

SPORTS

Finals Open with Key Guard Matchup

Young Tony Parker to face Nets star Jason Kidd

(AP)—To appreciate how much of an effect Tony Parker has had on the Spurs, just look at the way he eats his French fries - dipping them in a mixture of mayonnaise and ketchup.

"Tim (Duncan) eats them that way too now," teammate Malik Rose said.

Parker has indeed influenced the tastes and talents of the San Antonio Spurs, who begin their quest for a second NBA title on Wednesday night in Game 1 of the best-of-seven championship against the New Jersey Nets.

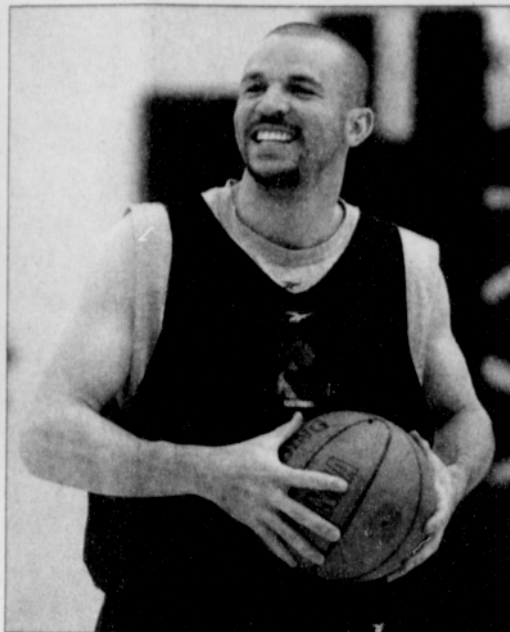
Parker, who turned 21 less than three weeks ago, will become the fourth-youngest player in NBA history to compete in the finals behind Jonathan Bender (19, Indiana, 2000), Darryl Dawkins (20, 1977, Philadelphia) and Magic Johnson (20, Lakers, 1980).

"It's a dream to play in the NBA Finals. Three years ago I was waking up at 3 a.m. to watch the finals, and now I'm playing in them," Parker said.

His matchup against Nets point guard Jason Kidd will be one of the keys, and it comes with an intriguing subplot. The Spurs will have more than \$14 million worth of salary cap space over the summer when Kidd becomes a free agent, and it's possible they could make him an offer.



San Antonio Spurs guard Tony Parker (above), one of the NBA's youngest players, will match-up against New Jersey Nets veteran Jason Kidd (right) in the NBA finals starting Wednesday in San Antonio (AP photo)



Will that affect Parker? "I've been asked that question 500 times, and it's not going to bother me - the comparison and the matchup with Jason Kidd," Parker said Monday.

Parker does not even expect this matchup to be his toughest of the postseason. In his opinion, no point guard is more difficult to defend than Stephon Marbury, whose Suns defeated San Antonio twice in the opening round.

Kidd is not a natural scorer like Marbury, but he's a better passer, rebounder and all-around player. Kidd is averaging 20.3, 8.4 rebounds and 8.3 assists in the postseason to Parker's 14.9 points, 2.6 rebounds and 3.3 assists.

"They were the best team in the NBA, so everybody talks about Tim, and they should," Kidd said. "But Tony Parker is the key. When he plays well, they play well."

Indeed, the Spurs were 20-1 during the regular season and 4-0 in the first three rounds of the playoffs when getting 20 or

more points from Parker, whose flashy speed and accurate mid-range jumper are his strongest skills.

Parker, born in Belgium and raised in France, is the son of an American father and a Dutch mother. His father, Tony Sr., played for Loyola, Ill., before moving overseas to play professionally in Europe.

Parker first saw his father's old Chester Highlands neighborhood on Chicago's South Side when he was 6.

"It was the ghetto, it was really poor. It helped me appreciate the good things in life," Parker said.

Cheeks Caught in Coaching Merry Go Round

(AP)—There are still plenty of NBA coaching jobs out there, and plenty of unemployed former coaches to fill them. With Larry Brown taking over the Detroit Pistons and Paul Silas going to the Cleveland Cavaliers on Monday, the list of coaching vacancies dropped to five.

Another factor that could further unsettle the leaguewide picture is Maurice Cheeks' status with the Portland Trail Blazers.

Philadelphia was denied permission to speak to Cheeks about its coaching vacancy, but some in the Sixers organization believe the Trail Blazers would rather have Rick Carlisle as their coach. Cheeks has one year remaining, plus a team option, on



Blazer Coach Maurice Cheeks.



Coach Paul Silas hired at Cleveland.

his contract with Portland.

Carlisle came onto the market unexpectedly over the weekend after the Pistons fired him to make

way for Brown.

"Rick will be a head coach on somebody's bench next year," Pistons president Joe Dumars said

Monday. "A lot of stuff is happening. If Mo can get out of his deal in Portland, and ends up in Philly, he may end of keeping some of (Brown's former) staff. There's so many domino effects going on."

The New Orleans Hornets, Philadelphia 76ers, Toronto Raptors, Washington Wizards and Houston Rockets still have openings, and former coaches Mike Fratello, Mike Dunleavy and Jeff Van Gundy are among the candidates who have interviewed for several of those jobs but have not yet been hired.

Carlisle said he planned to speak to three teams this week while attending the NBA pre-draft camp in Chicago. He would not identify the teams.

Tubman's Panthers Bound for High Five Tourney

The Tubman Middle School Panthers have qualified for and will be attending the High Five American Tournament, Summer National Competition in San Diego, Calif.

The team from north and northeast Portland has set goals to compete at an AAU national level with national and state championships

by the end of their 8th grade year. Academics are also a main focus with the team.

The Panthers are coached by Mr. Freeman and one assistant Mr. Randall. On April 13, the team took 5th place in a tournament in Springfield and on May 18, the team took 2nd place in the tournament in Seattle.

The team is looking for community support through donations to attend the California tournament. Car washes will be held every Saturday during the month of June at Clear Image at 816 N. Lombard next to Bookies to raise money for the trip. Contributions

can also be made during a White T-Shirt dance for youth ages 11 to 14 on June 13 at Matt Dishman Community Center from 8 to 11 p.m.

Tryouts Set for Junior Women's National Softball

ASA/USA Softball Junior Women's National team tryouts will be held on Sunday, June 8 at Erv Lind Stadium in Normandale Park, NE 57th and Hassalo in Portland from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Any female United States citizen born in or after 1984 is eligible to tryout. Applications and a registration fee of \$100 are due to the ASA National office in Oklahoma City no later than June 2.

Application forms may be picked up from the Portland Metro Softball Association office in East Delta Park, 10737 N Union Ct. Portland or by calling 503-823-1656.

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The Portland Observer

World of Autos

REVIEWS ON EXCITING NEW VEHICLES BY THE WORLD'S LEADING MANUFACTURERS

2003 mustang mach 1

Price Tested..... \$29,650.00
Engine..... 4.6L 4V DOHC V-8
Transmission.... 5 speed manual

The Mustang is the last pony standing since the competitors are no longer making the Firebird or Camaro. Ford added Mach 1 to their special edition models for 2003. Ford has not lost it touch to bring one back to the 1960s muscle car era. They continue to stay strong in sales with the Mustang family. The Mach 1 high performance twin-cam 4.6-liter V8 engine lets you hear the power under the hood from the turn of the ignition. The roar of the engine took me back to my high school days just wishing I could take it to the high school drags for a run. I enjoyed hearing the rumbling of the engine that made want stomp on the gas pedal and take it to its full potential. It delivers tremendous acceleration performance with lots of torque. The Mach 1 distinguishes itself by the black shaker hood with a low-gloss black strip running up the center of the hood. The scoop is designed to channel fresh air into the intake for increased breathing and therefore increased power. The Mustang offers superior gripping when cornering hard. The first glance of the interior left me with impression of race car seats and pedals. The center console is standard however easily accessible. The seats grip the body giving full support. It is roomy enough may be a little tight for any long legged rear passengers. The trunk space is small but adequate. The Mustang Mach 1 remains to supply great performance and sound. I believe Ford will continue to stay strong in sales of the Mustang family just for the simple fact that it continues the heritage of the 60's and the love of muscle era which for some of us it brings back memories and for others it will built memories.

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