brown can play either the small forward or offguard position after displaying incredible athleticism last year. Sophomore Brad Wanamaker has an opportunity to step into the off guard position.

Pitt's five newcomers consisting of forwards Nasir Robinson and Dwight Miller and guards Travon Woodall, Ashton Gibbs and Jermaine Dixon will all have the opportunity to contribute immediately.

#### FORWARDS

Coming off a breakout season which saw him earn All-Big East First Team honors, Big East Tournament Most Outstanding Player accolades and the Big East Most Improved Player award, Sam Young returns to Pitt's lineup for his senior season. Standing just sixfeet-six inches tall, the high flying and dynamic Young plays taller than his size. An All-America candidate, Young uses his quickness to score around the basket, his efficient jump shot to keep defenders off balance and his slashing ability to get to the rim. In addition, Young has proven to be one of the most entertaining players in school history, amazing fans with athletic ability, hustle plays and acrobatic

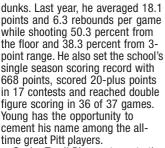
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## SEASON PREVIEW

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Senior Tyrell Biggs returns to the mix and will see action at both power forward and center. Biggs has the unique ability to play both a physical or finesse game. He is a versatile, highly skilled wide body who can score in the low post or pop out to the perimeter and hit jumpers. Biggs is one of Pitt's two most experienced players after seeing action in 105 career games and 1,409 minutes.

A player who provided fans a glimpse of his amazing athleticism last year was redshirt sophomore Gilbert Brown. Brown averaged 6.5 points, 3.1 rebounds in 22.0 minutes per game last season. He also made 15 starts at small forward after starter Mike Cook missed the majority of the year with a torn ACL. This season, Brown has the opportunity to make an impact.

Two freshmen—Nasir Robinson and Dwight Miller—both join the program after successful high school careers. Robinson led his Chester High School team to the PIAA Class 4A state title and No. 3 national ranking by *USA Today*. He is a strong, hard-working and fearless player who will contribute at small forward. A Bahamas native, Miller is an unheralded player who played at St. Pius X High School in Houston. He is a tenacious rebounder and defender who plays with passion.

#### CENTER

Sophomore DeJuan Blair is back at center for his second collegiate season. Undersized at only six-feetseven inches tall, Blair emerged last year as one of the nation's top freshmen, earning Big East Rookie of the Year and consensus Freshman All-America honors. He contributed 11.6 points and 9.1

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Sam Young was named the Big East Tournament Most Outstanding Player last year after scoring 80 points in four games.

FAR RIGHT: Gilbert Brown emerged as a key contributor after season threatening injuries to Levance Fields and Mike Cook. Brown scored in double figures 11 times last year.

**RIGHT:** An undersized post player at 6-feet-7 inches, De Juan Blair ranked among the school's all-time freshman leaders in 10 different statistical categories. rebounds per game while totaling 14 double-doubles. The three-time national player of the week, Blair has proven to be an efficient scorer around the basket, aggressive rebounder on both the offensive and defensive glass and an active defender. He even led the Panthers and ranked among league leaders in steals last year with 62. Blair, who set four Pitt freshman season records, now has an opportunity to build upon that success.

Sophomore Gary McGhee provided valuable minutes off the bench at center last year. The sixfoot-10-inch McGhee offers size and a more traditional post-up look both on the offensive and defensive ends. His playing style has been compared to former Pitt All-America center Aaron Gray.

Senior Tyrell Biggs will also see action at the center position.

#### GUARDS

Following in the tradition of Pitt's outstanding point guards Brandin Knight (1999-2003) and Carl Krauser (2002-06) is senior Levance Fields. Fields is Pitt's floor leader and general. Despite a season-threatening foot injury Fields battled back to compete in Pitt's final 13 games, leading the Panthers to the 2008 Big East Tournament title and earning All-Tournament team honors. In his three years at Pitt, Fields has averaged 9.1 points, 3.9 assists and 3.2 rebounds per game and compiled a 52-12 record as a starter. He currently holds the school record for best career assist:turnover ratio with a 2.47 mark and ranks among school leaders in assists and assist average. Fields does it all for Pitt. The Brooklyn native operates Pitt's offense, distributes the ball and makes his teammates better. Most importantly, he is Pitt's clutch player who desires the ball at crunch time.

The losses of seniors Ronald Ramon and Keith Benjamin have opened up the off-guard position and several Pitt players have the opportunity to fill the void. Sophomore Brad Wanamaker returns with the most experience as he played in 30 games and 331 minutes while dishing out 43 assists and scoring 66 points. Wanamaker is a tough, physical guard who provides stellar defense, strong ball handling and slashing ability from the wing. He now has a chance to earn his own minutes.

Junior college transfer Jermaine Dixon has an opportunity to challenge for playing time at the offguard position. One of only two players in Tallahassee Junior College history to conclude a two-year career with over 1,000-points, 300 rebounds, 200 assists and 100 steals, Dixon is a natural scorer who can penetrate and attack the basket.

Two freshmen—Ashton Gibbs and Travon Woodall-both enter the mix at their respective guard positions. Both players provide different skills and intangibles. Gibbs is a stellar outside shooter and slasher who concluded a successful high school career at Seton Hall Prep (N.J.), the same program that produced current Pitt assistant coach Brandin Knight. Woodall is a quick and multitalented point guard who helped guide St. Anthony's High School to a perfect 32-0 record, New Jersey state title and nation's No. 1 ranking by USA Today.







2008-09 PITT BASKETBALL

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#### PERSONNEL BREAKDOWN

- Brad Wanamaker (SO) ...... G ..... 2.2 ppg, 1.2 rpg, 1.4 apg Notes: Played in 30 games with 331 minutes as a freshman.
- Gary McGhee (SO) ...... C..... 1.5 ppg, 1.4 rpg, .522 FGpct Notes: Played in 21 games and 103 minutes as a freshman.

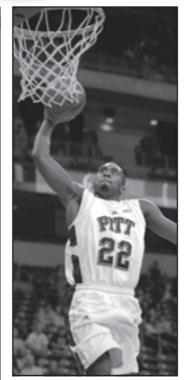
#### PLAYERS LOST (4)

Player Pos. 2007-08 Statistics Ronald Ramon (SR) ......G ...... 8.5 ppg, 3.6 apg, 2.61 a:to ratio Notes: Big East Sportsmanship Award winner...Ranked No. 15 nationally in assist:turnover ratio...Led Pitt in assists (133) and 3-point field goals made (67-180)...One of Pitt's top perimeter defenders...Career statistics: 1,096 points, 339 assists, 254 rebounds in 135 games and 70 starts...One of top 3-point shooters in school history.

Maurice Polen (SR) ...... F ...... 0.4 ppg, 0.6 rpg Notes: Walk-on who saw action in 21 career games.

#### **NEWCOMERS (5)**

Player	Pos.	Hometown/Previous School
Jermaine Dixon	<u> </u>	Baltimore, Md./Tallahassee J.C.
		Scotch Plains. N.J./Seton Hall Prep
		Nassau, Bahamas/St. Pius X H.S.
		. Chester, Pa./Chester H.S.
		Paterson, N.J./St. Anthony's H.S.



Brad Wanamaker has an opportunity to compete for the starting off guard position. Wanamaker saw action in 30 games and 331 minutes off the bench in 2007-08.

Walk-on guards Ryan Tiesi and Tim Frye both provide depth. Both begin their second year at Pitt.

#### SCHEDULE

Once again, Pitt will face a challenging schedule. According to ESPN's Joe Lunardi, Pitt ranks tied for third nationally in average RPI over the last seven seasons (2002-08). Both Pitt and North Carolina average a 14.2 ranking, while Duke ranks first at 7.0 and Kansas is second at 10.8. Pitt's RPI ranking is proof that it continues to play topnotch competition.

Pitt will play its annual 18-game Big East Conference schedule and will face each of the 15 league opponents at least once. Pitt's three repeat opponents are Connecticut, DePaul and West Virginia. Pitt will play nine home games and nine away contests. Home opponents at the Petersen Events Center will include Cincinnati, Connecticut, DePaul, Marquette, Notre Dame, St. John's, South Florida, Syracuse and West Virginia. The Panthers' 2008-09 road opponents include Connecticut, DePaul, Georgetown, Louisville, Providence, Rutgers, Seton Hall, Villanova and West Virginia.

Highlighting Pitt's 13-game nonconference schedule are contests against nine schools that advanced



Levance Fields battled back from a broken left foot to help lead Pitt to the Big East Tournament title. With Fields in the lineup, Pitt finished 19-4 in 2007-08.

to postseason play in 2007-08, five programs that advanced to the NCAA Tournament in 2007-08 and nine opponents which ranked among the nation's top-100 in RPI last year.

Top non-conference opponents include Texas Tech, Mississippi State, Washington State in the Legends Classic along with Florida State and Siena. The Panthers will also play crosstown rivals Duquesne and Robert Morris.

#### 2008-09 SENIOR CLASS: WINNERS

Pitt's 2008-09 senior class of Tyrell Biggs, Levance Fields and Sam Young ranks among Pitt's all-time winningest classes. Here is where the threesome ranks among Pitt's top four-year men's basketball periods:

Senior Class	<u>W-L</u>	Pct.
2004-05	108-25	.812
2003-04	107-30	.781
2006-07	105-30	.778
2005-06	104-27	.798
2007-08	101-35	.742
2002-03	89-40	.690
2008-09	<b>81-26</b>	.757
1987-88	81-41	.663
1988-89	81-42	.658

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# **2008-09 ROSTER**

#### **NUMERICAL ROSTER**

No.	Name	Pos.	<u>Ht.</u>	Wt.	<u>CI.</u>	Exp.	Hometown/Previous School
1	Travon Woodall	<u>r os.</u> G	5-11	190	FR	HS	Brooklyn, N.Y./St. Anthony's (N.J.)
2	Levance Fields	Ğ	5-10	190	SR	3L	Brooklyn, N.Y./Xaverian
3	Jermaine Dixon	G	6-3	195	JR	TR	Baltimore, Md./Tallahassee J.C./Maine Central Inst./Blake
5	Tyrell Biggs	F	6-8	250	SR	3L	Nanuet, N.Y./Don Bosco Prep (N.J.)
11	Gilbert Brown	G/F	6-6	200	S0*	1L	Harrisburg, Pa./South Kent Prep (Conn.)
12	Ashton Gibbs	G	6-2	190	FR	HS	Scotch Plains, N.J./Seton Hall Prep
21	Ryan Tiesi	G	6-2	185	S0	TR	Pittsburgh, Pa./North Allegheny
22	Brad Wanamaker	G	6-4	205	S0	1L	Philadelphia, Pa./Roman Catholic
23	Sam Young	F	6-6	220	SR	3L	Clinton, Md./Hargrave Military Academy/Friendly
24	Tim Frye	G	6-4	200	S0	1L	Mars, Pa./Mars
25	Dwight Miller	F	6-8	230	FR	HS	Nassau, Bahamas/St. Pius X (Houston, Texas)
35	Nasir Robinson	F	6-5	220	FR	HS	Chester, Pa./Chester
45	DeJuan Blair	F	6-7	265	S0	1L	Pittsburgh, Pa./Schenley
52	Gary McGhee	С	6-10	250	S0	1L	Anderson, Ind./Highland Senior
* By class denotes redshirt year							

Head Coach: Jamie Dixon (TCU, 1987), Begins 6th Year as Head Coach, 132-40 overall; Associate Head Coach: Tom Herrion (Merrimack, 1989); Assistant Coach: Pat Sandle (San Francisco State, 1987); Assistant Coach: Brandin Knight (Pittsburgh, 2005); Director of Basketball Operations: Brian Regan (Saint Vincent, 1988); Video Coordinator: Rasheen Davis (St. Thomas Aquinas, 2002); Athletic Trainer: Tony Salesi (Pittsburgh, 1980); Strength & Conditioning Coach: Tim Beltz (Northern Colorado, 1995); Academic Coordinator: Mike Farabaugh (Pittsburgh, 1987); Equipment Manager: Brian Brigger (Xavier, 2004); Student Assistant: Austin Wallace; Head Student Managers: Kevin Funston, Ben Stirt; Managers: Matt Falcon, Brendan Kozlowski, Shamus McNulty, Dan O'Brien, Pete Paradise-Asher, Nick Rivers, Melanie Wilmot; Administrative Assistant: Beth Schoedel.

				ALPHABETICAL ROSTER							
<u>No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	Pos.	<u>Ht.</u>	Wt.	<u>CI.</u>	<u>Exp.</u>	Hometown/Previous School				
5	Tyrell Biggs	F	6-8	250	SR	3L	Nanuet, N.Y./Don Bosco Prep (N.J.)				
45	DeJuan Blair	F	6-7	265	S0	1L	Pittsburgh, Pa./Schenley				
11	Gilbert Brown	G/F	6-6	200	S0*	1L	Harrisburg, Pa./South Kent Prep (Conn.)				
3	Jermaine Dixon	G	6-3	195	JR	TR	Baltimore, Md./Tallahassee J.C./Maine Central Inst./Blake				
2	Levance Fields	G	5-10	190	SR	3L	Brooklyn, N.Y./Xaverian				
24	Tim Frye	G	6-4	200	S0	1L	Mars, Pa./Mars				
12	Ashton Gibbs	G	6-2	190	FR	HS	Scotch Plains, N.J./Seton Hall Prep				
52	Gary McGhee	С	6-10	250	S0	1L	Anderson, Ind./Highland Senior				
25	Dwight Miller	F	6-8	230	FR	HS	Nassau, Bahamas/St. Pius X (Houston, Texas)				
35	Nasir Robinson	F	6-5	220	FR	HS	Chester, Pa./Chester				
21	Ryan Tiesi	G	6-2	185	S0	TR	Pittsburgh, Pa./North Allegheny				
22	Brad Wanamaker	G	6-4	205	S0	1L	Philadelphia, Pa./Roman Catholic				
1	Travon Woodall	G	5-11	190	FR	HS	Brooklyn, N.Y./St. Anthony's (N.J.)				
23	Sam Young	F	6-6	220	SR	3L	Clinton, Md./Hargrave Military Academy/Friendly				

\* By class denotes redshirt year

### **PRONUNCIATION GUIDE**

Tyrell Biggs	. Ty-REL
DeJuan Blair	. Da-WAHN
Levance Fields	. La-VANTZ
Nasir Robinson	. Na-seer
Ryan Tiesi	. Tee-Zee
Travon Woodall	. Tray-vahn

#### **CLASS BREAKDOWN**

#### Total Players: 14

Seniors: 3 (Tyrell Biggs, Levance Fields, Sam Young)

Juniors: 1 (Jermaine Dixon)

- Sophomores: 6 (DeJuan Blair, Gilbert Brown, Tim Frye, Gary McGhee, Ryan Tiesi, Brad Wanamaker)
- Freshmen: 4 (Ashton Gibbs, Dwight Miller, Nasir Robinson, Travon Woodall)

#### **GEOGRAPHICAL ROSTER**

- Bahamas: 1 (Dwight Miller, Nassau) Indiana: 1 (Gary McGhee, Anderson) Maryland: 2 (Jermaine Dixon, Baltimore; Sam Young, Clinton)
- New Jersey: 1 (Ashton Gibbs, Scotch Plains) New York: 3 (Tyrell Biggs, Nanuet; Levance
- Fields, Brooklyn, Travon Woodall, Brooklyn) **Pennsylvania:** 6 (DeJuan Blair, Pittsburgh;
  - Gilbert Brown, Harrisburg; Tim Frye, Mars; Nasir Robinson, Chester; Ryan Tiesi, Pittsburgh; Brad Wanamaker, Philadelphia)