



THE LOCKER ROOM

Gene Little Is a Big Time Coach

Reds prove no team is invincible



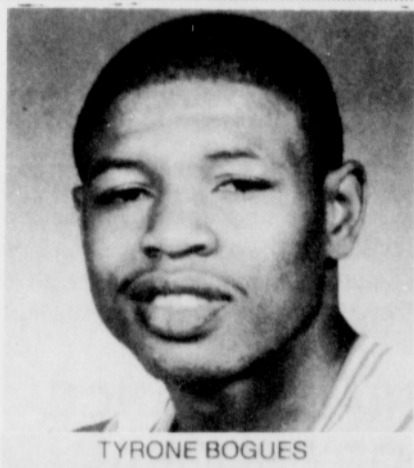
Gene Little of the Charlotte Hornets

Photo by Veronica Green

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Bernie Bickerstaff, Lenny Wilkins, K.C. Jones, Don Chaney, Stu Jackson, Wes Unseld, and Gene Little are all black Head Coaches in the National Basketball Association. Little coaches the Charlotte Hornets. By no means is he a stranger around the league. In fact, ask Trail Blazer head coach Rick Adelman. "Gene is recognized around the league as a very capable and organized coach. He's been in this league a very long time, especially as an Assistant, and he just hasn't had the visibility as the other coaches.

Little received his first Assistant's job with the Utah Jazz (1979-82). He later served as an assistant for the Cleveland Cavaliers (1982-86), where he served as head coach for a brief period (sixteen games), the Chicago Bulls (1986-87), and the Charlotte Hornets last season. The Hornets hired Little full-time after they fired Oregon's Dick Harter. In addition to Harter, Little has worked under Head Coaches George Karl, Tom Nissalke, now his Assistants in Charlotte are, Doug Collins and Frank Layton. Little did not feel slighted or overlooked when it came to Head coaching jobs because experience was something he cared about more than securing a top position. "I've had the opportunity to see how several organizations do business and I am thankful for every opportunity. The league went through this stage where they went after the big name college coaches. In the process, they learned that those coaches did not know the game on this level. Now, you're seeing guys like Dick Motta (Kings), Weiss (Hawks), Richie Adubata (Mavs), and Bill Fitch (Nets) get jobs before some college coach. Some college coaches have been successful and others have not. I think the league has moved away



TYRONE BOGUES

form that trend."

Before Little entered the NBA Coaching ranks, he served as the Head Coach for North Carolina A & T University in Greensboro, N.C., a member of the MEAC (Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference). He compiled a 36-15 record in two years. Little also played in the old ABA with the Carolina Cougars and the Kentucky Colonels. He was a member of the Colonels 1975 ABA championship team. Little said that he had no expectations when Charlotte hired him as Director/Player Personnel-Assistant Coach last season. He was happy to be in management and glad to be contributing to the growth of an expansion team. When Dick Harter was fired halfway through the 1989-90 season, owner George Shinn decided that Little was his man to finish the season. Little won 11 games out of 42, but there was no doubt who would coach the Hornets this season.

"Our owner is committed to the long term growth of this team," said Little. "It's so easy to go for the quick fix in this league and we're going to grow through the draft. Last year. We were the worst rebounding team in the league. We hope to improve on that. We also picked up Kendal Gill and Johnny Newman from the Knicks. We will be a

competitive team this year. Our team speed and quickness should also be better."

When questioned about whether he would concentrate on a management position should things not work out, Little, an NAIA All-American at High Point College in High Point, N.C., smiled and hollered to his players that it was time to leave their shoot-around at Memorial Coliseum. "You know how this business is", referring to how coaches come and go. "I never think about not doing good, all I think about is doing the best that I can do each night out and accomplishing the goals of the organization. I'll certainly be in basketball".

When questioned about there being only seven black coaches in the NBA, Little downplayed the fact that race is an issue. "Timing is everything. I was in the right place at the right time. Winning is more important than race in this league. Owners want to win. Now, if you're asking me about capable people who can coach in this league, there are plenty. Paul Silas, Fred Carter, Mack Calvin, Cazzie Russell, and several more are good assistants, who in time will be head coaches. There are only so many jobs to go around.

Little is a native of Washington, D.C. and a graduate of McKinley High School.

Special thanks to Linda Jones of the Cleveland Cavs for her research work recently. You helped me to beat my deadline this week. I owe you one...

Best laugh this week: J.R. Reid teasing Charlotte teammate Tyrone Bogues about not being able to touch the ten-foot high rim at a recent practice. Reid called the 5-3 Bogues too short, but he backed away when Rex Chapman suggested that he put a twenty dollar bill up there to test Bogues. What do you think? Stay tuned...

by Aaron Fentress

Without a doubt in anyone's mind, west of Ohio, the Oakland Athletics were clearly supposed to whip the Cincinnati Reds senseless in this year's World Series. The only problem was that someone forgot to convince the Reds as they turned the tables and swept the A's and the baseball world off of its feet and into a collective state of baffledness asking the question, "What the hell happened?"

Without a doubt the Reds World Series victory is one of the great upsets in baseball history, or sports history for that matter. And in a sports age where dynasties such as the Detroit Pistons, San Francisco 49ers and formerly, the Oakland A's have dominated their sports the last couple of years, the Reds have let it be known that no team is "un-beatable." If the Reds had simply won in seven games then there wouldn't be that much to gawk at. As everyone knows, anything can happen in baseball. But to sweep a team that was supposed to sweep you, well that's an eight game turn around. And the A's are still spinning.

"You don't expect to win a series like this and sweep a team that was playing so well," said Reds manager Lou Piniella. "But we felt we'd play well and thought that if we got some breaks, things would go our way."

Getting some breaks, as Piniella put it, is selling the Reds effort short. The fact is that the Reds simply pounded the A's by a four game run total of 22-8. They out hit the Athletics, .317 to .207, while maintaining an ERA of 1.70 against a lineup which featured Rickey Henderson, Willie Mcgee, Mark McGwire, Dave Henderson, Carney Lansford, Harold Baines and last and definitely least, Jose Canseco.

For Canseco his 1990 World Series performance may live forever

as a reminder that no matter who you are, or what you've done, no man is worth four million dollars. Especially if that man's purpose is to hit a baseball, which Canseco managed to do only once, while batting a miserable .083 in 12 at-bats.

"He's a punk," said Canseco's wife, Esther Canseco, about Oakland manager Tony La Rusa, after La Rusa decided to bench Canseco for the fourth game. "Let them sweep us. I should have worn a red dress."

"Tony's gone too far. He's putting the blame on Jose when it's the whole team."

The fact is that the whole team didn't play exceptionally well. But the other side is that Canseco didn't even play bad. He simply did not show up.

Ironically for Canseco he did get his chance for redemption in that fourth game. With one out in the bottom of the ninth and trailing by only one run Canseco was called upon to pinch hit for Baines. Alas Canseco failed as he dribbled a pitiful grounder to third. Mighty Canseco had fallen again. While another Jose was the hero.

The name Jose Rijo, not exactly a household name before the series, became a nationally known name after he was named the series MVP. In two games Rijo pitched 15 and 1/2 innings, surrendered only one run and held Oakland to a pathetic .163 batting average.

"It's not incredible for me. I thought I could do it," Rijo said. "We've got one of the best teams in baseball now. I guess the A's are second."

Definitely the best team when it counted most. The Athletics are undoubtedly the most talented team in baseball, on paper. Eight all-star's grace the Athletics roster, including two late season acquisitions in Mcgee and Baines,

who figured to be the pieces which would make the A's invincible. But come world series time that piece of paper was set a blaze by the Reds. Like Canseco... both Baines and Mcgee, who led the national league in hitting with a .332 average before being traded to the A's late in the season by St.Louis, failed to show as the two combined for just three hits in 17 at-bats for a .176 average.

"We just didn't hit like we're capable," said Henderson, who was actually the only Athletic who did show up to play. Henderson batted .333. "That's the key. When you don't hit, you don't win."

Needless to say the A's pitching performance also lacked it's magic of the regular season. Cy Young candidates Dave Stewart, Bob Welch and Dennis Eckersley combined for a sub-par 4.38 ERA while going 0-3 for the series.

But enough about how bad the A's played. Although many people will have you believe that the A's simply choked, you can't forget that the Reds came to play. And played well.

Although Rijo was selected the MVP some other Reds made a bid for the award. Center fielder, Mickey Hatcher set a new record for a four game series while batting .750, including four doubles and a triple. While Hatcher and Rijo played well enough to earn MVP honors, and Rijo did, it was third baseman Chris Sabo who delivered the knock out blow in game three when he homered twice to lead the Reds to an 8-3 victory.

Sabo, who voiced his opinion after the series about the fact that no one gave the Reds a chance, let it be known who was the best team in baseball.

"We're the best team in baseball, bar none," said Cincinnati third baseman Chris Sabo. "I don't care what anyone says."

Last week, they were.



Saturday during a match-up between G.I. Joe's/Jefferson and Whitaker of the fifth and sixth grade Pop Warner football league, #86 Derek Bell scored a touchdown on a 50-yard pass play. G.I. Joe's/Jefferson beat Whitaker, 20-6. G.I. Joe's/Jefferson will compete for the city championship Sunday at 3:00 p.m. at Mt. Hood Community College. Jefferson's seventh and eighth grade team will play at 5:00 p.m. Good luck to both Northeast Portland teams.

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PORTLAND PRO-AM BASKETBALL LEAGUE 1990/91 FALL/WINTER PROGRAM

The Portland Pro-Am Basketball League will be starting up on November 3rd & 4th at Portland Community College Cascade Gym located on N. Killingsworth across the street from Jefferson High School. The six teams are generically named after NBA mascots and league play is governed by NBA rules. The league also features the development of NBA referees. All games are played on the weekends 4:30pm & 6:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Portland Pro-Am Basketball League will be having it's Third Annual Basketball Preview, featuring a total of 14 teams from Seattle & Portland. The dates of the preview are November 3rd (Sat) 7 4th (Sun), 1990.

Eight games will be played on Saturday & Sunday at the PCC Cascade Gym. Games will be played from 8:30am to 7:00pm on both Saturday & Sunday.

Following the games on Saturday there will be a Dance involving the players at the Inn at the Coliseum from 8:30pm to 1:00am. There will also be an after hours party following the dance. Cost for the dance will be \$5.50 (with a ticket) and \$6.50 (without). There will be no charge for the games.

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