



Happy together

The Winfields — father Lee and son Julian
— will be a guiding force for the basketball Tigers this year.

STORY BY TERRY JORDAN PHOTO BY ROB HILL

Lt must be tough to be an assistant coach when your son is on the team. Don't you insiders turn, for instance, when the guy is playing poorly and the head coach pulls him out of the game?

Lee Winfield breaks into a hearty laugh. "With me, I think it's just the opposite," says MU's newest assistant basketball coach, whose son, Julian, is being touted as one of the stars for Coach Norm Stewart's Tigers this year. "I know what Julian can do, and when he's not playing up to par I'm thinking, 'Take him out, take him out.' But too often, the others are saying, 'No, we need him — keep him in.'"

And how does the son see this potentially awkward situation? In Julian's case, it's all positive. "You always want to impress your dad, and you hope he'll be there to support you," says the 6-foot-5 sophomore guard. "When I was growing up, I played with a lot of kids who got upset because their fathers wouldn't come to see them play.

"I don't have to worry about that. My dad is on the bench, cheering me on."

Two years ago, the Winfields were at St. Louis University, where Lee was an assistant under Coach Rich Grawer and Julian was a starting guard as a freshman. When Grawer resigned at the end of the 1991-92 season, the assistants' contracts were not renewed.

About the same time, Tiger assistant Dwight Evans resigned to take a position at Central Florida University, and Stewart, BS Ed '56, M Ed '60, began the search for a replacement. He

didn't have far to look.

"We could have done a full-blown, yearlong national search, and we wouldn't have come up with anyone as qualified as Lee Winfield," Stewart says. "We were lucky to get him."

A native of St. Louis, Lee graduated from North Texas State in 1971 and played seven seasons as a guard for the Seattle SuperSonics, Buffalo Braves and Kansas City Kings in the NBA. But it was his 10 years as a coach at St. Louis that most impressed Stewart.

"Lee coached all aspects of the game at SLU, and is doing basically the same thing for us," Stewart says. Winfield recruits by telephone from his campus office, helps with on-floor coaching and is the team's liaison to MU's Total Person Program. "If something happened to me or the other assistants, Lee could easily take over."

Of course, Stewart didn't mind that Julian came along, although the young business major had to sit out a year because of NCAA regulations and an injured knee. Julian, who says the knee is fine now, started all 27 games for the St. Louis University Billikens as a freshman, averaging 9.5 points, 5.8 rebounds, and leading the team with 80 assists. "Julian is talented," Stewart says, "but just as important, he has the makings of a good leader. There are eight seniors on our team this year. When they're gone, we're going to need someone to take charge. Julian is a good

student, has a great attitude and is confident without being cocky. I can see him filling that role."

Julian is excited about playing in the Big Eight Conference, but unlike some transfers from smaller schools, is not awestruck. St. Louis University competes in the Great Midwest Conference, which boasts basketball powers Memphis State and Cincinnati, along with solid teams such as DePaul and Marquette. "I had to guard Anfernee Hardaway (former Memphis State forward, now with the Orlando Magic) and Nick Van Exel (former Cincinnati guard, now with the Los Angeles Lakers)," Julian says. "You don't get much better than those guys. I think the Big Eight might be a little more physical, but I expect the competition to be on the same level."

Lee and Julian compose the male side of a close-knit, four-member family. Mom Christine, who holds degrees in education and communication, is employed by Shelter Insurance Cos. in Columbia, and daughter Lezlie, 23, a graduate of St. Louis University, works at Snelling and Snelling in St. Louis. The women are avid basketball fans. "When we decided to come to Mizzou, Lezlie was thrilled," Lee says. "I remember her saying, 'Great! It's close enough that I can go to the games.'"

"That's important to her, and in turn, it's important to us. Being together, staying together, are what families are all about." ☺