



Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes
Sports Editor

Who said the Philadelphia 76ers were a bunch of chokers? Who said that when the going gets tough, the sixers would get going... meaning right out of the playoffs.

Bewitched by the Boston Celtics in the opening game of their NBA Eastern Conference playoff finals, and bothered by the 40-point loss, the Philadelphia 76ers fought back in game two with the same tenacity that almost brought them the conference title a year ago. The sixers after being humiliated came back to edge the Celtics 96-94 to even the series at 1-1.

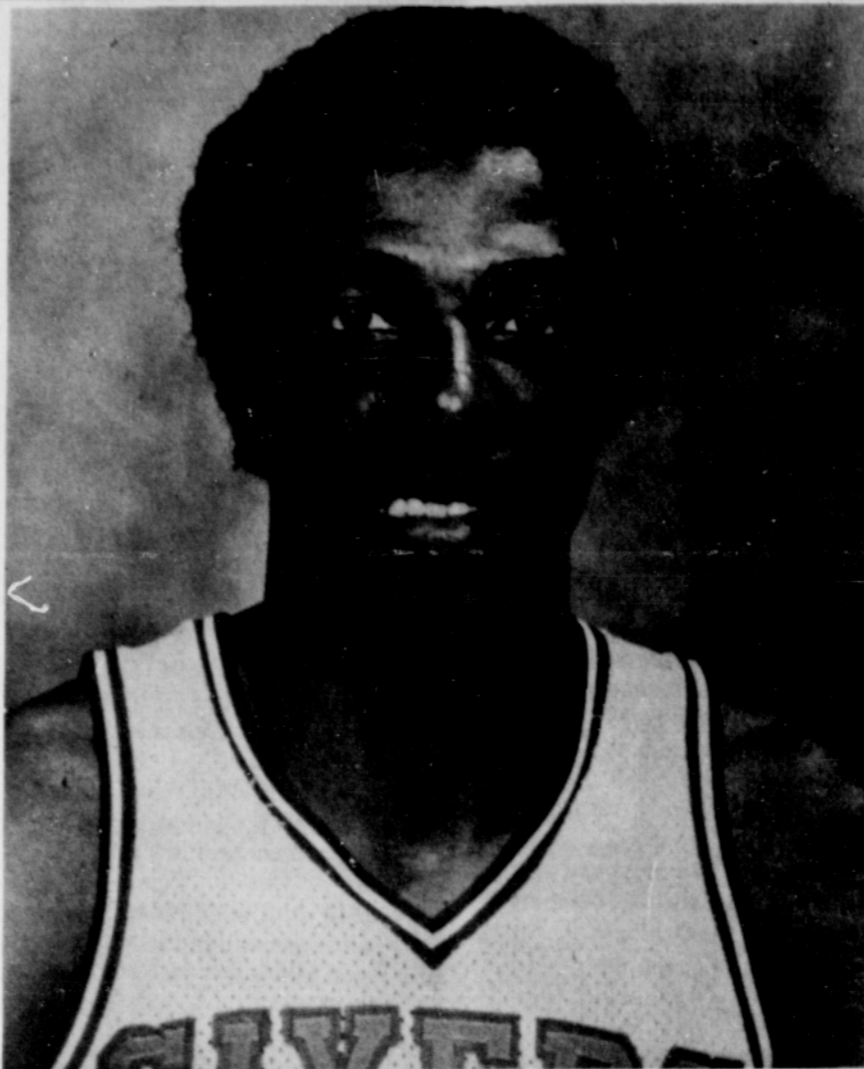
In the second game it was Caldwell Jones' marvelous outside shooting that spelled the difference. Jones netted 22 points, while grabbing 11 boards to leave Boston reeling in his aftermath. Philly then went home and took the next two rather easily winning by margins of 9 and 25 points respectively. Boston was now back 3-1 and in the exact situation of a year ago, when they got down then stormed past the Sixers to achieve one of the most spectacular reversals in NBA history. Most fans expected the Celtics to toughen up at home, and they did winning this one easily as Robert Parrish outdueled both Jones and Darrel Dawkins. Philly fans were preparing the champagne as game

six was being readied for Philadelphia's Spectrum. The battle began and ended after the first 8 minutes of the opening stanza. Boston's tenacious defense held Philly to a skimpy 27 points in the second half. That my friends is an all-time NBA playoff low.

The series now knotted at 3-3 and all fans in all the NBA domain expected the Sixers to have as much chance in the seventh game against Boston as "Dr. J." would in walking across the Potomac in mid-summer. Friends throughout the land settled back in their easy chairs this Sunday to watch what everyone thought would be a slaughter.

But Andrew Toney, the second-year guard from SW Louisiana, had other ideas. Toney just simply would not let the Sixers die. Time after time he canned crucial jump shots. He drove the middle and when that was closed he deftly passed to a cutting Erving for another two points.

Boston Coach Bill Fitch, in an effort to cool the hot hand of Toney, decided to bring out 6-9 all-pro forward Larry Bird. All Toney did was to step back then around the slower Bird. Andrew was superb and with his 34 points on 11-19 shooting he certainly was my choice for MVP.



Watch for "Dr. J." as Sixers meet LA Lakers for NBA championship

College ranks

by Ron Sykes

Ralph Sampson, the Virginia giant who has accomplished more in three years of college basketball competition than any previous player has done in four, has been selected as the winner of the 1982 Tanqueray Achievement Award for excellence in amateur sports.

The 7-foot, 4-inch tower of power kept the Cavalier in the forefront throughout the 1981-82 season as they consistently were at the top in the National polls. At the finish he was a unanimous selection for every All-American team and went on to selection as the player of the year. Sampson, who weighs only 219 pounds despite his awesome height, gained every honor in sight this season as was the case a year ago when he was equally outstanding as a sophomore.

A Virginian all the way as he migrated from his home of Harrisonburg where he was an all-state high

school star, Sampson is considered already to be the top professional prospect in the college ranks.

What is the real reason why the No. 1 rated prep center in the nation wound up at Creighton University coached by Hall of Famer Willis Reed? Reed who played his college ball at Grambling State University for Coach Fred Hobdy and led the New York Knicks to the NBA title, coached Creighton to its worst record (7-20) the past season.

Yet, Reed's Creighton University five landed Benoit Benjamin, a 7-foot Monroe, La. native.

Benjamin passed up scheduled trips to two other schools, after visiting Grambling, Hawaii and LSU and signed with Creighton. One now wonders why? We all know that Creighton's alumnae isn't exactly rolling in bucks so you would readily dismiss any under-the-table doings.

Rumors have been flying for weeks as to why Benjamin, generally considered the premier big man in the nation, would opt for tiny Creighton.

Rumors have ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime but the latest one takes the cake. A close and usually reliable source reports that the 6-10 Willis Reed is dating Benjamin's mother. Then another rumor had it that Benjamin's teammate and good buddy would be offered a full ride at Creighton if he could convince the highly touted Benjamin to enroll at Creighton. Rumor also had it that before Benjamin signed with Creighton that Hobdy would be sent out to pasture in favor of Reed. At any rate Benjamin is at Creighton and Reed is at Creighton and together they should help turn around an already dismal program. And never mind how, what and where.

NBA playoff schedule Best of Seven Series

- Thursday, May 27**
Los Angeles at Philadelphia, 6 p.m. (PDT)
- Sunday, May 30**
Los Angeles at Philadelphia, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 1**
Philadelphia at Los Angeles, 6 p.m.
- Thursday, June 3**
Philadelphia at Los Angeles, 6 p.m.
- Sunday, June 6**
Los Angeles at Philadelphia, 11 a.m. (if necessary)
- Tuesday, June 8**
Philadelphia at Los Angeles, 6 p.m. (if necessary)
- Thursday, June 10**
Los Angeles at Philadelphia, 6 p.m. (if necessary)

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