

HAWKS NOTEBOOK: McLeod injury to force choice

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You can never be too rich, too thin or . . . have too many small forwards. The Hawks are learning that lesson again this season. Roshown McLeod, who has been a solid scorer off the bench, was placed on the injured list Wednesday when his groin injury proved to be more serious than the club first believed.

The second-year player from Duke joins LaPhonso Ellis on the list. With Jim Jackson receiving treatment for tendinitis in Toronto, Chris Crawford is the only small forward on the roster who is able to play.

That leaves the Hawks with a decision to make.

If Jackson is able to play Saturday in Cleveland, the Hawks likely won't have to sign anyone out of the Continental Basketball Association. But if Jackson is unable to go, the Hawks will be short-handed with Minnesota, the Los Angeles Lakers and Utah visiting next week.

"I've got a list of names," coach Lenny Wilkens said Wednesday night. "But I'll wait until tomorrow afternoon to make a decision."

Wilkens said he will speak with Jackson today and he also will learn the results of the MRI that McLeod will take this morning.

"If we see Ro has a tear then we know it's going to be two weeks or more and we'll consider bringing in a guy who can practice hard for us. But if we learn that it's not a tear, then we can bring him back sooner than five games, provided we don't sign anyone."

Trainer Chris Tucker said early indications are that McLeod has a possible tear of the groin and lower abdominal muscles. McLeod was hurt while dunking after Monday's practice. "He's been on pain killers. He can't walk without them," Tucker said.

The news of Jackson is more encouraging. He told the Hawks after his second treatment Wednesday that his knees were better than they had been on Tuesday.

Jackson will leave Toronto Friday and take a flight to Cleveland to await the Hawks who will come in late Friday night after a home game against Golden State.

Confused Olowokandi

Last year's No. 1 pick, Michael Olowokandi is as confused as anyone who ever wore a Clippers uniform. "Right now I am at a loss on what I need to do," he says. "I don't think I am being as aggressive as I need to be on the defensive end. I'm afraid of picking up fouls, but they are still coming."

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