Swedish import Asoro is quick study for DS

By BRENT WORNOWIT Staff Writer

DAYTONA BEACH — When Abigall Asoro’s coaches describe her game, they use words such as “throwback” and “fundamental sound” and “hard worker.”

The Daytona State freshman sounds like a gym rat who has spent most of her life honing her ability.

Actually, the 19-year-old from Stockholm didn’t start playing basketball until five years ago, when a letter from an American basketball camp, meaning around, playing “street ball.”

“I have a lot to learn still,” Aso- ro admitted. “I think I’m fresh off run- ning sprints after practices.

This is a look at the 6-foot-1 Asoro, who is averaging 25 points and 10 rebounds in nine games this season. The junior, the Falcons (3-2) are ranked seventeenth in the state heading into this weekend’s Daytona State Showdown.

DSI hosts Brevard Com- munity College at 6 tonight and Gulf Coast State — ranked 10th in the nation — at 2 p.m. Saturday.

“I would probably call her a throwback player,” DSC coach Carl Cochran said. “She doesn’t do a lot of flashy things, but she does a lot of things well — she re- bounds, she passes, she’s a slasher, she can put it on the floor and go coast-to-coast and she’s a good point guard, though, because she doesn’t take that many.”

Asoro is also a natural athlete who has the ability to take a game when it’s necessary, DSC assistant coach Tara Cameron said.

“She can grab the rim,” Gib- son said. “She runs the floor like a deer, and she handles the ball very well. Her talent level is that of an elite player. She can definitely help a Division I program.”

Former Brevard Community Ayla said she was surprised when she learned that a player from as far away as Sweden was going to play at DSC, then she was as- tonished to watch Asoro on the court.

“She gets after the ball, re- bounds, passes, everything,” Ayla said. “Amazing would not suffice her.”

Asoro’s journey has been amaz- ing as well. And it’s just begin- ning.

She was born in Sweden and started playing on the Swedish junior national teams four years ago, shortly after taking up the sport.

Her parents emigrated from Nigeria to Sweden, and with athletic ability seems to run in her family — her older brother, Joel, is a promising soc- cer player who has participated in Manchester United’s developmental program and already has an agent, Abigall said.

Asoro lived with her family behind to play college bas- ketball in the United States. She signed a letter of intent with Winthrop (S.C.), but when she didn’t score high enough on her SAT, Winthrop assistant coach Christina Hunter told Asoro she was not as- sistant at DSC, helped her land with the Falcons.

“At that point (midseason), there were a lot of D-II colleges recruiting her, if you can imag- ine,” Cochran said. “But we de- veloped a strong relationship with her.”

Asoro misses her friends and family in Sweden, but she has adapted well to her new surroundings.

“I love America,” she said. “I love Florida; the weather is beautiful. Of course, I miss Den- den, but my teammates are like my family now on this journey.”

Aya said Asoro is an out- standing young woman who has had no trouble making new friends.

“She’s super funny,” Ayla said. “Anything she says, be- cause she has that little accent, makes it 10 times funnier. She just has a bubbly personality. She gets along with anybody.

In the first month of the sea- son, Asoro was named the state’s JUCO player of the week twice and had helped DSC vault the team from 19th to 14th in the nation.

But in the JUCO Shootout in Oklahoma last Saturday, the Falcons discovered they weren’t ready for the likes of Gulf Coast.

“Maybe we were intimidated,” Cochran said. “I think we won the second half. They were just inside and pressing, and we lost 84-64.”

Asoro had 35 points, 12 re- bounds and six assists in the loss. It was a different type of in- tensity level,” Gibson said. “Gulf Coast has a team full of Division I Division II guys. Our team is not as stacked as they are, but we have a great group of girls who are able to adjust, and we’re looking forward to the rematch.”

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Daytona State Showcase
WHERE: Lernerard Center, Daytona State College campus, Daytona Beach
TODAY: Hinsdithon Community College 4 p.m., Gulf Coast State College, 4 p.m., Brevard Community College vs. Daytona State, 5 p.m.
SATURDAY: Brevard CC vs. Hinsdithon CC, noon, Gulf Coast State College, 2 p.m.