



Pacers sign Rush

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INDIANAPOLIS -- Roy Hibbert and Brandon Rush gave Indiana Pacers coach Jim O'Brien what they thought was the right answer about their expectations heading into their rookie NBA seasons.

Each said he wanted to just fit in and not step on anybody's feet.

"I'm not interested in these guys coming in to fit in and not step on anybody's feet," O'Brien said Tuesday.

Oops.

"As a matter of fact, I'd like them to compete for starting jobs. I said to Brandon: 'If you want to come in and fit in, the veterans would be more than happy to just let you fit in. We want you to compete with the veterans.'"

The Pacers announced that both Rush and Hibbert signed Tuesday. Based on the league's rookie scale, Rush will make about \$1.5 million his first year as the No. 13 pick, and Hibbert will make about \$1.2 million as the 17th selection. All rookie contracts for first-round picks are guaranteed the first two years, with options for the next two. The team did not provide details.

Rush, a 6-foot-7 wing player, averaged 13.3 points last season to help Kansas win a national championship. O'Brien likes his scoring ability, athleticism and defensive skills.

"I think Brandon's going to give us the ability to play right away at both ends of the court," O'Brien said. "We think he has the chance to be an outstanding defensive player with some work and some growth, and he already knows how to put the ball in the basket."

Rush will be sharing playing time with Danny Granger and Mike Dunleavy, who both averaged more than 19 points last season.

"I knew that coming in that I was going to have to compete," Rush said. "I'm going to give it my best."

O'Brien already is thinking about how he's going to tinker with his lineup. He likes the possibility of a small lineup with Granger, Dunleavy and Rush.

"I would say that every game at some point in time, I'd be shocked if that threesome wasn't on the court," O'Brien said. "Certainly, Larry and I talked about the ability of those guys to play together."

