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MLB: Griffey deflects questions

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projection sheets in their lockers.

Griffey, Oakland's Mark McGwire and New York's Tino Martinez all arrived at the All-Star break on a pace to challenge Maris. All three still trail, with Griffey fading the most.

Maris hit his 36th homer on July 21 in that magical season of 1961. McGwire has 34 and Martinez 33.

Aside from monumental ability it takes to hit 61 homers in a season, perhaps the hardest part of chasing Maris is the pressure. It appears to be getting to "The Kid."

The expressive, fun-loving poster boy for what's good about baseball, Griffey angrily deflected questions about his slump Tuesday night. Glaring impatiently and noisily shuffling items in his shaving kit, Griffey assailed reporters who asked about it, then turned his attack on Mariners general manager Woody Woodward.

AL West-leading Seattle played an exhibition game Monday night against the Double-A Southern

League All-Stars in Zebulon, N.C. The 9-3 loss came on the eve of their longest road trip of the season — 12 games in four cities spanning two time zones.

"That's the ... Mariner way," Griffey said, practically whispering in the corner of a dead-quiet clubhouse. "It's the same stuff every year. Instead of becoming a first-class organization, which we could be, we're stuck in the '70s, seeing how many things we can do for other people."

As the postgame gathering of reporters stood dumbfounded in front of his locker, Griffey abruptly said, "Is that it?" When they dispersed, Griffey continued bashing Woodward in a hushed voice to the *The News Tribune* of Tacoma, Wash.

Griffey specifically exempted Mariners chairman John Ellis and president Chuck Armstrong.

"Chuck comes in the clubhouse. John comes in the clubhouse. Woody doesn't," Griffey said.

Before Wednesday night's game, Woodward said he had not talked with Griffey about his comments but had no hard feelings.

"We've been together too many years, I've known the family too many years," Woodward said. "I don't think he could do anything that would affect my friendship."

Griffey wasn't the only Seattle player angry about the North Carolina trip. But clearly, Griffey took it upon himself to speak up about a series of perceived slights by Woodward.

"This team never makes a player feel good," Griffey told *The News Tribune*. "Why can't they pick up Randy Johnson by picking up his option for 1998 now, make him feel appreciated? Why does this team always wait until the last minute? They did the same thing with me, they did it when they signed Randy."

"Woody's saying we don't have enough money to get this guy or get that guy, but there are players in this clubhouse who want to defer money to free up something now. Management won't do it."

He still takes batting practice with his cap turned backwards — which should not be perceived as disrespectful but as a sign of how much he loves to play.

NBA: Jackson's postseasons successful

■ Continued from Page 5

eral manager.

There were reports the Bulls had offered Jackson \$4.3 million for one year and that Jackson was seeking \$6 million. A source close to negotiations, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told *The Associated Press* that Jackson got what he wanted.

Jackson was paid \$2.75 million last season. That made him one of the best bargains in pro basketball, especially when compared with the offseason deals signed by Larry Brown at Philadelphia (an average of \$5 million a year for five years) and Larry Bird at Indiana (an average of between \$4 million and \$4.5 million a year for three years). Brown has never won an NBA championship and Bird had never coached a game on any level.

Jackson is still earning less than the Boston Celtics' Rick Pitino, who is getting \$7 million a year over 10 years. Pitino also is the team's president.

As recently as a week ago Musburger characterized the Bulls' offers as "insulting" and said the two parties were far apart financially. Reinsdorf at the time said he wanted to meet face-to-face with Jackson. Musburger said no thanks, he wasn't going to stand outside in the hallway.

Jordan was paid \$30.14 million last season and is expected to be offered an increase of 20 percent to return for one more year. His agent, David Falk, was on vacation.

Fans and NBA insiders were surprised by the

Bulls' apparent willingness to replace Jackson.

Krause, often at odds with his coach, was said to have had a list of successors already drawn up, headed by Iowa State coach Tim Floyd.

Krause said re-signing the coaching staff would be the next step.

"We expect the entire staff to be back, then we work on the players, and we hope to get all players done," he said.

While Jordan did not make specific demands on money, he did say that in addition to Jackson, he wanted forward Scottie Pippen and even troublemaker Dennis Rodman back with the team. Pippen had been the subject of trade rumors.

"We're entitled to defend what we have until we lose it," Jordan said after the Bulls beat the Utah Jazz for their fifth championship in seven years. "If we lose it, then you look at it and say, 'OK, let's change.'"

Pippen has one year left on his seven-year contract. Rodman is also a free agent.

Jackson, a disciple of Zen who buys his players books on the first long road trip each season, has a 483-173 record in the regular season during his eight years.

But it is in the postseason where he's been the most successful. His 96-35 mark, a percentage of .733, is the best among NBA coaches.

Jackson was also a member of the New York Knicks' 1973 championship team as a player.

Cowboys' stars settle with TV station

■ NFL: Sources said the two players will split a payment of at least \$2 million

The Associated Press

DALLAS — Cowboys stars Michael Irvin and Erik Williams settled their defamation lawsuit against a television station in a deal that "represents a major step" toward rectifying the damage done to them, their lawyer said Wednesday.

Attorney Peter Ginsberg and an official for the Dallas-Fort Worth television station said they could not disclose details of the settlement with KXAS reporter Marty Griffin and Lin Television Corp., parent company for KXAS.

However, a source speaking on the condition of anonymity, told *The Associated Press* the settlement calls for the players to split a payment of at least \$2 million.

"Erik Williams and Michael Irvin entered into this lawsuit to try to make a statement and try to come out a little more whole following the abuse that they suffered," Ginsberg said. "There is no settlement in the world that could ever make up in whole for the damage that was done to them. But the settlement represents a major step in that direction."

Williams refused to discuss the settlement.

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