



Stat of the week

VCU second-year Toibu "Tobi" Lawal had a 16-point double-double in the black and gold's 73-69 win over Saint Joseph's University, according to VCU Athletics.



The Explosive Art of TOBI LAWAL

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Toibu "Tobi" Lawal is a second-year forward from London who came to the United States to play at a higher level.

Lawal is, as most of his teammates and coaches say, freakishly athletic, and he's very aware of that. He acknowledges his physical abilities, but he gives glory to God for those talents and skills on the court while quoting Romans 11:29, Lawal said.

He recorded a 49.5-inch vertical in 2023 and has since continued to make great strides athletically, according to VCU Athletics.

There are six key things that contribute to the explosive art of Lawal.

1. FORCE

Force is a key fundamental in basketball, on a general level, according to Trifecta Therapeutics.

For example, you have to apply upward force when you go to shoot a basket, then gravity naturally brings the ball back down, according to Pitsco Education.

Lawal has a level of force every time he jumps off the ground that puts him on a different level than his peers, according to VCU strength and conditioning coach Daniel Roose.

"Tobi has a unique physiology that I've only seen maybe one other time," Roose said. "That allows him to propel his body off of the floor of greater force than anybody else around."

2. POSTERIOR CHAIN STRENGTH

The posterior chain is the makeup of back muscles that allows you to make important movements required for daily living and is essentially a powerhouse for the entire body, according to Shape.

Roose emphasized that posterior chain strength is important because of the level of force that Lawal puts into the floor.

"Obviously the higher you jump, the more that comes into those landings," Roose said. "The main thing about that is just his posterior chain strength. So with that, hamstrings, the low back, hips, glutes and things like that is where we focus."

3. CONTROL

The ability to control your body weight is important because it can assist in accentuating speed and strength, according to TRUE Fit.

However, Lawal said control was something he lacked when he first came to VCU.

"When I first got here, I didn't have that much control, I was just all over the place," Lawal said.

Lawal spoke about how core and leg strengthening and ensuring they are in proper positions when he lands have helped him have more control over his body and movements on the court.

4. JUMPING AND LANDING MECHANICS

Jumping is something that comes naturally to Lawal but it's also something that he continues to work on in order to perfect, according to Lawal.

"All my coaches throughout my career, especially coach Roose when I got here, we work on that type of stuff, especially in the summer," Lawal said.

On the other side of jumping, is landing, which is just as important, if not more important than taking off, Roose said.

Coach Roose said the goal is to be injury-free, which is where appropriate landing mechanics come in. Not only are they important for injury prevention but they are also a big contributor to knee health.

5. GENETICS

An athlete's performance can be attributed to their work ethic, but it is also influenced by their genetic makeup, according to MedlinePlus.

Roose said it's safe to say that genetics play a key role when it comes to Lawal's athletic abilities and talents.

"That's all genetics," Roose said. "It's all thanks to his parents. He arrived here being able to jump like that."

Being naturally gifted in this department makes it enjoyable for coaches to work with, Roose said.

"Anytime you get a guy with genetic gifts he has, it makes it a lot of fun," Roose said.

6. WORK ETHIC

Lawal's overall performance is a direct result of his work ethic as an athlete and as a person, according to Roose.

"His work ethic is tremendous," Roose said. "He does everything asked of him."

Lawal is cognizant of the importance of being a hard worker and emphasizes working to sharpen and harness his "God-given" talents to get better and continuously improve, Lawal said.

"In the Bible, it says that a lazy man is a poor man," Lawal said. "So all I can do is work as hard as I can with the gifts and the blessings that God's given me."