

Brown takes over Pistons with high hopes

Perry A. Farrell
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DETROIT — In the end, the possibility of reaching the NBA Finals within the next couple of years convinced Larry Brown that the fastest route would be through Detroit and not Washington, the Los Angeles Clippers or Houston.

Brown, 62, will make the Pistons the next stop on his winding road Monday when the team introduces him at a 2 p.m. news conference, a source within the organization told the Detroit Free Press.

Brown, a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, was the NBA

coach of the year in 2001 as he led the Philadelphia 76ers to the NBA Finals. He is expected to coach the U.S. men's national team at the Olympic-qualifying tournament this summer in Puerto Rico.

Brown's brother, Herb, coached the Pistons in 1976-1978, but the expectations are far greater now than they were back then.

When Joe Dumars took over as president of basketball operations in 2000, he wanted to put the organization in a position where it could attract one of the best coaches in the league, and he has done that in hiring Brown. He's consid-

ered one of the league's best turnaround artists and ranks with Pat Riley and Phil Jackson among the best bench coaches in the league.

Brown's deal is for five years at \$5 million per season, and it will be interesting to see how long he stays. The Wizards reportedly offered him \$7 million a year plus general managership duties, but the veteran coach wanted a chance to win now. And the Pistons, the two-time defending Central Division champions, advanced to the Eastern Conference finals this year after beating Brown's 76ers in the second round. Brown then resigned from the

Philadelphia job after six seasons.

His salary is about \$1 million less per season than he was making in Philadelphia.

The two sides talked at length on Saturday and hammered out a deal after the Pistons released Rick Carlisle from his coaching duties late Friday night.

Not many Hall of Fame coaches have big shoes to fill, but Brown does because of Carlisle's work the past two seasons.

Carlisle won 50 games in both of his seasons in Detroit and was NBA coach of the year as a rookie.

Brown led the 76ers to the playoffs in the last five of his six seasons there. Before that he coached at Indiana, which he led to Game 7 of the Eastern Conference finals in 1994 and '95.

The Pistons are getting a teacher they believe can help develop the likes of Tayshaun Prince, Mehmet Okur and expected draft pick Darko Milicic, the 7-foot-1, 253-pound 17-year-old from Serbia-Montenegro.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

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To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) _ Today is a 6 _ If you spend just a little more time thinking about your domestic situation, you'll find a way to spend a lot less money. Calm down, and scratch an expensive item off your list.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) _ Today is a 7 _ More money is coming in, but it's not going out. Divert it into a safe place so that there's plenty when you want it. You can manage quite well without it now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) _ Today is a 7 _ Drop a reminder to one who owes you, and you'll finally be repaid. You could also get a favorable response to an unreasonable request.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) _ Today is a 7 _ You're powerful in a subtle way. Others watch for your approval. No need to explain how you've achieved your goals. Let them try to figure it out.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) _ Today is a 7 _ You'll now be more effective working behind the scenes. Don't get into an argument with someone who's made up their mind. Conserve your resources.

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