

# SPORTS BRIEFS

# SPORTS

## COACH'S FUTURE IN AIR AFTER BLAZER EXIT

### Pitino to coach Celtics

University of Kentucky coach Rick Pitino is reportedly on his way to the Boston Celtics. WBZ-TV in Boston reported Monday that Pitino had accepted the deal and the Boston Globe added that Pitino has agreed to a 10-year, \$70 million contract. Celtics president Red Auerbach told the Boston Globe that Pitino would be hired by the Celtics but would not have the dual titles of coach and general manager.

### Whalers become hurricanes

The Hartford Whalers became the Carolina Hurricanes Tuesday. The National Hockey League team announced at a news conference it will relocate to North Carolina in time for the 1997-98 season. The conference was held in Raleigh, N.C. at the site of the new arena that will house the team.

### Coyotes fire head coach

The Phoenix Coyotes, who followed up a fifth-place finish in the Western Conference with a first-round playoff exit in their first season in Arizona, fired head coach Don Hay and his staff.

### Rain mars German Open

Heavy rain for the second consecutive day has caused additional first-round matches to be either postponed or suspended at the \$2.05 million German Open — the fourth Super 9 tennis tournament of the year in Hamburg. Only three matches were completed before the skies opened up, forcing postponement of 10 matches and the suspension of five others.

### Seles headlines Italian Open

Top seed Monica Seles of the United States, making her first appearance in Rome in five years, highlights the play at the \$926,250 Italian Open. Seles, who won here in 1990 and was a finalist in 1991 and 1992, will take on Germany's Barbara Schett in a second-round match.

### Coach wins award

Dave Weese, aquatics and youth programs supervisor for the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department, received the Professional Citation of Merit Award from the Washington Recreation and Parks Association at its annual conference in Tacoma in April. The award is bestowed each year.

P.J. Carlesimo certainly didn't talk as if he didn't expect to come back next season.

In the moments after Portland's 95-91 season-ending loss to the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday night, the Trail Blazers coach talked about his team's effort and potential.

He brushed aside rumors, that surfaced in a column in The Oregonian on Friday, that Blazers president Bob Whitsitt already has lined up a replacement.

"Rumors don't bother me at all," Carlesimo said. "I had a job to do and I did it. This team stayed together and improved. We won 20 of 25 down the stretch and not many did that. We're a good team, but a very young team."

Despite all the turmoil that swirled around the franchise through the season, with players publicly swearing at the coach and periodically being penalized for various team

rule violations, Carlesimo said he liked this team.

"We have a good nucleus for the future," he said. "I think we exceeded what a lot of people thought we would do, but we didn't exceed our own expectations. We need to keep the team together and go from there. The key for us is to keep the nucleus intact, and there's no reason to think we won't."

Blazers president Bob Whitsitt again denied that he'd made any decision on a coaching change.

"We'll step back and take some time and start evaluating everything," he said.

Carlesimo has two years left on his contract, but a buyout would be no problem for Paul Allen, the wealthiest owner in sports. Whitsitt was hired after Carlesimo. After the Blazers' fifth consecutive first-round playoff exit, three under Carlesimo, Whitsitt might go after a different

style of coach.

For now, Whitsitt is keeping his thoughts to himself.

"Right now it's just time to let the adrenalin of the series end," he said. "Whenever you end, you end, and it's never a good feeling."

Lakers coach Del Harris offered unsolicited praise of Carlesimo, who directed the Blazers to a 49-33 regular-season record and the No. 5 spot in the Western Conference with an assemblage of players labeled by many as troublemakers.

"As far as I'm concerned, they're as well coached as anybody that we play against," Harris said.

Whitsitt has at least three player situations to deal with. Clifford Robinson, coming off perhaps his best overall season, becomes a free agent this summer, and Chris Dudley has said he will opt out of his contract to test the free-agent market.

Robinson, the last remaining

player from the Blazers teams that made it to the finals in 1990 and 1992, wants to sign again with Portland.

"That's my plan, but we'll see," he said.

Atop the list of priorities is a new contract for Rasheed Wallace, who averaged better than 20 points per game in the playoffs. The Blazers see Wallace, 22, as a budding superstar. After an inconsistent rookie season in Washington, Wallace blossomed in Portland, and the front office would like to lock him up in a long-term contract rather than allow him to play out the final year of his rookie pact next season.

"I enjoyed playing with Cliff and all the guys and I enjoyed the season on the West Coast," Wallace said. "I'm hoping we all come back and have a better season. I lot of people doubted us. I feel good that we came farther

than people thought we're only going to get better."

But the way Game 4 slipped away Friday night wasn't easy for the Blazers to take, especially for Kenny Anderson, who was just 1-for-8 from the field in a bitter finish to what had been a standout first season in Portland.

"I'll learn from this. I'll take this with me," Anderson said. "Put me in the same spot next year and I'll do differently. Everyone needs to look at themselves and do better next year. I know I will."

And Isaiah Rider, whose roller-coaster season on the court was matched by his erratic behavior off it, said the team shouldn't be satisfied.

"We underachieved," he said. "We played well against this team all year and then we couldn't beat them when it counted. That's disappointing."

## YMCA Hosts Midnight Basketball Tournament

The Midnight Basketball League of the North/Inner NE Family YMCA will host a fun night basketball. Local teenagers in North/Northeast Portland will play against Key Bank of Oregon and Portland Public School (PPS) Police Department which patrols the school where games are played.

The event is scheduled to take

place on Friday, May 16 at Portsmouth Middle School, 5103 N. Willis Blvd. The event will begin at 7:30 PM.

Sergeant George Weatheroy from the Police Department will begin the evening with a positive message to the youngsters.

Tip-off time is scheduled for 8:10 PM. There is no cost to the commu-

nity for entrance.

This is an annual event held by the YMCA to directly involve its donors and supporters of the program. This will be the first year that the PPS Police Department will participate.

Two separate games are scheduled; first will be Key Bank and second the PPS Police.

The adult teams are made up by Key Bank employees of various branches and officers of the PPS Police Department.

The teenagers playing are consistent participants of the Midnight Basketball Program played at Portsmouth Gym.

The YMCA has sponsored this program at Portsmouth Middle

School over the past two years and overall for the last six years. The program runs 28 weeks per year, including a summer session at Roosevelt High School. There is no cost to the youth. Teams are formed and organized and players actually show up 80% of the time. The second week of each session is the cutoff for new players.

## Portland Power Drafts Milton

Power Takes DeLisha Milton of Florida with Second Overall Pick in 1997 ABL Draft

DeLisha Milton, the 1997 Wade Trophy winner as the nation's top senior women's basketball player, was selected second overall by the Portland Power in Monday's American Basketball League (ABL) draft, conducted via conference call from San Jose.

"I think DeLisha makes us an instant contender - there's no reason we can't start thinking (about the playoffs)," Power coach Lin Dunn said Monday. "DeLisha is a great person, and that was a priority for our team, to have someone come to our team that would have an impact on this community."

Milton, a 1997 Kodak first team All-American and the 1997 Southeastern Conference Player of the Year led the Gators to this year's NCAA Midwest Regional Finals, where Florida fell to eventual national runner-up old Dominion. A native of Riceboro, Georgia, Milton averaged 19 points and nine rebounds per game during her senior season.

The Power, holding the second pick in each of the six rounds, selected 6-1 forward LaTicia Morris from Auburn in the second round at number 11 overall. Morris was named the Most Valuable Player of the 1997 Southeastern Conference tournament and averaged 18 points per game last year.

In the third round, Portland stayed in the SEC, adding 5-9 point guard Elaine Powell of Louisiana State with

the 20th selection overall. Powell, was LSU's leading scorer during 1996-97, averaging 18 points per game.

In the fourth round, Portland added 6-3 forward-center Erin Scholz from the University of Colorado, an honorable mention All-American and first Team All-Big 12 selection. The team's final two picks were 5-11 guard Markita Aldridge, who appeared in a handful of games for Portland last season, and 5-10 guard Charmin Smith from Stanford.

In the first round, all nine ABL teams chose either a forward or a center, and two teams traded away their first round selection. With the first overall selection, the ABL's new expansion team in Long Beach took 6-4 veteran forward Yolanda Griffith, who starred at Florida Atlantic University.

Portland followed with the 6-1 Milton at number two, and the New England Blizzard then selected 6-7 center Kara Wolters from the University of Connecticut third. Wolters, who signed a three-year contract with the ABL last week, had been assigned to the Blizzard as a Regional Draft Pick.

With the fourth selection in the first round, the Seattle Reign then took NCAA Player of the Year Kate Starbird from Stanford. Starbird, from Tacoma, signed a multi-year pre-draft contract with the ABL on April 22nd and was assigned to the reign as a Regional Pick.

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With the number-five choice in the first round, the Atlanta Glory selected 6-3 center Tracy Henderson from the University of Georgia, followed by 6-3 center Clarisse Machanguana of Old Dominion, taken by the San Jose Lasers.

The first draft-day trade took place when the Colorado Xplosion sent the number seven pick and forward Charlotte Smith to the Seattle Reign for center Tari Phillips and the Reign's third round pick - acquired from Long Beach in a trade for Cindy Brown - number 19 overall. With the seventh pick in the first round, the Reign grabbed 6-1 forward Shalonda Enis from Alabama.

La'Keisha Frett, and All-American who from Georgia who signed with the ABL on Friday, was then selected eighth overall by the Richmond Rage, the 1997 ABL runner-up.

The first round closed with another trade, as the ABL Champion Columbus Quest sent the last pick in the first round to the New England Blizzard.

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