

SPORTS/EVENTS

The Locker Room

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.



Norm Nixon: "There Is Life After Basketball"

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.
Like former teammate Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, "Stormin'" Norman Nixon has found happiness and peace of mind after basketball. He now has the time to spend with his family and take care of the business ventures he involved himself in as a player.

Nixon was in Portland recently to solidify a big real estate (apartment complex) deal in Gresham, Oregon. Like most former players, who wander up the Pacific Northwest, Nixon found some time to check out the Portland Trailblazers at Memorial Coliseum. "We had some great games in this building," he said, referring to his days with the Los Angeles Lakers. Nixon finished his NBA career with the Clippers in 1989.

When questioned about his adjustment to the "real world" and what he has been doing since his retirement, Nixon, one of the fastest guards every to play in the NBA, was just as quick with an answer.

"There is a lot of life after basketball," he laughed. "I'm spending a great deal of time with my family. I have two lovely kids (Vivian, 5 and Norman Jr., 2), a beautiful wife (entertainer Debbie Allen), and some great projects to work on. By virtue of me being hurt the last two weeks of my career, it made the transition much smoother than if my career had been abruptly cut off."

Nixon damaged his knee in a benefit softball game organized by his wife and after some very intense rehabilitation, he retired. In 768 games, Nixon scored

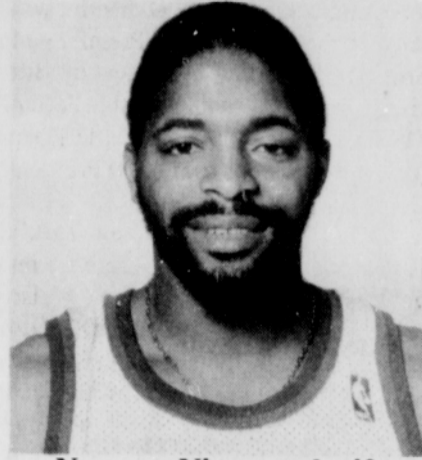
12,065 points and dished out 6,386 assists. He averaged 15.7 points during his career. Originally drafted by the Lakers out of Duquesne University in 1977, Nixon was traded to the Clippers along with Eddie Jordan and two draft choices. The Lakers received Byron Scott and Swen Nater in the deal.

Nixon, who sported one of the two World Championships rings he helped (1980 & 1982) the Los Angeles Lakers win, still maintain close relationships with his old teammates. Basketball has helped him to build some life-long friendships and expose him to some business/professional opportunities that may not have materialized had it not been for the sport. Nixon feels blessed and he is thankful.

"No doubt about it, basketball has been great for me," said the native of Macon, Georgia. Along with his wife Debbie Allen, Nixon is involved in a great deal more than real estate and raising "great kids". He is definitely making use of every opportunity to broaden his horizons.

"Right now, Debbie and I are working on several projects. We have produced five music videos, we're in production right now for a special for ABC, and we are working on a feature length film for Warner Bros. We are also doing a movie for NBC. So, I'm staying."

For those who can remember, Nixon once ran the floor with the likes to George Gervin, Julius Erving, Artis Gilmore, Gus Williams, Randy Smith, Maurice Lucas, Lionel Hollins, and a host of other "soldiers", who helped



Norman Nixon and wife, Debbie Allen



make the NBA what it is today.

If you jog your memory a little more, you will also remember that Norm Nixon danced in the arms of Debbie Allen in an episode of "Fame" several years ago. "Magic" has a basketball court in his Los Angeles home, but Norman and Debbie have a dance studio. Both have been known to kick up their heels a bit... Hollywood style. "I'm staying busy," he smiled.

NBA PLAYOFF COACHING RECORDS

(prior to 1990 NBA Playoffs)

Most Career Victories			Records of Active Coaches		
1. Red Auerbach	99-69	.589	1. Pat Riley	98-42	.700
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3. K.C. Jones	79-54	.594	3. Bill Fitch	54-48	.529
4. Billy Cunningham	66-39	.629	4. Chuck Daly	47-26	.644
5. John Kundla	60-35	.632	5. Don Nelson	46-50	.479
6. Red Holzman	58-47	.552	6. Lenny Wilkens	41-38	.519
7. Dick Motta	56-70	.444	7. Doug Moe	33-47	.413
8. Bill Fitch	54-48	.529	8. Del Harris	20-25	.444
9. Chuck Daly	47-26	.644	9. Cotton Fitzsimmons	20-32	.385
10. Tom Heinsohn	47-33	.588	10. Bernie Bickerstaff	12-15	.444
11. John MacLeod	47-51	.480	11. Matt Guokas	8-9	.471
12. Don Nelson	46-50	.479	12. Larry Brown	8-13	.381
13. Alex Hannum	45-34	.570	13. Wes Unseld	2-3	.400
14. Jack Ramsay	44-58	.431	14. Jerry Sloan	2-7	.222
15. Lenny Wilkens	41-38	.519	15. Don Chaney	1-3	.250
16. Larry Costello	37-23	.617	16. Rick Adelman	0-3	.000
17. Bill Sharman	35-27	.565	17. Jim Lynam	0-3	.000
18. Bill Russell	34-27	.557	18. Jimmy Rodgers	0-3	.000
19. Al Cervi	33-26	.559			
20. Fred Schaus	33-38	.465			
21. Doug Moe	33-47	.413			
22. Al Attles	31-30	.508			
23. Joe Lapchick	30-30	.500			
24. Gene Shue	30-47	.390			
25. Richie Guerin	26-34	.433			

The following active coaches have no previous NBA Playoff head coaching experience: Richie Adubato, Phil Jackson, Stu Jackson, Gene Littles, Bill Musselman, Ron Rothstein and Dick Versace.

1990 NBA PLAYOFF POOL

The playoff pool for 1990 is the same as 1989, a total of \$2.4 million to be distributed in the following manner:

Best Record in NBA:	\$70,000
Best Record in Conference, \$67,500 each:	135,000
Second Best Record in Conference, \$55,000 each:	110,000
Third Best Record in Conference, \$40,000 each:	80,000
Fourth Best Record in Conference, \$35,000 each:	70,000
Fifth Best Record in Conference, \$27,500 each:	55,000
Sixth Best Record in Conference, \$20,000 each:	40,000
Teams Participating in First Round, \$34,375 each:	550,000
Teams Participating in Conference Semifinals, \$41,250 each:	330,000
Teams Participating in Conference Finals, \$68,750 each:	275,000
Winning Team, NBA Finals:	410,000
Losing Team, NBA Finals:	275,000
Total Playoff Pool:	\$2,400,000

NBA PLAYOFF NOTEBOOK...

For the first time in 14 years the NBA Playoffs will take place without former LA Lakers center **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**. With Abdul-Jabbar, who is the all-time NBA playoff leader in several categories having retired, other league veterans have become the leading active players in playoff statistics. Boston's **Larry Bird** is the top active scorer in playoff history with 3,559 points, currently in sixth place overall behind **Wilt Chamberlain** (3,607). Bird also leads all active players in field goals attempted (2,797) and made (1,331), and in free throws made (825). Bird's Celtic teammate, **Dennis Johnson**, is the leader in playoff games played (175), minutes played (6,842) and personal fouls (558). Chicago's **Michael Jordan** is already at the top of the all-time list for the highest scoring average in playoff competition with 35.4 ppg. The criteria calls for a minimum of 625 points scored or 25 games played, and Jordan has scored 1,309 points in only 37 games. **Jerry West** ranks second with 29.1 ppg — 4,457 points in 153 games... LA Lakers Coach **Pat Riley** (98-42) needs only one more playoff victory to tie former Celtic Coach **Red Auerbach** (99-69) for most career playoff victories. But Auerbach holds a big lead in number of titles won with nine to Riley's four. In between these two, in second place for most titles won, is **John Kundla** of the Minneapolis Lakers with five... Over the past 10 years, Edge NBA Most Valuable Players have combined to average 26.5 points and 9.9 rebounds per game while shooting 52.2 percent from the field and 82.7 percent from the free throw line. Those players have also led their teams to an average of 59.7 victories per season... In the 21 years since the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Award has been given out, on only six occasions has the regular season MVP and the Finals MVP been won by the same player. The first was New York's **Willis Reed** in 1970. The other double-winners were **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** for Milwaukee (1971), **Moses Malone** for Philadelphia (1983), Boston's **Larry Bird** (1984 and 1986) and the Lakers' **Magic Johnson** (1987).

The 1990 NBA World Champions may have to play 26 games en route to the title. That's a maximum of five games in the First Round (2-2-1 format), seven Conference Semifinals Games (2-2-1-1-1), seven Conference Finals games (2-2-1-1-1) and seven NBA Finals games (2-3-2). Last year it took the Detroit Pistons only 17 of the possible 26 games to win the title, as they swept Boston in the First Round, Milwaukee in the Conference Semifinals and the Lakers in the Finals. Detroit's only two losses came against Chicago in the Eastern Conference Finals. That 15-2 record put the

Lottery, Draft on TV

The NBA's Draft Lottery will once again be televised live by CBS on Sunday, May 20, at approximately 2:15 EST, during halftime of an Eastern Conference Playoff game. TNT will air both rounds of the NBA Draft on Wednesday, June 27, starting at 7:30 p.m. EST.

Pistons in second place (.883) for the best won-lost percentage in a playoff series. The 1983 Philadelphia 76ers hold the record, a .923 percentage, with a 12-1 mark. The 1988 Lakers, by the way, hold the record for most games played in one playoff series with 24. In other 1990 Draft news, several teams currently own multiple first-round draft choices as a result of trades. The LA Clippers have their own pick plus Cleveland's (Harper-Ferry, R. Williams 11/89); Dallas has its own plus Indiana's (Garnett, Stansbury 10/84) and Washington's (J. Vincent 9/86); and Minnesota has its own plus Philadelphia's (Mahorn 10/89). Of course, this may be affected by last minute trades. As the NBA is entering its Playoffs, the CBA is finishing up its post-season in which the championship series matched the Rapid City (SD) Thrillers against the La Crosse (WI) Catbirds. La Crosse Coach **Flip Saunders** had played for **Bill Musselman**, the father of rookie Rapid City Coach **Eric Musselman**, in college at the University of Minnesota. The elder Musselman's Timberwolves were one of only two NBA teams to hold their opponents under 100 points a game (the other team being the Detroit Pistons). Musselman's 1987-88 Albany Patroons set the current CBA record for fewest points allowed with 97.5. In other CBA news, Albany's **Vincent Askew** was named MVP. Pensacola's **Clifford Lett** was Rookie of the Year, Topeka's **Duane Ferrell** was CBA Newcomer of the Year and Albany's **Gerald Oliver** was Coach of the Year.

Peninsula Park Little League



Terry Tims And Chuck Washington...

Little League coaches, express optimism about league competition this season and have set goals of on-field discipline and team leadership. Despite fielding a less mature team this year, the two coaches were enthused over last week's resounding victory by team KETIV (sponsored by KETIV Technology) 22-2 over its Peninsula Park league opponent.



Aluminum Bats Hurt Baseball

The rise of the aluminum baseball bat over the last decade has created one of the biggest controversies in sports. Is use of the aluminum bat at the high school and college level helping or hurting the game? I definitely think the aluminum bat is hurting baseball.

Aluminum bats are fine for young kids. At the Little League level they make great economic sense. Baseball is an expensive sport, and it costs a lot to start a decent program. Unlike wooden bats, which can crack and break, aluminum bats will last for years and can be used by team after team.

But aluminum bats keep kids from learning many of the fundamentals of the game. By the time a young player gets to the high school level, he should be using wooden bats. At the time when a kid could be getting serious about his game, he still only needs to get his bat on the ball to hit it out of a park. Everything is magnified with an aluminum bat. The real art of hitting isn't learned.

Pitching also is affected. Young pitchers don't learn to throw inside because they can't throw inside to hitters with aluminum bats. An inside pitch will "jam" a hitter with a wooden bat. The hitter can't do anything. But again, with an aluminum bat, a hitter just has to get part of the bat on the ball to get a decent hit.

It's very aggravating for pro scouts to watch a game and have no idea what young players actually can do. A guy who is hitting one home run after another with an aluminum bat may not be able to do anything with a wooden bat. They don't get a real idea of a hitter's strength and rhythm. Pitchers can't show all their stuff.

At the college level, the economic arguments for aluminum bats no longer make sense. I think any college that can afford to have a baseball program should be able to afford wooden bats. It should be a rule.

I sincerely hope that it never gets to the point where aluminum bats are used in the major leagues. Not only for the most obvious reasons. Of course it would take a lot less time for hitters to break a lot of long-standing hitting records, including my own, and pitching would go downhill. But more important, the game's safety would be affected. It's already dangerous enough trying to get out of the way of a foul-back off a wooden bat. In the hands of some of the sluggers in the majors, a foul-back off an aluminum bat could be deadly.

So for children, the aluminum bat is fine. But real baseball should be played with real bats—wooden bats. **ll**

Hank Aaron is the top home run hitter of all time with 755 homers. A member of baseball's Hall of Fame, Hank is senior vice president of the Atlanta Braves.

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