

SPORTS

SOME DON'T BELIEVE JORDAN WILL QUIT

This might have been Michael Jordan's final All-Star game, and it will be followed by what might be a farewell tour and what might be a last championship push.

Through it all, there will be believers and nonbelievers. Some think it's the end of the Jordan Era, some think it's all a big charade.

"How many times do you want me to say it?" Jordan asked Sunday after winning his third All-Star MVP award. "I'll say it once more. If Phil (Jackson) is not in Chicago, I'm not playing."

Jordan did not change his stance during All-Star weekend. He simply reiterated what he has been saying for weeks: If the Bulls change coaches, as management maintains it will, he will retire.

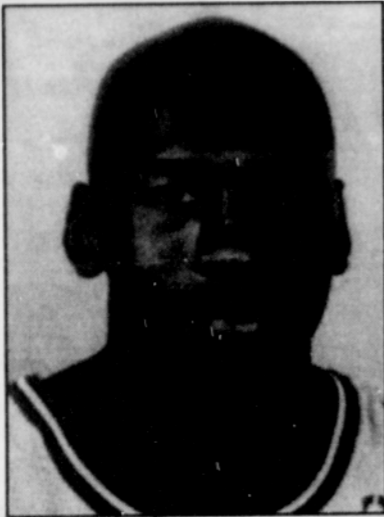
Neither side figures to blink until the playoffs are over and it's clear whether the Bulls have added to their dynasty with a sixth title in eight years.

If they win, the pressure to capitulate will be on owner Jerry Reinsdorf and general manager Jerry Krause.

If someone knocks the Bulls off, management will have an excuse to rebuild the team.

"He's such a great person, a great player, that it will really hurt if we lose him," Eastern Conference All-Star coach Larry Bird said.

Bird, like nearly everyone at All-Star weekend, heard the Jordan ques-



Michael Jordan

tion over and over. And like everyone, he didn't know whether to believe it.

"Michael will be here again next year and will win the MVP again," Jayson Williams said. "I don't know why Mike needs so much drama in his life."

"I think this was his last (All-Star) game," Penny Hardaway said.

"We hope he won't retire," Gary Payton said. "We hope he comes back because he makes it more competitive."

Added West coach George Karl: "The league will learn how to function without Michael, but I'll go on record right now that I personally think Michael should continue to play."

"I think we all want to try to beat

him. He has set the standard at such a height that anybody who has the opportunity wants to go after the best. And he has proven to be the best many, many times."

Jordan won the MVP award after leading all scorers with 23 points as the East beat the West 135-114. Jordan shot 10-for-18 with eight assists, six rebounds and three steals.

"If that was his last, it was a great way to go out," Jason Kidd said. "If he does decide to retire, he's going out at the right time - out on top."

There is skepticism regarding Jordan's pronouncements because he has gone back on his word before.

When he retired in 1993 to become a baseball player, he said he was finished playing basketball.

When he returned in 1995, he wore uniform No. 45 and said he would never wear No. 23 again.

In both cases, Jordan flip-flopped. Now, people are looking for any sliver of hedging on his part.

If he won't play or any coach other than Jackson, would he consider being a player-coach?

"No. That was just an appetizer thrown out by Phil," Jordan said.

Would he play elsewhere next season if Jackson gets a job coaching another team?

"Nowhere else," Jordan said.

Would he play for the Knicks?

"No. I said I'd only do that if I was single. I'm not single," Jordan said.

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Community

"Girls Only Sports Week"

NIKE announced the expansion of its "Girls Only" Sports Program from 10 to 100 Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Officials across the country joined the NIKE team in declaring this week "NIKE Girls Only Sports Week" in celebration of girls' increased involvement in sports.

At a kick-off celebration in Los Angeles, Lisa Leslie, center for the Los Angeles Sparks, joined top amateur athletes to teach more than 200 young girls the importance of staying in sports through their adolescence as well as how to dunk, spike and score in basketball, volleyball, field hockey, track & field and soccer.

"NIKE has always been committed to creating opportunities for girls and women in sports and the 10 Boys & Girls Clubs in the pilot program have successfully developed innovative sports programs for girls," said Sue Levin, women's brand director, NIKE. "Through programs like the 'Play Like A Girl' Web site and 'Girls Only' Sports, we will continue to inspire and encourage girls to realize their full potential through sports."

NIKE established the "Girls Only" Sports Program in 1997 as a response to a report from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, which announced that girls who continue to participate in sports beyond their adolescence enjoy numerous benefits including better physical and mental health. Research has shown that girls who play sports are more likely to stay in school and go to college, less likely to develop a disturbed body image, and less likely to engage in unwanted sexual behavior.

NIKE's "Girls Only" Sports Program began with a 10-city pilot pro-

gram last summer; the program was so successful, it has been expanded to 100 clubs in 1998. The goal of the program is to create girls-specific sports programs through the Boys & Girls Clubs rather than simply giving girls the boys "hand me down" sports.

With the growing popularity of the WNBA and top female athletes like volleyball star Gabrielle Reece and soccer star Mia Hamm, more and more girls are realizing the value of staying in sports. When Title IX was passed in 1972, there were ap-

proximately 300,000 high school girls playing sports. In 1997, that number increased to 2.47 million and is expected to continue growing with the help of programs like NIKE's "Girls Only" Sports Program to get girls started in sports.

PIL Winter Standings

BOYS BASKETBALL	W	L	TO
Benson	12	0	
Jefferson	9	3	R,L,B
Wilson	8	4	B,G,J,R
Cleveland	7	5	J,W,B,L,J
Grant	6	6	B,C,J,B,C,J
Lincoln	6	6	F,W,B,G,W,M
Roosevelt	6	6	B,C,G,W,L,B
Franklin	3	9	
Madison	3	9	
Marshall	0	12	

GIRLS BASKETBALL	W	L	TO
Jefferson	13	1	W
Lincoln	11	3	W,J,W
Benson	10	4	L,J,G,J
Wilson *	10	4	J,B,G,J,M
Grant	9	5	B,J,L,F,J
Franklin	7	7	L,W,J,B,G,L,W
Madison	4	10	
Cleveland	3	11	
Marshall*	2	12	
Roosevelt	1	13	

*Wilson forfeited to Marshall

BOYS - FINAL SWIMMING	W	L
Lincoln	8	0
Benson	7	1
Wilson	6	2
Grant	5	3
Cleveland	4	4
Franklin	3	5
Madison	2	6
Roosevelt	1	7
Jefferson	0	8

WRESTLING	W	L
Benson	7	1
Grant	6	1
Madison	5	2
Wilson	5	2
Franklin	4	2
Jefferson	3	3
Cleveland	2	4
Marshall	0	6
Lincoln	1	6
Roosevelt	1	7

Update 2/10/98

The Portland Observer Salutes Black History Month

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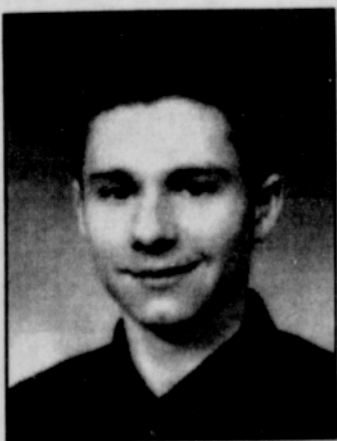
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