

SPORTS



Shaquille O'Neal

END GAME

▲ Detroit Pistons Chauncey Billups is all smiles as Los Angeles Lakers Derek Fisher walks away in the final game of the NBA Finals in Auburn Hills, Mich. (AP photo)

Lakers O'Neal Puts Self on Trade Market

Portland prospects look doubtful

(AP) - The NBA trade market has one huge addition: Call him The Big Commodity.

The breakup of the Los Angeles Lakers has begun, with Coach Phil Jackson out and their All-Star Cen-

ter Shaquille O'Neal now looking to join him.

"If any GM out there wants a hardworking big man who wants to win championships, call (Lakers general manager) Mitch Kupchak, because he will entertain offers," Shaquille O'Neal said.

Some sports columnists are speculating on O'Neal's new home and a

place on the Portland Trail Blazer's roster. Speculators call the trade to Portland "doable but doubtful" and also unlikely because of the Blazer's lack of matching talent to trade.

At age 32, O'Neal isn't the same player he was during the team's championship years. He can dominate as before, but only in stretches. The NBA Finals against Detroit

were a perfect example; he was very good in Games 1 and 4 and far below that standard otherwise.

O'Neal is under contract for \$27.6 million next year and \$30.6 million the following season and can opt out after next year.

He wanted an extension beyond the 2005-2006 season, but it never happened.

Billups MVP in Detroit Win

(AP) - After Chauncey Billups bounced around the league like a basketball, he found a home in Detroit. Two years later, he was voted MVP of the NBA Finals.

Billups averaged 21 points and 5.2 assists for the Pistons against the Los Angeles Lakers in five stunning games.

"It's unbelievable," he said last Tuesday night after Detroit won its first title since 1990. "I've dreamed of this opportunity all my life, and the way my career had gone, it seemed like my chance was kind of drifting away. But I never gave up."

Billups had 14 points and six assists as part of the Pistons' balanced attack in a 100-87 win over Los Angeles in Game 5.

Billups, who hasn't been an All-Star during his seven-year career, is the lowest-profile player to be MVP of the finals since Boston's Cedric Maxwell in 1981.

Parks Open with a Bang

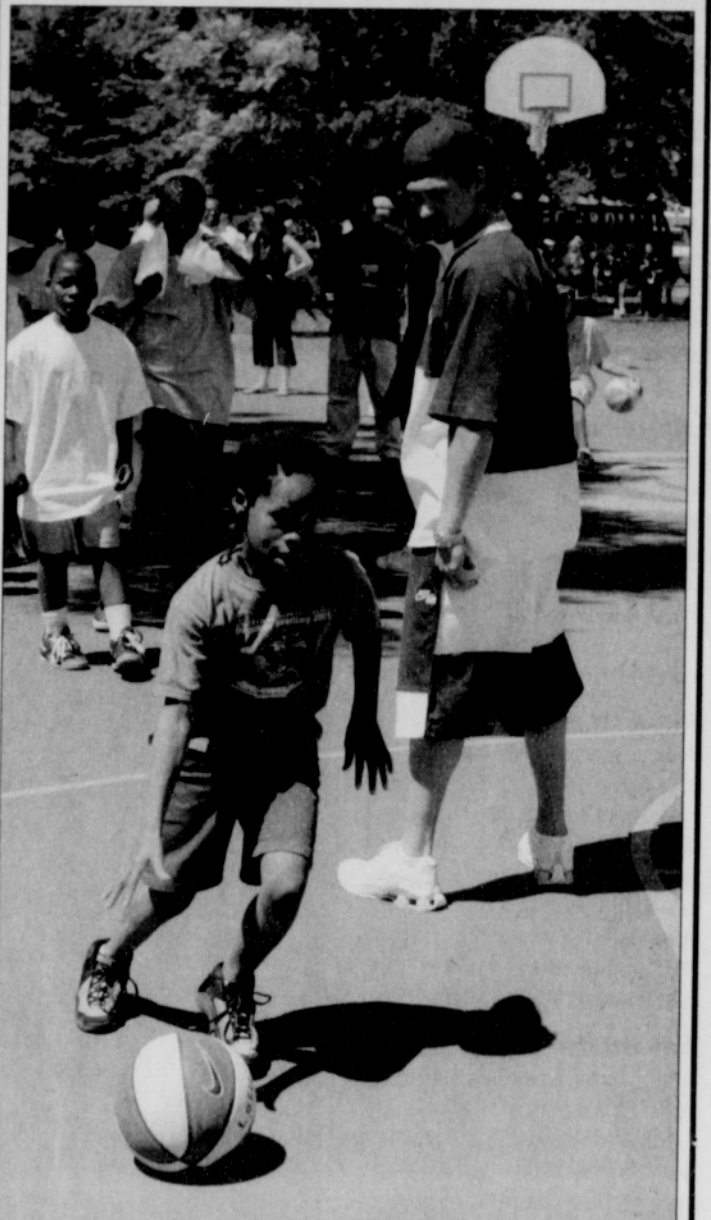


PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE DIPAOLA

Dan Dickau watches as Julaina Montgomery, 10, drives to the hoop at a basketball clinic sponsored by NikeGo at Peninsula Park in north Portland on Friday.

Portland Parks and Recreation kicked off the summer season with a party and free swimming on Friday, June 18 at Peninsula Park in north Portland.

Kids and their parents enjoyed food, music and games while learning about the park's schedule of more than 2,000 recreation activities running all summer long.

A NikeGO basketball mini-clinic also gave kids a taste of summer fun.

Nike recently announced a \$195,000 donation to the parks

and recreation department for a Summer Playgrounds Program with more basketball clinics and support for the Portland Skatepark Project at Pier Park.

"Through this donation, we hope to inspire kids to enjoy the benefits of a physically active lifestyle as well as to help continue the Portland Parks legacy as an important place where families and communities join together," said Jim Carter, vice president and general counsel for Nike.

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Tiger Woods reacts after his fairway shot on hole eight lands in a rough during the final round of the U.S. Open Sunday at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y. (AP photo)

Woods Looks to Break Drought

(AP) - Tiger Woods needed a final-hole birdie to avoid matching his worst round ever in the U.S. Open Sunday in Southampton, N.Y.

Woods shot a 6-over 76 at Shinnecock Hills and finished at 10-over 290 for the tournament.

Woods has won eight majors, including two U.S. Opens, but currently he's on a 0-for-8 run in the game's biggest tournaments.

"I hung in there, grinded my tail off today, I really did," he said. "I did the best I could."

Woods will play one more tournament before traveling to the British Open at Troon in July, his next chance to end his streak of defeats in majors. He will defend his title at the Western Open in Chicago over the July 4 weekend.