



THE LOCKER ROOM

BY ULYSSES TUCKER, JR.



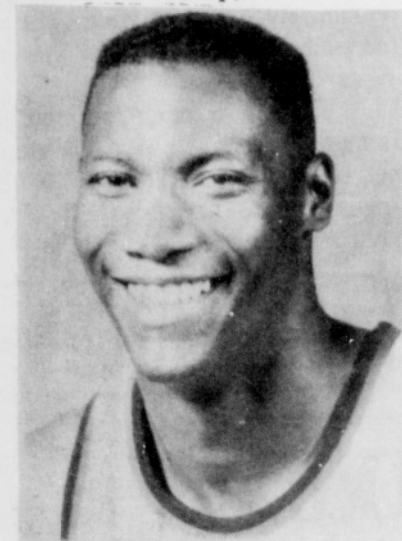
Jerome "Have Mercy" Kersey: Tough!

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

"...he is anything but a classic small forward—not a deadly shooter. He's no Doctor J., no Alex English, no Bernard King. But like Dennis Rodman of the Detroit Pistons, he's essential to a team composed of unconventional parts..."

Jim Patton/NBA Writer
Williamette Week

After spending his early years behind Kiki Vandeweghe, ex-communicated to the New York Knicks, Jerome Kersey has emerged as one of the best small forwards in the National Basketball Association. Portland fans did not take too kindly their favorite son (or white player) being traded away and Kersey took the heat. Critics said that he was inconsistent as an outside shooter and needed to be traded for a player who can fill it up night-in and night. You can cut that rap, now.



JEROME KERSEY

When told that he was considered the weak link in the Trail Blazers starting line up, Kersey, like Perry Mason—went to work building a case for his client, himself. "I was never a weak link," he said confidently. "I went through the season averaging almost sixteen points per game and 8.7 boards. I'm not even the main go to guy in the offense, so, those are great numbers, I think. It's (the playoffs) just an opportunity now. I'm getting time to get the ball, getting more shots, and putting up the numbers. All I have to do is keep doing that, hit the boards, and I'll be alright."

To date, Kersey has been averaging 21.3 points during the NBA playoffs and grabbing 81.7 rebounds, second only to Buck Williams (9.3). Kersey's scoring average is tops on the team going into the NBA Final against the

defending champions, the Detroit Pistons. Kersey expects a very physical series—"I'm not glad to just be here, I want to win," said Kersey.

Center Bill Lamber of the Pistons, known throughout the league as the dirtiest player in the NBA, believes that the Trail Blazers will be very competitive and physical.

"They are a difficult team to play because they're a big-time rebounding team and have explosive players (referring to Kersey, Drexler and Porter). We have our hands full," he told USA Today's David DuPree.

Drafted in the second round (46th) in 1984, Kersey is fast gaining the respect of sportswriters, coaches, and players around the league. His teammates respect him too. Terry Porter, resident point guard, said that he has watched Kersey blossom over the past couple of years and he is not surprised at his contributions.

"Jerome has been playing great," said Porter. "He has been one of the key guys for us throughout the playoffs and he is playing extremely well. He's going to continue playing that way and make us much better. I'm sure of that."

Porter dismisses the notion that Kersey, as suggested by some, is the weak link in the Blazers starting lineup. Porter says that it's a team game.

"It's really hard to give one guy a weak link on a team sport," he said. "He's really fought through all that adversity as far as the situation with him and Kiki. He's really come on and his game is great."

Kersey provides an element that Vandeweghe could not give to the Blazer team, heart. Vandeweghe had no heart. Kersey is not afraid to do what is necessary for his team to win. He rebounds, plays in your face defense, and blocks shots. He's tough. He's tough on small forwards who can not or will not bang with him on the boards. Ask Sean Elliott, Sam Perkins, or any other overpaid small forward who received no mercy from Kersey. If Kersey's value to the team is based on what his peers made last season, Brinks had better be ready to give Kersey a ride to the bank. If it is based on his peers wages and play this season, the Blazer front office had better call a couple of armoured cars.

No, Jerome Kersey might not be a classic small forward or a Doctor J, Alex English, or Bernard King because he does not bring home the All-Star statistics. In time, these above mentioned players may be remembered for not being a Jerome Kersey.



1990 NBA FINALS



CONGRATULATIONS BLAZERS!!!

GOOD LUCK IN THE NBA FINALS!!

FROM THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

CENTENNIAL LOGO

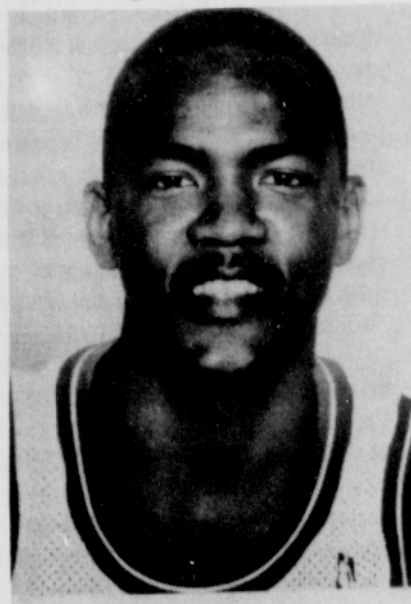


Pictured above is the official logo for the 100th anniversary celebration of the game of basketball, a year-long event scheduled for 1991-92. The logo was unveiled during the 1990 induction ceremonies at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA and it will be worn as a patch on the uniforms of all NBA players during the 1991-92 season. In addition to the NBA and the Basketball Hall of Fame, other organizations pledging support for the centennial program are U.S.A. Basketball (U.S. Olympic basketball), the NCAA, and the NFSHSA (National Federation of State High School Associations).

Joe Dumars, Jr.: Quiet Storm

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

In the 1985 College Draft, 17 teams picked before the Detroit Pistons selected Joe Dumars, Jr. out of McNeese State. He was a secret of some sort or a steal as one NBA General Manager put it, an outright steal.



JOE DUMARS

From a quiet country boy from Louisiana to one of the best guards in the NBA, Dumars has earned the respect of his peers and the Detroit Pistons management. At one point two years ago during the mid-season, it was rumored that Dumars was on the trading blocks. He exploded down the stretch and helped Detroit to the NBA Finals before ultimately losing to the Los Angeles Lakers.

Last season, Dumars had his coming out party against the Los Angeles Lakers as the Pistons won the World Championship in a sweep. Dumars was named the MVP for the 1989 NBA Playoffs and rewarded a new six-year \$8 million contract. Signing a new contract did not change Dumars style of play or his quiet ways. He came back strong as ever this season. A member of the 1990 NBA All-Star team and All Defensive team for the second straight year, Dumars is geared and ready to defend Detroit's NBA Title against Portland.

"When you get to the Finals, it doesn't matter who you play," he said. "You have to respect them (Portland) a great deal, because we know what it takes to get this far."

Currently averaging 17.4 points in the NBA playoffs (second behind Isiah Thomas) and is capable of taking a game over with his outside shooting at anytime. In the Eastern Conference Finals against Chicago, he garnered a huge load of credit for holding "Air" Michael Jordan in check—to the extent that anyone can hold anyone in check.

Now, Dumars has to deal with Clyde "The Glide" Drexler. He is up for the challenge and use to playing opponents much taller. "Clyde is an excellent player," he said. "I had to look at some films because we (Pistons) don't see them but twice a year." Dumars, at six-foot-three, is four inches shorter than Drexler.

Dumars calls winning the NBA Title the greatest thing he ever experienced as an athlete and now he has to get used to the recognition from his play. Dumars said that he has to get used to being a celebrity and the attention. He prefers to be anonymous, but his basketball abilities and quiet demeanor draws fans and writers like a magnet.

"Winning the NBA Finals last year really changed my life. A lot," he said. "People approach me differently now. Even though I try to treat people the same, they're different. And a lot more people approach me now than they did before. But I try not to change. All this only reaffirmed my life values, the way I've been raised, and what I was taught to believe. I can say it pays to work hard and do the right thing because you reap the benefits."

One last thing readers should know about Joe Dumars, Jr.: He wants a second NBA Championship ring to wear on his hand. You see, Dumars gave the first one to his hero and good friend, Joe Dumars, Sr. (Excerpts from NBA News, New York City)

Short Shakes: According to a survey of NBA players, Michael "Air" Jordan is the man you want with the basketball in his hand when the game is on the line and Joe Dumars is the guy you want checking him. Talk about peer respect for two great athletes.



Words from The Coach

Coach Art Shell of the Los Angeles Raiders congratulates Laddie Howard on an outstanding freshman year as a "Thurgood Marshall scholar, during Howard's recent visit to Los Angeles. Howard attends South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, S.C., and is one of 36 recipients of a four-year, \$16,000 Thurgood Marshall scholarship. Founded by Miller Brewing Company in 1987, the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund is the only fund of its kind to support public black colleges. Miller has contributed more than \$1.6 million to the fund. Coach Shell, a graduate of the University of Maryland—Eastern Shore, is one of many distinguished alumni of America's public black colleges. He spent 15 seasons as a Raiders player, then joined the team's coaching staff after retiring from the playing field in 1983.

Summer Tennis Camp

What: Tennis Camp **Where:** Irving Park
When: June 25th to Aug. 10th **Time:** 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm
Days: Monday thru Thursday **Beginners:** 12:30 - 1:15 pm
Adv. Beg. & Intermediates: 1:15 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: 7 yrs. to 16 yrs. **Cost:** No Charge! **T-Shirts \$10.00**

The City of Portland's Parks Bureau, Portland Public Schools, United States Tennis Association, Tennis Unlimited, and the Augustana Lutheran Church will jointly sponsor an eight week tennis camp this summer at Irving Park on N.E. 7th and Fremont St. Donald Johnson will serve as the site Director for this camp. Adult and youth Camp Assistants will also serve as staff members.

Others who are interested in helping with this camp are welcomed to apply as camp volunteers. Tennis experience is not required for Camp Volunteers. Some can help with registration, supervise parties at Burger King, and help check-out equipment. The staff will have a "Tennis Kick-Off Carnival on June 16th at Irving Park from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In the event of rain the Carnival will be rescheduled for June 23rd same time, same site. If you are interested in helping or participating in this camp then call Donald Johnson at 281-4102 or write P.O. Box 19745, Portland, Oregon 97219.

NBA Update

Magic Johnson, who received the third Edge NBA Most Valuable Player award of his career last Tuesday, is now tied with Larry Bird and Moses Malone for the fourth-highest total of MVP awards in league history.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar won six Edge NBA MVP awards, one more than Bill Russell, and Wilt Chamberlain won four. Johnson, however is the only guard to ever win MVP honors more than once (Bob Cousy, Oscar Robertson and Michael Jordan are the only other guards to be so honored).

Johnson also became just the second player in the last 17 years and the eighth player in league history to win both the Edge NBA MVP and NBA All-Star Game MVP trophy (his first) in the same season.

Johnson, in winning both MVP awards, joins Bob Pettit (1956, 1959), Cousy (1957), Chamberlain (1960), Russell (1963), Robertson (1964), Willis Reed (1970), Dave Cowens (1973) and Jordan (1988) as the only players to win both in the same year.

And, with Lakers Coach Pat Riley winning Digital NBA Coach of the Year honors for 1990, this marks the sixth time in history that the league's MVP and Coach of the Year have come from the same team. The other winning combinations were Russell and Red Auerbach of Boston in 1965; Chamberlain and Dolph Schayes of Philadelphia in 1966; Wes Unseld and Gene Shue of Baltimore in 1969; Reed and Red Holzman of New York in 1970; and Cowens and Tom Heinsohn of Boston in 1973.

Only twice — Russell and Auerbach in 1965 and Reed and Holzman in 1970 — did the league's MVP and Coach of the Year come from the team that went on to win the NBA Championship.

The Portland Observer:
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