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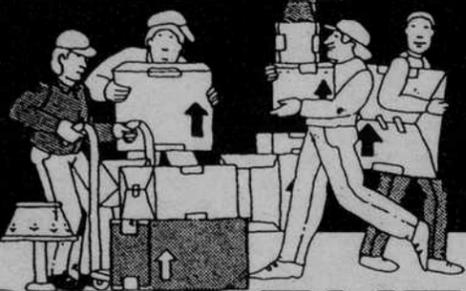
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The ODE Classified section ... much more than a place for the crossword

Bucks SWAT Hornets away

By Arnie Stapleton
The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Ervin Johnson has gone from MIA to MVP in George Karl's eyes.

The coach and center didn't get along when they were in Seattle, where Karl questioned Johnson's guts and gumption, suggesting the raw big man might not be cut out for the rigors of the NBA.

In Milwaukee, they've found bliss together, and never more so than on Sunday, when the Bucks advanced to the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 1986 and Karl called Johnson his most valuable player.

Glenn Robinson scored 29 points and Ray Allen had 28, matching their career playoff highs, and Sam Cassell added 17 as the Bucks beat the Charlotte Hornets 104-95 in Game 7.

"Glenn and Ray were very ..." Karl said, pausing to give credit where he thought it was really due. "Ervin Johnson probably is in my mind the MVP of the series."

"He was so good at the dirty work and in the interior, in the paint," Karl said. "He and Scotty

[Williams] and Jason Caffey, all my big guys did a great job. Even though the 'Big Three' are expecting most of the reward, I really think Ervin was fantastic."

Johnson had 11 rebounds and four blocks as Milwaukee tied a franchise playoff record with 13

"I just thank God that he united me and George back together."

**Ervin Johnson
Milwaukee Bucks center**

blocked shots, including at least one by all five starters.

After moving into the starting lineup in Game 5, Johnson pulled down 41 rebounds and blocked 12 shots. He also helped frustrate Elden Campbell and Jamal Mashburn.

"I know Glenn Robinson and Ray Allen and Sam Cassell are great shooters, but Scott Williams and Ervin Johnson were probably MVPs," Mashburn concurred. "They sacrificed so much to get

those guys open. They're like two P.J. Browns out there. I got sick and tired of seeing Ervin Johnson."

So did Karl when he was in Seattle.

"I just thank God that he united me and George back together," Johnson said. "A lot of people were saying a lot of negative things about that when we got back together, how our relationship was going to be. I'm just so glad that we worked things out."

"We got married again, and hopefully it's for life."

The rest of the Bucks and their fans sure hope so.

While Johnson was patrolling the paint the way Karl had pleaded for him to do in their younger days, Robinson and Allen took turns stifling Mashburn, who missed 18-of-25 shots and finished with 21 points.

Cassell tied a playoff career high with 13 assists as the Bucks overcame Baron Davis' career-high 29 points.

The Bucks hit 33 of 35 free throws — including all 20 in the fourth quarter — compared to the Hornets' 17-of-28.

Golf

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native, who played in the Masters earlier this year and will play alongside Tiger Woods in the upcoming U.S. Open, struggled in Corvallis to finish tied-for-38th with a 223.

The Sun Devils weren't hurting, though, as Matt Jones won the individual title with a 208 and Jin

Park ended up in third with a 211.

Other Pacific-10 Conference teams that qualified for the NCAAs include Arizona (2nd, 867), host Oregon State (tied-for-6th, 881), Stanford (tied-for-sixth, 881), UCLA (tied-for-sixth, 881) and Washington (10th, 883).

As for the Ducks, they say they are frustrated about not playing up to their talent level, but take solace in the fact that they will only lose Genovese from their roster for next

season.

"We only have one senior in this group so we have four guys coming back," Nosler said. "Hopefully this was a less-than-enjoyable experience for them, so it will help focus us for next year and put things back to square one."

With the men's golf team's departure, only the Oregon men's and women's track and field teams remain in action from the school's 15 varsity sports.



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