

Magic says he's done for good

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Magic Johnson, who returned to the Los Angeles Lakers in September after missing last season because he is HIV positive, said today he is retiring for good because of the controversy surrounding his comeback.

Johnson's announcement came after several NBA players said they were concerned about playing against him. The season starts Friday.

"It has become obvious that the various controversies surrounding my return are taking away from both basketball as a sport and the larger issue of living with HIV for me and the many people affected," Johnson said in a statement Monday. "After much thought and talking it over with Cookie and my family, I decided I will retire — for good — from the Lakers."

Dr. Michael Mellman, Johnson's personal physician and the Lakers' team doctor, said Johnson's medical condition "has not changed from the moment he returned to basketball."

"This is not based on his doctor's advice. It's his lifestyle decision," Mellman said.

Several NBA stars, including fellow Dream Team member Karl Malone, said they were concerned about playing with Johnson for fear of contracting the virus. One NBA general manager, speaking on the condition that he not be identified, told *The New York Times* that Johnson should step aside to avoid any controversy.

"Look at the cuts and scratches I get now," Malone said. "All of a sudden, the last second of the game, and here comes Magic to the basket. It's the same as, What if I had the virus as a player and what if a Buck Williams or a Charles Barkley comes in? It is a physical game and you do get kicked

and scratched. I do have concerns, just like anybody would have. It's not a thing of kicking a man when he's down."

A source close to Johnson, also speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed that Johnson's retirement was related to the controversy surrounding his comeback, and not his health.

The source referred to the story in Sunday's *Times*, which examined the hazards of playing basketball with Johnson.

Another source familiar with the situation, who also declined to be identified, said Johnson "probably thought he would be above any kind of controversy because he's Magic. But he discovered that wasn't going to happen."

NBA Commissioner David Stern said: "We know this is a difficult and complex decision that only Magic could make. We certainly respect his choice and Magic knows that he has the NBA's continued support."

Johnson played in five of the Lakers' eight preseason games, averaging 10.4 points and nearly 12 assists a game.

"I've come to realize that it simply isn't possible to return to playing in the NBA and still continue to be involved in all the things I want to do," Johnson's statement said. "Although my family has given me their support to return to the Lakers, I feel that it is more important to spend my time with them as

well as continuing with HIV and AIDS education projects than in the competitive and time-consuming world of the NBA."

It was only Friday night, after the Laker's final exhibition game, that Johnson had said he and the team were ready for the upcoming season. Johnson made only 1 of 10 field-goal attempts while scoring eight points in the Lakers' 103-92 loss to Cleveland at Chapel Hill, N.C. He played 28 minutes and had five assists.

He sat out a few minutes in the first quarter of that game when he got a scratch on his right arm. The scratch required a bandage, which he covered with a sweatband.

Johnson, the NBA's career leader in assists with 9,921, shocked the sports world last Nov. 7 when he suddenly announced his retirement. He said he was quitting because he recently had tested HIV positive.

Not long after, he began contemplating a comeback and in February was the Most Valuable Player in the NBA All-Star game, when he scored 25 points and made three straight 3-pointers in the final five minutes.

A week later, his number was retired by the Lakers, but even at that time he made it clear he was considering a return.

'It is a physical game, and you do get kicked and scratched. I do have concerns, just like anybody would have. It's not a thing of kicking a man when he's down.'

— Karl Malone, Utah Jazz

Pac-10 awards weekly honor to Duck end

The Pacific-10 Conference named Oregon defensive end Jeff Cummins defensive player of the week for his performance Saturday in the Ducks' 34-17 win over Washington State.

Cummins, a senior, had five tackles and three sacks totaling 25 yards against the favored Cougars in Pullman.

Cummins shares the honor with USC's Curtis Conway and California's Russell White, who won the honors for special teams and offensive play, respectively.

Kicker Tommy Thompson is the only other Duck to receive the honor this season. He has received the award twice this year.

SEASON

Continued from Page 8

Cougars to finish 4-7.

OK, so I was off by a few, but who knew UCLA would be so bad this late in the season, and I underestimated the patsies Washington State scheduled to put life in the program.

Some of the teams WSU beat on its way to a 6-0 record are Montana, who is currently 3-5 in the Big Sky Conference, Temple (1-7) and the previously mentioned Oregon State Beavers. Sure they beat 5-4 Fresno State, but they struggled to do that, and they beat Arizona, but that was when the Wildcats were struggling so bad they tied the Beavers.

The Cougars succeeded in fooling people for a while, and were ranked as high as 13th in the country before folding in back-to-back weeks against USC and Oregon. It doesn't get much easier for the Cougars as they finish the season against Arizona State, Stanford and Washington.

Number One: It is time for the NCAA to realize the big business college football has become and make two changes: institute a playoff system and play overtime when a game is tied after regulation.

I have rarely had more respect for a coach than I did for Texas Tech head coach Spike Dykes earlier this year when he passed up an almost certain tie to go for the win against Oregon.

Too often we see coaches like Lou Holtz of Notre Dame and Auburn's Pat "Tie" Die go for ties instead of wins during big games. I know college football is played by amateurs and winning shouldn't be everything, but if that is the case, tell me why college basketball has overtime.

As for this No. 1 controversy:

Like I said earlier, I know winning and being the best aren't supposed to be what college athletics are all about, but I ask why college basketball has a post-season tournament and football doesn't?

The simplest way to institute a playoff system is first to move bowl games up two weeks, it is ridiculous for teams to need five weeks to prepare for a bowl game. For example this year Washington's final regular season game is Nov. 21 against Washington State, but then it must wait until New Year's Day to play in the Rose Bowl.

Play the bowl games during the first three weeks of December, then take the top four teams in the polls and have them play a college football Final Four during the final week of December and the first week of January.

As for who is No. 1 this year, I was finally sure it was Miami until Washington annihilated a good Stanford squad last week by a score of 41-7, and once again clouded the picture. The only thing that is sure is we are currently seeing two of the most talented college football teams in a long time. For these two teams to go unbeaten for almost two whole seasons is incredible and thus both teams should be called the best.

One solution to finding out who is No. 1 is to bring back all the Miami and Washington players who graduated last year, and play at a neutral site somewhere in Kansas. There aren't many sporting events I'm willing to pay money to watch on TV, but this would be a Pay-Per-View bonanza. Are you listening Don King?

Steve Mims is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

PAC-10

Continued from Page 8

12 teams, with Colorado to become its 11th member and Texas the second expansion target.

"They're approaching Colorado first because they think it's ready to go and Texas is not," said one official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Texas is the more important one."

Pac-10 commissioner Tom Hansen said he has been instructed not to comment on expansion.

"I won't confirm or deny anything," Hansen said. "Once you start down that path, you never stop."

Colorado athletic director Bill Marolt said he had no knowledge of the Pac-10's discussion.


"Well, there are all sorts of rumors about all sorts of schools," Marolt said. "I really don't have anything to say."

An official within the Pac-10 told the newspaper "in the next few weeks and months, there will be movement at the presidential level" regarding Colorado. He said the Pac-10 presidents had been "careful" not to take a vote on the issue.

Texas Chancellor William Cunningham was out of town Monday and did not return a phone call from The Associated Press.

A second official in the Pac-10 said the CEOs had taken a straw vote of 9-0, with one abstention, to pursue Colorado. The league requires unanimous agreement in all formal votes.

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