

Jordan, Magic and Bird are Barcelona bound

SECAUCUS, N.J. (AP) — Scottie Pippen knows exactly what has to happen when the United States sends its Dream Team to the Barcelona Olympics next summer.

"We must win," said Pippen, who along with Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Patrick Ewing and six other NBA stars was officially named to the U.S. Olympic basketball team.

"The whole world is watching us and expecting us to win. Look at the team on paper and it is obvious that we are not expected to lose. However, you can't win with names; we are going to have to go out and play."

Some may argue over who's not on the team — Isiah Thomas and Clyde Drexler are two obvious names — but Pippen is looking at the bottom line, which is winning a gold medal in international competition for the first time since 1986.

Joining Jordan (Chicago Bulls), Johnson (Los Angeles Lakers), Ewing (New York Knicks) and Pippen (Detroit Pistons) on the team coached by Pistons' coach Chuck Daly are: Larry Bird (Boston Celtics), Charles Barkley (Philadelphia 76ers), Karl Malone (Utah Jazz), Chris Mullin (Golden State Warriors), David Robinson (San Antonio Spurs) and John Stockton (Jazz).

There will be two more players, including a college star, named to the team next spring. The team's first competition will be the Olympic qualifying Tournament of the Americas up in Portland on June 27-July 5. The Olympic Games open July 26.

"We have 10 outstanding athletes and they all said yes within 24 hours after we extended the invitation to them," USA Basketball president Dave Gavitt said Saturday after the team was announced during a made-for-TV show.

Bird's status was in doubt because of his recent back surgery, but the 35-year-old leader of the Boston Celtics said he wants one chance to play on the same team as Johnson.

"I'm feeling better than I have in three or four years," he said. "I've been working out and playing ball. I'm confident that I'll be able to come back full strength."

"I've never had the opportunity to play with Magic and our careers are winding down. I'll get to play with all these great players that I haven't had the chance to play with. I'll probably be more excited than anyone."

Jordan said he never wavered in his decision to play although there were several reports indicating he would pass up the chance to allow someone else to play on the team.

"It was the decision I made and I wanted to keep it low-key," he said. "I knew all along I was going to play. I never had any doubt."

The U.S. last won a gold medal in international play at the 1986 World Championships. Since then, there's been two silver medals and three bronze medals. USA Basketball is certain things will turn golden again now that FIBA, basketball's world governing body, approved the use of NBA players two years ago.

While the 10 players are among the best in the league,

Pippen makes Dream Team, but not Drexler and Thomas

the exclusion of Thomas created the biggest controversy. It led to the resignation of Jack McCloskey, the Pistons' general manager, from the 13-member selection. There were reports that Jordan would not play if Thomas was invited.

"If I had anything to do with the selection, my brother and sister would be going to Barcelona," Jordan said. "Isiah Thomas and my relationship

had nothing to do with who was on this team. That was blown way out of proportion. There's still a possibility of Isiah being selected."

Thomas said he isn't mad at anybody.

"I would have liked to have the opportunity to play, and I would have liked the opportunity to contribute," he said. "I

"Can I guarantee that this will not affect them during the

have no personal feud with anybody. Although the Chicago Bulls and the Detroit Pistons basketball teams have an intense rivalry, that rivalry was there before I became a Detroit Piston and before he became a Chicago Bull."

Daly said he not only would like to have Thomas for the Olympics, but Pistons' Dennis Rodman and Joe Dumars as well.

NBA season? I don't think so," he said. "I know Isiah is hurt by this, and that's not going to go away."

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