

SPORTS

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR NBA

The growing popularity of women's basketball prompted the NBA to start a women's league in the summer of 1997. "We are working on the concept. It's a working model, subject to lots of changes," said commissioner David Stern. "We are excited about the prospects of using the assets of the NBA and its teams to give life to a concept that's ready to bloom."

The league expects eight teams to play a 25 to 30 game schedule over 10 weeks, from mid-June to mid-August, in NBA cities.

"Everyone has kind of agreed to agree this is a good idea," said Chris

Brienza, NBA director of media relations. "As to specifics on franchise sites, the format the number of teams and so on, none of that has been worked out yet and won't be until early July."

Stern sees no conflict with the American Baseball League, a women's circuit with plans to have a team in Portland, the ABA plans to play in the winter and the NBA is looking to play in both leagues.

The NBA concept is to launch the league as a single enterprise. Women would sign contracts with the league and be dispersed to teams on the basis

of territorial competitive considerations as well as through a draft. Stern continued to emphasize that all plans were tentative and promised details about television arrangement, number of teams and the cities in which they will operate by July.

"We will be working in places around the calendar to make sure this succeeds. Our best assets are our cities, our buildings and our staffs, and they will be made available. We will hopefully show the world's best women in the world's best arenas. I can't imagine better circumstances," said Stern.

SONICS SWEEP HOUSTON

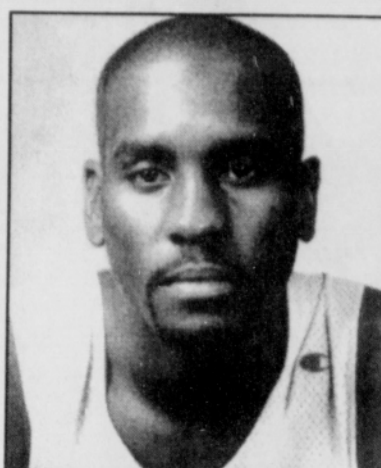
The Seattle Super Sonics sweeps the conference semifinal series and ends Houston's two year reign as NBA champion.

The Sonics' 114-107 victory advances them to them to the Western Conference finals to face the winner of the Utah-San Antonio series.

"I believe our heart was there," said Rudy Tomjanovich Rockets coach "But we ran into a team with depth and confidence."

The Sonics lead by as much as 20 points in late in the third quarter.

The Rockets, down by nine points with 1:32 minutes left, rallied and a



Gary Payton, Seattle guard.

series of three pointers forced the game into overtime.

"I kept wondering, 'Why don't you guys just die?'" Seattle guard Gary Payton said. "I just couldn't believe it. They were like a vampire. You stab them 18 times and they just won't die."

"We played right down to the final possession," Tomjanovich said. "But we ran into a phenomenal basketball team."

The victory extended the Sonics winning streak over Houston to 13 games. They defeated the Rockets in the 1993 playoffs.

OLYMPIC ORGANIZERS SUE DESIGN

When the Olympic Stadium plays host to its first track meet this week, the event will be celebrated by marching bands and a grand ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Two days after the happy christening, it's off to court, where Olympic organizers are suing the stadium's designers over construction problems and a death of a worker.

Moments of glory shadowed by problems - that's been the story of the stadium and other major Olympic building projects.

From the collapse of a lighting truss at the stadium to sinking athlete dorms at the Olympic Village to fallen roof beams at the swimming pool, Olympic construction has at times seemed like too much, too quickly. But several engineering experts with experience in similar building projects said the problems with some Olympic venues doesn't indicate a widespread problem.

"Any time you have a lot of construction going on, particularly on an accelerated schedule, there's an in-

creased chance for accidents," said Ray Holdsworth, who heads an engineering and construction firm involved in several projects for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. "That's probably what you're seeing down in Atlanta right now," said Holdsworth.

When Atlanta won the 1996 Games, it lacked many of the venues needed for an Olympics, so it embarked on a \$500 million building program that includes 11 new facilities and renovations to several oth-

ers.

Despite the fallen light truss that caused the death of a construction worker and the beam that came down at in the pool, Olympic officials insist their buildings are safe. They staunchly deny that tight schedules contributed to either accident.

"If you look at any construction program of this size, it has been extremely successful," ACOG spokeswoman Lyn May said. "When you say problem, it's been a media description - not ours."

BLAZER DANCERS AUDITIONS SCHEDULED

Auditions for the 1996-97 BlazerDancers team will be held on Saturday, June 15 at Clackamas High School. Auditions start at 8 a.m. First day finalists will be invited to return on Sunday, June 16. Final auditions and team selection will take place the following weekend. Dancers will be judged on dance ability, enthusiasm and showmanship. Dance team applications are available at the Blazers office, One Center Court, Suite 200, Portland, Oregon, 97227. All dancers must be 19 years of age or older by November 1, 1996. For more information contact the Blazers office at (503) 797-9626.

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WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM TRI-MET, THE ROSE GARDEN NIPPED PARKING PROBLEMS IN THE BUD.

Parking at the Rose Garden could have posed a thorny problem for the almost three million fans who attend events there each year. But Tri-Met rose to the occasion and helped avert potential snags before they could grow.

Working with the Blazers and Rose Quarter officials, Tri-Met devised a comprehensive plan providing bus, MAX, and shuttle service to and from the facility. In fact, 12 different Tri-Met routes serve the Rose Quarter, in addition to a dedicated MAX station. There's simply no faster, cheaper, or easier way to get to the arena.

Tri-Met service to the Rose Garden is certainly a convenience, but it's also a necessity. The building holds over 20,000 people and has only 2,400 parking spots. That's why many sports, music, and event fans are also fans of Tri-Met.

The Rose Garden is just one example of Tri-Met's successful problem-solving efforts around Portland. Tri-Met has also customized innovative programs to serve the Marquam Hill medical community, Portland International Airport, and over 200 local businesses.

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