

All-Star weekend generates memorable quotes

The 37th annual National Basketball Association All-Star game will go down in many fans' memories as the greatest match-up ever between the best players from the Eastern and Western Conference.

The occupants at the Seattle Kingdome might describe Sun-

NBA's young and old gather for basketball action

day's game in the following ways:

"It was the fastest-paced game I have ever seen."

"The comeback by the West

to take the game into overtime was fantastic."

"Rolando Blackman was cool as ice while shooting the free throws to tie the game with no time on the clock."

All of these responses would truly describe the West's 154-149 overtime victory, but they give a fan's perspective. I found it much more interesting to hear what the players themselves remembered about the game.

"I didn't think he (Blackman) was going to make it," said Larry Bird. "He is standing at the line with no time on the clock and a chance to tie an all-star game. Michael (Jordan) told me he would make them both. I didn't think so."

"I lost \$20," added the Boston Celtic forward.

"When Blackman went to the free throw line with no time left, Isiah (Thomas) was trying to play with his mind," said Earvin "Magic" Johnson. "So I put my hand over his mouth and tried to keep him away so Rolando couldn't hear it. Isiah kept saying, 'Ro, you're going to choke!'"

Blackman's memory of the free throws does not center on Thomas' joking, though, but comes from the feeling of accomplishment for making both free throws in the pressure situation.

"As far as basketball's concerned, this moment is on my top shelf. It's great to come out and be successful..."

The subject of the free throws dominated the post-game conversation, but they also talked about All-Star weekend, which boasts other annual basketball festivities. The talk throughout the weekend left many colorful quotes that would add to basketball memories.

To start, it would only be fitting to look at what Pat Riley, the Los Angeles Lakers coach who led the West squad, said

when he welcomed Ralph Sampson's replacement, Seattle forward Tom Chambers, to the Western team.

"Congratulations, Tom. You're guarding Larry Bird."

This may have been the most memorable quote of the weekend, but many of the best quotes came from players in the three-point and slam dunk contests and Legends game which were held Saturday.

Reporter's Notebook By Terry Dischinger

"I wanted to beat Larry Bird," said Celtic Danny Ainge after Bird captured the three-point contest. "I had to listen to him all year about winning this thing... Larry was talking in the dressing room before the contest about what he should do when he wins. They (the officials) were saying that the winner go to center court and Larry asked, 'How much time do I have to talk?'"

Bird, who won the contest for the second year in a row, felt sympathetic towards Detlef Schrempf after the Dallas forward fell one shot short of upending the champ.

"I feel bad about this. Can you imagine Detlef had one shot for \$12,000 — and missed?"

The Gatorade Slam-Dunk Championships left the majority of the fans in an excited frenzy, but it left some of the players disappointed and even ashamed.

"Ron (Cleveland Harper), I'm disappointed in you. I'm ashamed of you," cried fellow rookie and slam dunk participant Johnny Dawkins.

Soon after showing his disapproval of Harper's performance, Dawkins also screamed at one of the judges, popular comedian Joe Piscopo, while he was being interviewed on television.

"Piscopo, you gave me the low score!"

In reality, Dawkins was neither ashamed nor disappointed of his performance, but

just happy to be on the court with the other players.

Some of the more memorable and intelligent quotes came from the old veterans in the Legends game, also known as the "old-timer's game." Red Auerbach, the all-time winningest coach in the NBA, probably termed it best as "a game of old, fat, out-of-shape men."

Zelmo Beatty, a former all-star and 12-year NBA veteran showed his intelligence when he described his strategy for the game.

"I just tried to stay out of Paul Silas' way (Silas is 6-foot-7, 230 pounds)."

"Easy" Ed Macauley displayed his smarts on the court when he moved aside for Spencer Haywood's dunk, the first-ever slam in the Legends game. "I saw Spencer coming in for that dunk, and I said 'Don't get in his way, or you'll be dead.'"

But he later proved he has a little trouble thinking off the court. "I've talked to my agent about playing again and we're looking for at least two million, but I haven't had any offers yet," quipped the 58-year-old Macauley.

Bob Cousy, the former Celtics great, probably had the least to comment of all the Legends participants. He had only one thing to say when asked about how he felt on the court.

"Terrible," Cousy replied.

Wes Unseld's facial expression fooled many fans into thinking that he came to play, but he clarified his expression later.

"That's pain," he said.

Jerry Lucas did not have very much to say about the game, but he did respond to the question of why he memorized the New Testament. "I have decided to use my gift (memory) for something more worthwhile than memorizing telephone books," he said.

EDITORS NOTE: Dischinger is a senior journalism major at the University and the son of Terry Dischinger, who played professional basketball for nine years from 1962 to 1972 and participated in Saturday's Legends game.

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