

THE LOCKER ROOM



Jeff Malone: Adjusting To Salt Lake



JEFF MALONE

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Aucronaire to NBA public opinion, Jeff Malone is not having a difficult time adjusting to Salt Lake City and no, the city is not as bad as it is made out to be. Though his scoring numbers might not indicate it, Malone is actually enjoying himself and blending in with the Jazz.

Malone has made adjustments before. He played high school basketball in Macon, Ga. (Southwest), college ball at Mississippi State University, and was drafted by the big city Washington Bullets in the 1983 NBA Draft (10th). He is no stranger to the slower pace. Malone, a laid back southern gentleman type, does not care where he plays at this stage of his career or miss the faster paced lifestyle. Malone wants to compete for the NBA Title.

"Washington was a faster city," he said. "I had some real good times there. Salt Lake is laid back and the people are very nice. I'm not so much impressed by a city. I just wanted the chance to play on a great team that can contend for the title. People have welcomed me to the city and I'm having fun."

Malone noted that the only adjustment he has had to make is on the court, not off of it as some expected. Utah has established stars like John Stockton, Karl Malone, Thurl Bailey, and Mark Easton. The Jazz runs an inside oriented offensive attack and the Bullets ran a pass-

ing game.

"I was able to move around a little more to get my shots in Washington," he said. Here, I had to get used to spotting up for my shots and standing more, but I've come along. The season is still young. I would like to be shooting (.450) the ball better too." Currently, Malone is averaging 15.9 per contest, seven less than he scored last season and he is also taking fewer shots. "It's no big deal. I knew that I would shoot less before I arrived out here. I just need to make the ones I get."

A two time NBA All-Star (86 & 87), Malone is more relaxed this season because he no longer has the pressure of scoring thirty points per night for his team to win ball games. Utah, predicted to be a power in the west with the addition of Malone, had not played up to expectations until recently. "We are going to get better as the season goes on", he said.

Reflecting back on the block buster three way trade that sent Pervis Ellison from Sacramento to Washington and Bob Hansen, Eric Leckner and a 1990 1st and 2nd round draft choices from Utah to Sacramento, Malone said that he was ready for a change. "We were stuck in the middle in Washington. It was very hard because we couldn't get the top lottery pick or go deep in the play-offs. We were always picking between 10 and 13 in the draft. So, when I got traded out here, I was very happy about it because they won 50-plus games last year. If everything clicks for us, we have a chance to do some serious damage in the play-offs and go very far. I'm looking forward to getting some good play-off experience and going into the second-third rounds. I'm real excited about our chances."

Despite his excitement about Utah's chances, Malone is very impressed with the quick start of the Portland Trail Blazers. "They are going to be tough if they keep playing like they are now. It's real tough to run up and down with them because they have so many great athletes. Their bench is deep too. It is definitely much tougher out here (Western Conference) than back east."

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Earl "The Pearl" Monroe: Giving Back

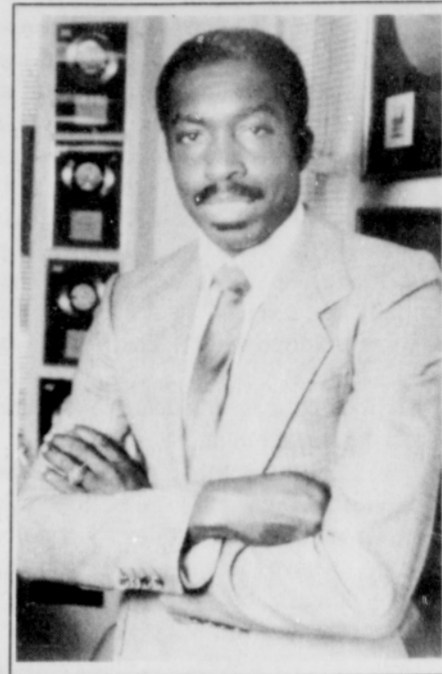
BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Back in the school yards of South Philadelphia he was known as a guy who invented and patented his own moves. After a professional career that spanned 13 years and 17,000 points and culminated with his election to the Basketball Hall of Fame, Vernon Earl Monroe, Jr. became better known as "The Pearl" to sports fans throughout the country.

He was college basketball's scoring champion, a man of a million twists and turns, who came out of little Winston-Salem College in North Carolina to become the National Basketball Association's second draft choice in 1967. As a member of the Baltimore Bullets, he was named the NBA Rookie-of-the-Year and to the NBA All-Star team for the first of four times. In 1971, Earl Monroe was traded to the New York Knicks, where he would become the heart of a championship-winning team, meshing his talents perfectly with those of Walt Frazier, Willis Reed, Dave DeBusschere and Bill Bradley. These five would set a standard for New York die-hard fans that later teams would never attain. In 1990, Earl joined these teammates as members of the Basketball Hall-of-Fame.

While one member of that legendary team today has his sights on the White House and the others over the years have remained in the limelight

through their continued association with the game, Monroe has followed a slightly different path-as a successful entrepreneur in the entertainment industry and as



a major player within the community.

Monroe is president and chief executive officer of Pretty Pearl, Inc., an entertainment production and management firm he founded in 1979. Most recently he worked for ABC Radio Sports as a broadcaster for the NBA Championship Playoffs.

Perhaps most significant is Monroe's

long-standing involvement with the city's youth, where he has put to good use his concern for education with his background in sports and music. A recipient of scores of community awards and honors, he presently holds membership on the boards of Crown Heights (Brooklyn) Youth Collective, the New York State Voluntary Services Commission, the Literacy Assistance Fund and Harlem Junior Development.

With this in mind, Monroe has taken an active role in projects like the Amateur Athletic Union/MARS MILKY WAY High School All-American Award and scholarship program, which will recognize outstanding high school seniors. The nationwide program honors well-rounded young men and women who excel in academics, athletics and community service. A minimum of 96 college scholarships, ranging from \$750 to \$40,000, will be awarded.

"I was fortunate. I had a strong family support structure that allowed me to realize my dreams," says Monroe, whose family owned a small grocery store in Philadelphia. "Today, inner-city kids without that support system face so many potential dangers. I think it's important for these kids to have role models within their own communities and of their own age to look up to." For more information about the awards, please contact Mary Ellen Dougherty (201-852-1000) or Sara Coulter (212-527-8832).

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Trail Blazer Clyde Drexler Give Awards

Brian Washington And Clyde Drexler

Portland Trail Blazer, Clyde Drexler was on hand Monday December 17, 1990 to give students of Holy Redemer area school their annual Scholastic Improvement Awards.

The awards are given with the cooperation of Avia and The Bank of America each year.

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Thanks to the dollar Card collecting has lost it's innocence

Part 1 of 2

by Aaron Fentress

What is a piece of cardboard with a picture of a star athlete on it worth? Anywhere between five cents and a few thousand dollars. Believe it.

Last weekend I attended my first sports card show at the Portland Memorial Coliseum. The experience was eye opening. Or should I say depressing. Why didn't I save all those cards I collected as a little kid? If I had, I wouldn't need to borrow my college education from the government in the form of student loans.

A friend of mine did save all those cards he collected as a kid. The net worth now; \$10,000. For Christmas he's given me a Rickey Henderson rookie card worth \$180; just one of four he owned.

For me the hobby of collecting sports cards has been renewed. I want in. Both financially and sentimentally the rewards can be many. But you must be careful. It can be addicting and financially dangerous. To sell cards for money is fine, but to rob the innocent collector should be a crime.

While walking around spending time observing different card stands at the card show the first thing I noticed was the prices. People will rob you and not think twice about it. My first experience involved a Jerry Rice card. Rice's rookie card goes for \$45. The card I saw was a special 1,000 Yard Club card from Rice's second year, yet it said rookie on the price tag. The price tag also read \$20. Being the investigator that I am I immediately looked around for the same card. I found some across the room selling for \$3 a piece. Being the aggressive person that I am I went back to the where the first card lay and confronted the dealer about his overpriced card. He looked at the card and said it was a mistake. He then said he would sell it to me for 75 cents.

I wonder, if I had simply pulled out \$20 originally, would he would have sold it to me for 75 cents. I doubt it, all of his cards were over priced according to the Becket price guides to sports cards.

Every month Becket magazine comes out giving you a complete list of sports card prices. This is the sports cards collectors bible. But they won't swear on it.

The Becket says that a Walter Payton rookie card is worth \$210, if in mint condition. Yet I saw Payton's card being sold for as much as \$295 and \$350. Each card's dealer had different rational behind their prices.

The dealer of the \$350 card said that any mint card should be priced higher than that listed in Becket because it's an older card. But Becket's whole basis in which they set their prices is based on the card's condition, popularity and age. That's why the card's worth is listed at \$210. Not why

it should be \$350. He had no logical explanation for his price other than to rip someone off. No need to argue with the man, I walked away.

The dealer of the \$295 Payton card really had no rational behind his price. As a matter of fact when I informed him that the card was valued at \$210 in Becket he immediately said he would sell it to me for that amount. I wonder; if I had given him \$295 would he have said, "Oh that's too much." I doubt it.

The point behind these stories is to illustrate that what was once an innocent hobby for children has grown into a big money scam for adults.

The hobby of collecting cards is really a hobby for the heart. In reality a card is only a piece of card board with a picture on it. Nothing more. What makes them so valuable to people are the memories of collecting them and the memories that a certain player provided for you when you watched them play. That's what sports cards should be all about.

For me that memorable player is Walter Payton. I have collected all of his cards except his rookie card and his second year card which prices at \$50. When presented with the financial opportunity, I will have no problem putting down \$260 for those two cards. They will be worth it. But I won't pay \$350 for his card. Not to a person who is a disease to an otherwise innocent hobby.

Another experience I ran into occurred at a card shop in Aloha. My friend, who gave me the Henderson card, was attempting to trade one of his Henderson cards to a card dealer for a \$60 Pete Rose, a \$45 Willie Mays, and a \$20 Johnny Bench. A total of \$125 worth of cards in exchange for a \$180 Rickey Henderson. A \$45 advantage for the dealer.

You must always figure that the dealer wins because he's the one in business. Seems fair right? Wrong.

The dealer was insulted by the proposition. He claimed that my friend's card wasn't perfect, due to a barely noticeable bend in one of the corners of the card, and there for not worth \$125 in trade. Yet sitting in one of the man's glass cases was the exact same Henderson card, in worse condition than that of my friends, priced at \$175. You tell me who should have been insulted.

In the final analysis a dealer can charge what he or she wants for a card. But a card is only worth what the buyer is willing to pay. If the joy of having a particular card will make you forget about the cash you laid down for that card then it's worth the price. If not, then you are being robbed or your money and your love of collecting cards is being robbed of it's innocence.