



THE LOCKER ROOM

BY ULYSSES TUCKER, JR.



Part 2

A.C. Green, from Benson to Oregon State

By Aaron Fentress

Their record was 24-1. Virtually perfect, except for one tiny flaw. An early season loss to Hillsboro high school had left a mark on the Benson Tech-men's record, and the only way to erase that loss was a rematch. That rematch came four months later in the last game of the 1980-81 high school basketball season. The state championship.

Led by 6'9", all-state center, A.C. Green, Benson avenged their early season loss, 74-73, and captured the state championship. Nine years, two Pac-10 and two NBA championships later, Green can still look back on that championship season and compare it to those at Oregon state and with the Los Angeles Lakers.

"They all are precious in their own way and different," said Green. "Winning in high school was a great feeling because it was my last year in high school and my last year with those teammates, some of those guys I haven't seen again since we won. The Pac-10 championships were special also but they were during my freshman and sophomore years and I knew I would be coming back following those seasons. As far as the Lakers go, those are so special because the season is so long and you travel such a long journey to get to that point of the season that you feel so accomplished when it's all over."

The one constant present in all of Green's basketball championships is his high level of play. While leading Benson to the High School championship Green shot an unheard of 68% from the field while averaging 19 points and 10 rebounds a game during the tournament, including a 22 point, on seven for seven shooting, 10 rebound performance against Hillsboro in the championship game. Benson recently won the 1989-90 state championship, the school's first

since Green graduated. Green said he phoned his former coach, Dick Gray, to congratulate him after the victory.

"I was happy for the guys because I remember what it was like for me," said Green. "I was especially happy for coach Gray because he has gone through some problems the last few years and it was good to see him have that kind of success again."

Green continued his basketball career at Oregon State University and picked up right where he left off in high school. He was a four-year starter for the Beavers. Oregon state's most successful season came Green's freshman year when they made it to the 'elite-eight' of the NCAA tournament before being knocked out by Georgetown and Patrick Ewing. Green's most successful season came his junior year. While shooting the fourth best field goal percentage in the nation, at 68%, Green was voted Pac-10's player of the year and finished runner up for the award his senior year averaging 19 points and pulling down nine rebounds per game.

Following his senior season Green picked up another honor. This time for academics. Green graduated on time and received a degree in speech communications. Then came the 1985 NBA draft.

"It didn't matter to me when I went in the draft but to whom I went," said Green. "It doesn't make sense for a guard to go to a team with eleven guards, no matter when he's picked. I had been contacted by a few teams and was just waiting to see who would pick me."

Some experts didn't project Green as a first round pick, listing him sixth amongst the small forwards coming out that year. The Portland Trailblazers owned the last pick in the first round and were considering keeping Green at home by selecting him when their turn came around. The Blazers even tried

to trade up to get Green but there were no deals made and the Lakers selected Green one pick ahead of the Blazers who settled on guard Terry Porter.

Looking back on the 1985 NBA draft it was not a good day for teams who passed up on Green, or Porter for that matter. A list of names picked ahead of these two all-star caliber players shows that the so called experts were lacking much of their expertise. Steve Harris, Jon Koncak, Joe Klein, Ed Pinckney, Keith Lee, Kerry Green. Do any of these players sound familiar? How about Alfredrick Huges, Uwe Blab, Sam Vincent, Terry Catledge or Jerry Reynolds? Your probably wondering who these people are. All of these players have disappeared into NBA obscurity while Green has become an NBA All-Star.

After being drafted, the then, twenty-two-year-old Green told a Oregonian reporter that on the first day of practice he would just, "sit back and watch." Now, a star himself, Green says he was not that star struck back then by being in the company of Magic, Kareem and Worthy.

"I had never really followed basketball that closely so I never was into who was who," said Green. "I just wanted to get to camp play hard and be the best I could. In fact Philadelphia was really my team. Still today I don't follow the teams or stars around the league. I just concentrate on myself and the Lakers. I couldn't tell you who was in what place in what division."

So far during Green's NBA career, he has not had to worry about other teams standings at all. The Lakers have always won the Pacific division and have maintained themselves as a dominant force in the NBA. Next week: Green's NBA career.

Ron Johnson: Fighting to Stay on Top

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

For Ron Johnson, the art of Mo Duk Pai is not only a competitive hobby, it is a means of practicing self-discipline,

control of emotions, and concentration. The style combines five types of martial arts and emphasizes ethical self-defense over aggression.

A successful Account Executive for KATU-TV 2, Johnson believes that his art teaches him to endure the ups and downs associated with "pounding the pavement". Sales is not an art where the individual should equate their self-esteem with securing clients because sometimes you can be hot and sometimes not. On the mat, Johnson is always hot and his number (in his class) one ranking in the Pacific Northwest makes him a hunted man.

When questioned about which discipline is tougher, Sales or competitive fighting, Johnson reflected for a moment and ultimately concluded sales.

"Since the fighting is just for fun and learning, sales would have to rank tougher," he said. "Simply because it's my livelihood. I'm pretty much in control of my fighting ability. With sales,

control of all situations."

Johnson is in total control as a fighter. He answers to no one. Even though the risk for permanent injury is far greater as a fighter, Johnson believes that there is more at stake in sales. Some fighters and critics disagree with him. Without hurting potential clients, Johnson says that the discipline he has learned in fighting really helps during sales presentations/calls.

"Without a doubt, you need commitment, follow-through, and a positive attitude when you get confronted with adversity," he said about sales. When you're knocked down physically or emotionally, you must learn to accept those truths as part of your learning process. You will only learn from your mistakes, please, learn from them. Don't repeat them. Also, if you are not prepared mentally and physically, be prepared to get your butt kicked."

A bachelor and thirty-one years old, Johnson is a graduate of Evergreen High School in Vancouver, Washington and a former "Air Force Brat". He has traveled all over the world and the United States. For the same reasons he is drawn to fighting (competitiveness and the challenge". Johnson is drawn to television

Johnson, soft spoken and articulate, could easily pass for the Clark Kent-type with his "school boy" glasses or the "bookworm" next door. Like most of the employees at KATU, you would never figure Johnson as the type who would be involved in such an intense sport. Chess or bridge, yes; martial arts, no.

What type of gratification do you get from competing?

"A sense of pride," said Johnson. "Representing our system of fighting and ethical behavior is very applicable to real life situations. Comradery among my system and the other talented schools in the Northwest/Canada is important. Also, sharing my victories with fellow classmates is a great feeling because without them, I wouldn't be ready or as competitive. Lastly, being able to help beginning fighters understand the overall picture and observing the many (diverse) styles gives me great pleasure."

What do you want to accomplish as a fighter, Mr. Johnson?

"The continued respect among my peers as a fair, competitive warrior with a sense of humor," he said. "It's not life or death, but merely an opportunity to expand my knowledge on what works and doesn't work. You have to stay loose. Ranking and trophies are not nearly as important to me now. The biggest challenge now is to turn on or up the intensity depending on what I'm confronted with. This has to be an instinctive reaction and subliminal. That's when I know I've arrived."

Johnson competes in six to eight tournaments per year for the Academy of Kung Fu.



Photo by Ulysses Tucker, Jr. RON JOHNSON

Safety: A New Perspective on Accident Prevention



According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, car crash injuries are the leading cause of death among Americans under age 35 (this information can be found in the Insurance Institute's booklet *IHS Facts, 1989*, on page 1). The National Safety Council reports that more than 20 million

automobile accidents occurred in the United States in 1987. "Improper driving, or driver error," was cited as a contributing factor in more than 67 percent of these accidents (according to the National Safety Council's *Accident Facts, 1988*).

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