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Halvorsen: Shaq deserves his own type of MVP

■ Continued from Page 5

Drexler and Charles Barkley; however, both of them showed up. O'Neal claimed that Laker doctors ordered him to stay in Los Angeles and let his knee recuperate because the pressure changes in high altitude travel could affect his recovery.

Give me a break!

If you're given an award (of sorts), you had better show up and accept it, especially when you are supposedly in the same company as Larry Bird, Julius

Erving, Wilt Chamberlain and the like. If you can recall a certain All-Star game in the past, O'Neal stormed out of the venue ranting that he was never going to play in another All-Star game again just because he wasn't voted the Most Valuable Player for the game and that he was done a severe injustice.

Boo hoo.

It's just the All-Star game. Nobody takes it seriously, and besides, he'll probably play in it 10 more times before he's done.

In an interview with NBC during the second half of the Lakers' nationally televised game with Seattle, O'Neal sort of gave a weak apology for not showing up, claiming that if he had it to do all over again he would show up. Guess what, Shaq. There probably won't be anything like that ever again, or at least not with those same players because at the 100th anniversary of the NBA, they'll probably all be dead. Also, with the way O'Neal accepts his awards, the NBA probably will be

a little reluctant to ever give him another one. But I guess we all get what we deserve, right?

Shaq deserves an MVP award, but not for most valuable player. The new MVP award that will be implemented in Shaq's name will stand for most valuable pouter. Enjoy the award, Shaq.

Ryan Halvorsen is a sports reporter for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the paper.

NFL: Vermeil says cutting Phillips is not an option

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Sunday in Omaha, Neb., after cursing and threatening police officers who came to his hotel room. As police escorted him from the hotel, he threatened to beat up another person he fought with earlier in the evening, officers said.

Also, two women who attended the party accused Phillips and other party-goers of touching them inappropriately. One woman told police that Phillips poked her in the buttocks with a champagne bottle.

A man was cited for disorderly conduct and released, but none of the other party-goers were ticketed. Phillips was released on \$50 bond, and a hearing was scheduled for Tuesday in Douglas County Court.

"Everyone else remained calm," said officer Jim Murray. "Phillips could have walked away from this, too."

He already is serving three years' probation after pleading no contest in December to a drunken-driving arrest in California. That came while he was serving a one-year probation following an assault of a former girlfriend in Nebraska, which could lead to jail time.

The latest arrest stemmed from a party following a wedding reception. Vermeil said he was somewhat encouraged after speaking with someone at the scene.

"He told me it was blown totally out of proportion, that if it hadn't been Lawrence Phillips, there may not even have been an incident in regard to an arrest," Vermeil said.

However, the arrest has changed Vermeil's thinking about the free-agent market and the draft. He said the Rams might be more active pursuing free agents and running backs will be a higher priority in the draft.

Then again, Vermeil said Nebraska coach Tom Osborne and several Rams players have told him Phillips is basically a good person.

"You know something? The guys have some real good things to say about him," Vermeil said. "I've gotten good feedback."

The previous regime tried to keep Phillips out of trouble by surrounding him with more stable types like fellow Nebraska product Toby Wright. Even so, last year he was fined for missing more than 30 team meetings.

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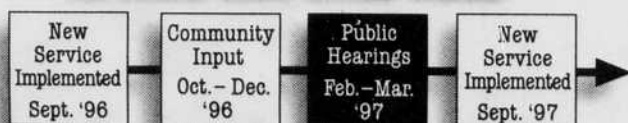
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