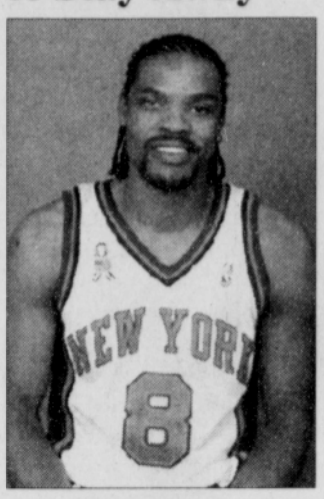
SPORTS/METRO

Sprewell Told to Stay Away



Latrell Sprewell

(AP) — Latrell Sprewell was fined $250,000 Monday by the New York Knicks, who also told him to stay away from the team until he can make "a positive contribution."

Sprewell was punished for failing to tell the team that he injured his shooting hand when he tripped and fell on his yacht two weeks before training camp started. He had surgery last week and is out at least six weeks.

"He has a responsibility to let us know. He had an obligation to do that," said Madison Square Garden president Steve Mills, who also met with Sprewell, along with coach Don Chaney.

Knicks president Scott Layden emphasized that Sprewell was not officially suspended, but no time frame was given for the four-time All-Star's return to the team.

Nike chairman, CEO and founder, Philip Knight unties the ceremonial shoe-lace with Mayor Very Katz at the final Anniversary Project celebration at Peninsula Park on Thursday, Oct. 3. To commemorate 30-years as an Oregon –based company and to thank Portlanders for years of support, Nike resurfaced nearly 90 outdoor basketball courts in the Portland Parks and Recreation system

Nike Completes Anniversary Project

After resurfacing 90 basketball courts, company will also provide funds for maintenance

In commemoration of its 30th year as an Oregon-based company, Nike announced the completion of its basketball court resurfacing gift to Portland Parks & Recreation today in a community celebration at Peninsula Park. The $2 million-gift, made to the Portland Parks Foundation, represents Nike's largest one-time sports surface donation anywhere in the world.

In just 75 days, Nike's Anniversary Project resurfaced all of the outdoor basketball courts in the Portland Parks and Recreation system with a world-class, cushioned Rebound Ace surface containing recycled shoes. The same quality of surface featured on nearly 90 of Portland's outdoor basketball courts is also found at the Australian Open, Sydney's tennis venue for the Games of 2000 and at the country's most prominent outdoor basketball court, Holcomb Rucker Park in Harlem.

"This is Nike's way of saying thank you to everyone in the Portland area for [all of the] support over the last three decades," said Philip H. Knight, Nike chairman, CEO and founder, who grew up in southeast Portland.

> *One of the Anniversary Project's main goals is to inspire kids to be physically active.*
>
> **—Gary DeStefano, Nike's President of U.S. Operations**

The project involved nearly 4.5 acres of resurfacing. The courts, many of which are 20 or more years old, were resurfaced using recycled shoes collected through Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program, which collects, separates, and grinds up athletic shoes to make Nike Grind material. The grind is then used in athletic courts, tracks, fields and playground surfaces.

It took nearly 170,000 shoes to produce the Nike Grind material for all of the Anniversary Project courts.

"One of the Anniversary Project's main goals is to inspire kids to be physically active," said Nike's President of U.S. Operations, Gary DeStefano. "The first part of this gift was revitalizing the courts so kids had a great place to play; the second part is ensuring that the courts are maintained properly in the future."

Before the Anniversary Project, many of the courts were currently decommissioned or slated to be due to the shortage of maintenance funds. In addition to resurfacing the courts, Nike will now match up to $10,000 per year in court maintenance-related expenses incurred by Portland Parks & Recreation. The matching funds program extends through 2017.

NFL Defends Record of Minority Hiring

(AP)—The NFL, threatened with a lawsuit over its lack of black head coaches, defended the steps it has taken in minority hiring, but acknowledged Tuesday there is room for improvement.

"Progress has been made and we expect that progress to continue," league spokesman Greg Aiello said.

"We take the issue very seriously and have initiated several programs in recent years under commissioner (Paul) Tagliabue to ensure that our hiring practices are fair, and that all coaches have opportunities to advance."

Aiello was responding to a report released Monday by a group headed by attorney Johnnie Cochran. Using statistics compiled over the past 15 years, the report noted that black head coaches had been more successful than their white counterparts, but that they weren't hired commensurate with that success.

> *Black coaches are being held to a higher standard. Now is the time for the NFL to step up and make a change.*
>
> **— Johnnie Cochran.**

"Black coaches are being held to a higher standard," said Cochran, who suggested the league might be sued if progress isn't made. "Now is the time for the NFL to step up and make a change."

To stimulate the hiring of blacks as head coaches, Cochran proposed that Tagliabue "reward at least one team each year for developing a diverse front office" with a draft pick.

He also asked the NFL to require team owners to include "diverse racial groups" when interviewing candidates for coaching positions. According to the proposal, "owners can choose to opt out of this requirement, but to do so they must forfeit a draft pick."

There currently are two black head coaches in the NFL: Tony Dungy of Indianapolis and Herman Edwards of the New York Jets. But Aiello pointed out that in the last five years, 23 blacks have been interviewed for coaching positions and three were hired: Dungy, Edwards and Ray Rhodes, by Green Bay in 1999.

Tyrone Willingham, currently the coach of Notre Dame, also was among those 23.

Since Art Shell became the first black head coach of the modern era with the Raiders in 1989, there have been five: Dungy, Edwards, Shell, Dennis Green and Rhodes. Terry Robiskie served as interim coach of the Washington Redskins for three games at the end of the 2000 season.

There have never been more than three black head coaches in a season.

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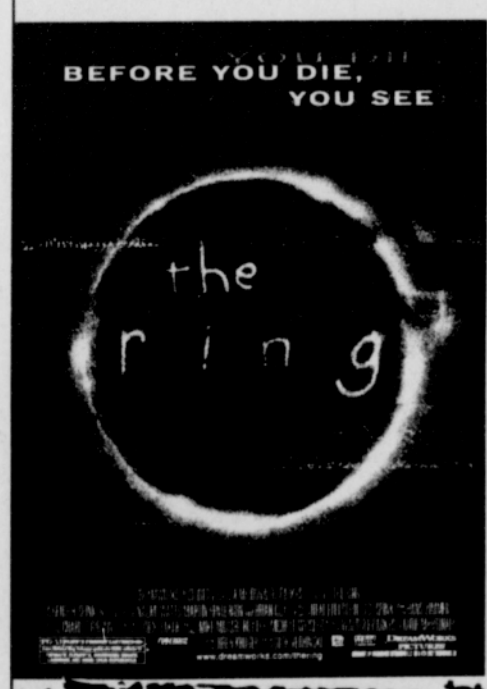

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Football fans can hop on Amtrak Cascades to Seattle from around the area and arrive in time for kick-off. Fans can avoid major traffic jams on game day while enjoying the scenic route to Seattle's King Street Station and walk directly to the new Seahawk Stadium located just outside the station entrance.

Regular one-way adult fares between Portland and Seattle start as low as $23. Space is limited and reservations are required for remaining home games on November 3, 17, and 24, December 8 and 22. Game times are 1:05 p.m. or 1:15 p.m.

For train schedules, fares and reservation information, call 1-800-USA-RAIL or visit www.AmtrakCascades.com.

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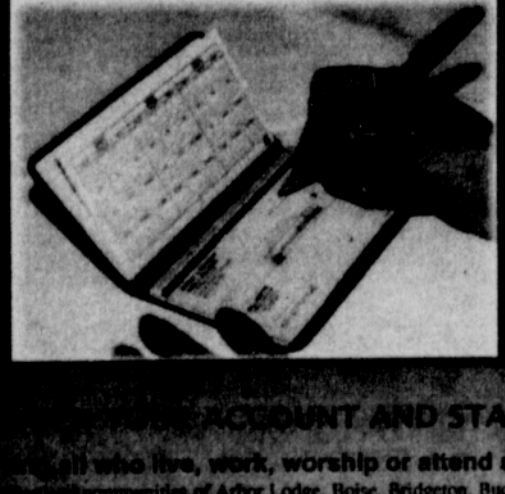

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