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Stylin':

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Lowe rises

BY SAMANTHA THOMPSON SMITH, Staff Writer

Forget being like Mike.

This college basketball season, it's all about being like Sidney.

Sidney Lowe, that is, the always-stylish head coach of N.C. State's men's basketball team. While Lowe is known for his good fashion sense on the sidelines, it was his attention-grabbing red jacket that caused the most buzz last season -- all the way to the finals of the ACC Tournament.

Now State fans have a few opportunities to dress like the coach. Two college basketball fans -- Oliver Spencer and State alum Brian Platz -- teamed up in the postseason to create a company that sells sports jackets in bright, hard-to-find colors.

And their first product? A red three-button jacket that looks like Lowe's.

"It was something neat and interesting to do," says Spencer, who also owns a Raleigh company called The Department of Marketing.

They launched www.myteamcoat.com almost three weeks ago selling the red jacket, made of a polyester-cotton blend shell. The cost is \$99, but discounts are available for college students. Initial orders should arrive in early December -- in plenty of time for the first State-UNC match-up in

January.

If a dressy blazer isn't your style, pick up the new "Fear the Blazer" T-shirt available at most area college bookstores. For \$20, you can look as if you're wearing Lowe's red jacket, white button down and red tie.

The real jacket, however, has other possibilities than just State games.

Spencer, a Boston University graduate, says he's already worn his red jacket to a Hurricanes game. And he plans to get plenty of wear out of the jacket during the holidays for parties, perhaps even pairing it with some festive green pants.

It's not likely a fashion move Lowe would make. And for the record, it's not a Lowe-endorsed jacket. (Cary menswear tailor George L. Saunders made Lowe's jacket.)

But will it bring wearers the same kind of luck it brought Lowe?

Lowe first pulled out the blazer in February as a tribute to the late Jim Valvano, the State coach who often wore red for big games, when the Pack beat UNC 83-79 in Raleigh. He wore it again to the rematch later that month in Chapel Hill. Lowe was rushed to the emergency room at halftime, and Carolina ended up winning the game.

Then Lowe vowed to wear the jacket as long as State played in the ACC Tournament. The team made it to the finals, and as promised, Lowe wore the jacket to every game.

A time to shop

Just in time for holiday shopping, the 40 vendors of the Crafter's Flea Market will set up shop Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of Ornamentea on North West Street in Raleigh. Look for one-of-a-kind designers from local jewelers and clothing designers as well as other artists and crafters.

What's worth it?

It's a tossup: Splurge on diamond studs that you can wear any time or a handbag that will last for years? A designer wallet or good makeup? Top-of-the-line running shoes or Manolos that give the illusion of a shapely calf?

Help us figure out the five top fashion/style/beauty splurges by sending us your list and reasons why. Get it to us soon. We're hoping to run the list before Santa starts doing his holiday shopping. Send your thoughts to samantha.smith@newsobserver.com.

Got news or a tip for Stylin'? Let Samantha Smith know at (919) 829-4563 or samantha.smith@newsobserver.com.

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