

# SPORTS

## Dunleavy gets Trail Blazers job

Mike Dunleavy was hired Tuesday as coach of the Portland Trail Blazers, The Associated Press learned.

The Blazers scheduled a news conference to make a major announcement. A source close to the situation confirmed 55 that Dunleavy would be introduced as the team's coach at that time.

Dunleavy has a 208-284 record in six seasons as a head coach in the NBA, two successful seasons with the Los Angeles Lakers followed by four losing seasons with the Milwaukee Bucks.

In his first season as a head coach, 1990-91, he directed the Lakers to the NBA Finals.

The Columbian newspaper in Vancouver, Wash., reported that Dunleavy signed a five-year deal but said the salary was not known.

Dunleavy reportedly was en-

route to Portland with Blazers' president Bob Whitsitt from Bellevue, Wash., where the two had met Monday.

Dunleavy told The Oregonian Monday night that he had yet to be offered the job but was optimistic.

"We've talked a lot, and about a lot of things, and I feel things have gone pretty well," Dunleavy said. "We'll meet again in the morning and take it from there. Hopefully, we'll be coming to a conclusion."

Dunleavy was cautious in his remarks Monday.

"Obviously, I can't help but feel this is the best job in the league, and I'd love to get it," he said. "I don't want to put words in their mouths, though, or shoot myself in the foot. But I think things have gone well. I think we're on the same wavelength."

Dunleavy said Whitsitt told him he was the first candidate to be inter-

viewed as the Blazers seek a replacement for P.J. Carlesimo, who was fired last week after three winning seasons. Dunleavy said he loves the young talent on the Blazers' roster.

"I love the team, no question about that," Dunleavy said. "I'm familiar with a lot of their players. I look forward, if I get the job, to meeting with them quickly and getting started with them, trying to get everyone on the same page."

Dunleavy said he would have no problem coaching the fast-paced, trapping, pressure-defense style that Whitsitt wants the team to play.

"To be a running team, you've got to be able to defend and rebound, and I think they have the ability to do that," he said.

"Certainly they are one of the bigger teams in the league, and they have a terrific point guard in Kenny Anderson, who can push the ball."



Mike Dunleavy, former Milwaukee coach was named Tuesday to coach the Blazers.

Dunleavy said the Blazers could use more outside shooting but they do have the ability to play in the open court.

"Arvydas Sabonis is great for the running game from the standpoint of his outlet passes," Dunleavy said. "He might be the smartest big man in the game. He understands how to trigger the break."

Dunleavy said the Blazers' roster gives great flexibility.

"You can play with a large lineup, or a smaller lineup, or a quicker lineup," he said. "I think it's a team with the ability to press. Stacey Augmon is a defensive stopper. You can use Rasheed Wallace at center if you want to go with speed and quickness. I was pretty impressed with Jermaine O'Neal the times I saw him. I liked his athletic ability, and he seemed to have a good feel for the game."

## Malone express puts Utah past the Lakers

Karl Malone scored 32 points, including six of Utah's nine in overtime, and grabbed 20 rebounds as the Jazz beat the Los Angeles Lakers 98-93 Monday night to reach the Western Conference finals for the fourth time in six years.

John Stockton added 24 points and 10 assists for the Jazz, who won the best-of-7 series 4-1. Utah will play the winner of the Houston-Seattle series in the Western finals.

Malone, expected to win the league's MVP award, put Utah ahead to stay 91-89 by making two free throws with 4:24 left in overtime. He also hit a pair of jumpers in the extra period as the Jazz outscored

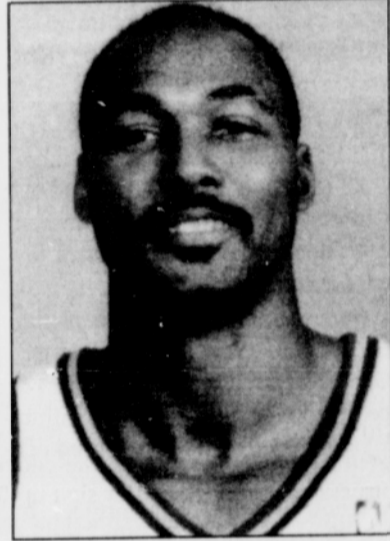
the Lakers 9-4.

"They gave us all we wanted tonight, and we could handle," Malone said. "The most important thing was we won the game. We're just happy we got to that next level."

It was a bruising contest. Lakers forward Robert Horry was ejected in the third quarter after taking a swing at Utah's Jeff Hornacek, and Los Angeles center Shaquille O'Neal fouled out with 1:47 left in regulation.

Nick Van Exel led the Lakers with 26 points, while O'Neal had 23 points and 13 rebounds.

Stockton's driving layup with 39.1 seconds left in regulation tied it



Karl Malone

at 89. After both teams missed potential go-ahead shots, the Lakers had a chance to win it in the closing seconds. But rookie Kobe Bryant shot an airball over Bryon Russell from 17 feet away just before the horn sounded, sending the game to overtime.

Utah's next opponent will be Seattle or Houston, which leads the Sonics 3-1 in their best-of-7 series.

"We have a tough series coming up no matter who it is," said Stockton, who was 11-of-13 from the field. "That'll be our proving ground."

Malone, who was 9-for-21 from the field and 14-for-18 from the line,

opened the overtime with a pair of free throws and a corner jumper that gave the Jazz a 93-89 lead with 3:20 remaining.

The Lakers didn't score in overtime until Elden Campbell made two free throws with 2:08 left to cut Utah's lead to 93-91.

After Stockton made one of two from the line, Bryant - who shot two more airballs in overtime - hit a driving shot to pull the Lakers within 94-93 with 1:43 left.

But Malone's short jumper put the Jazz up 96-93, and the Jazz held the Lakers scoreless the rest of the way. Utah's final points came on a pair of free throws by Russell with

3.4 seconds remaining.

The Lakers, who trailed 66-61 entering the fourth quarter, took an 87-84 lead on O'Neal's dunk with 2:03 left in regulation. But he fouled out a short time later when he hacked Malone, who then made one of two free throws.

Russell, who finished with 22 points, tied it at 87 with 1:13 remaining with a double-clutch, off-balance shot. Jerome Kersey's layup put the Lakers up by two with 58.3 seconds left, but Stockton tied it again with his driving layup.

Malone missed a jumper with 14 seconds remaining, and teammate Greg Ostertag lost the rebound.

## Bird goes home to coach Indiana

Larry Bird's Hoosier roots were showing.

Perhaps the most celebrated player ever to come out of basketball-mad Indiana, Bird returned to Market Square Arena Monday as the coach of the Indiana Pacers, a match 19 years in the making.

"The Pacers passed me up in the draft in 1978. I never thought I'd be here," Bird told a news conference on the floor of the arena, the home of the Pacers. "Now I'm here. I want to do whatever I can to make them proud."

Once a shy Hoosier country boy, the self-styled "Hick from French Lick," Bird is certain to fill the downtown arena by virtue of his name alone. Making a winner out of the Pacers is far less certain, especially since it's his first job as a coach and he's going to get a huge amount of attention.

"I don't like being in the public eye, but I want my team to succeed,"

Bird said. "Of course I'm young and I'll make mistakes... I know it's completely different. It's tough, but it's something I want to do."

"I crave winning. Whether I'm going to be a great coach or not, I don't know that. But I think I will."

Bird, a 12-time NBA All-Star with the Boston Celtics, retired as a player in 1992 because of chronic back problems. He said he never missed playing and never seriously thought about coaching until about two years ago.

Bird said he was asked to coach the Pacers in 1993, before Larry Brown was hired, but turned them down.

He didn't have to be asked again. "This is my home state. ... Every kid from Indiana watched the team in the ABA. Watching the Pacers, being from Indiana, you get caught up with it."

"I felt if I didn't take the opportunity now, this might be my last

opportunity," the 40-year-old Bird said. "I've always been very competitive. If you want to compete in the NBA you have to play or coach. I'm too old to play, and the only other option is to coach."

Bird, who reportedly will be paid \$4 million to \$4.5 million per year, said he would probably begin searching for a coaching staff next week and begin immediately to contact each of the Pacers players.

"I feel they can compete. If we can make a few moves and get a little better defense and get the ball and run, we're going to improve right away. You don't have to do a lot. Of course, you have to have the talent, and I feel we have the talent."

Pacers president Donnie Walsh said he wasn't concerned about Bird's lack of coaching experience.

"There's been a lot of speculation why we want Larry. We want Larry back because we know he's going to help us win ball games,"

Walsh said, adding that when Bird finished coaching he would move to the Pacers' front office.

"If you look at his career in high school and college and the NBA and the records of teams before he got there and after he came, you can see he's had a substantial impact wherever he's gone."

Bird was a Celtics special assistant — mainly scouting — for the five years since a bad back forced his retirement. Walsh approached him after Brown hinted he might not be back.

"I think we recruited each other," Walsh said. "Once he made up his mind to coach and wanted to come to Indiana, I didn't go after anybody else."

Brown left the Pacers with two years remaining on his contract and joined the Philadelphia 76ers. Bird helped the Celtics get Rick Pitino from Kentucky but said he had no desire to coach in Boston himself.

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## P.J. offered Celtics GM job

P.J. Carlesimo, fired as head coach of the Portland Trail Blazers last Thursday, reportedly has been offered the job of general manager of the Boston Celtics.

According to the New York Post, new Celtics president and coach Rick Pitino offered Carlesimo the GM position after it was declined by Larry Bird, who was named the head coach of the Indiana Pacers. Carlesimo was said to be a candidate for the coaching job at Kentucky, which opted for Georgia's Tubby Smith.

The Post added that Carlesimo is not a serious contender for NBA coaching vacancies in Golden State, Vancouver, and Denver.

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