

SPORTS

30 Years Later, Clippers Win a Playoff

Could face fellow LA Lakers next

(AP) - The Los Angeles Clippers were a happy bunch after putting an end to a 30-year drought of never winning a playoff series.

Cuttino Mobley and Corey Maggette each scored 23 points, Elton Brand added 21 points and 13 rebounds, and the Clippers took command in the third quarter to beat the Denver Nuggets 101-83 Monday night and win the first-round best-of-seven Western Conference series 4-1.

Mobley pumped his fists repeatedly in the final minute, and his teammates waved at the Staples Center fans, who stood and cheered as the final seconds ticked off.

"We've got to keep winning," Mobley said afterward in a somewhat subdued locker room.

"I saw what we had in training camp," fellow newcomer Sam Cassell said. "This team was in a lot of games last year. They just didn't have guys to finish games."

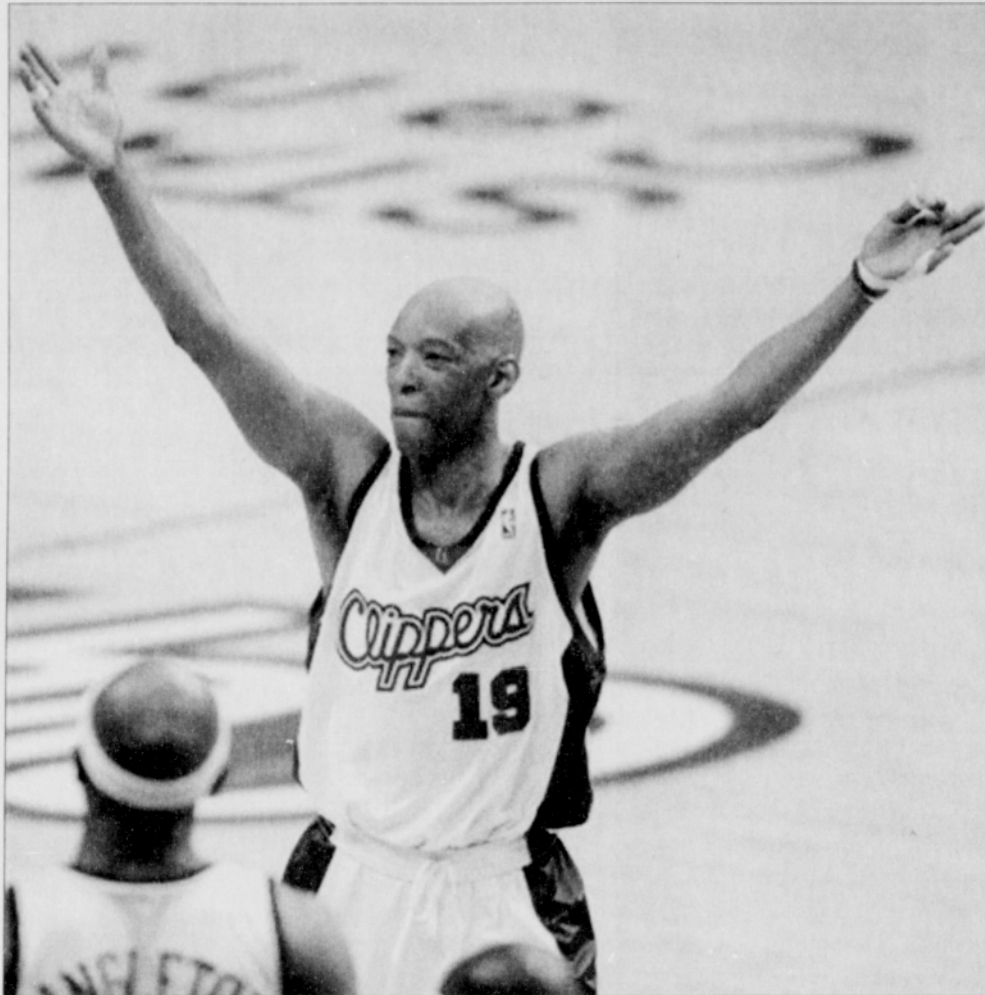
They do now, in the veteran backcourt combo of Mobley and Cassell, but finishing wasn't an issue in the series finale.

The Clippers hadn't won a playoff series since 1976, when the team was playing in Buffalo with Coach Jack Ramsey and beat the Philadelphia 76ers in the opening round before losing to the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The franchise moved to San Diego in 1978, then to Los Angeles in 1984. The Clippers are in the playoffs for just the seventh time in their 36-year history, only the fourth time since heading west, and the first time in nine years.

The franchise was 13-22 in the postseason entering these playoffs, including 9-13 while playing in Buffalo.

"For the organization, it's a tremendous accomplishment," said third-year coach Mike Dunleavy. "It's been a long time since this has happened. But for me, it's the vision I had. My



Los Angeles Clippers' Sam Cassell in the final minutes against the Denver Nuggets, as the Clippers won 101-83 in Game 5 of the first-round of the NBA basketball playoffs. (AP photo)

philosophy through it all is you have to defend to be good."

And defend the Clippers did, holding the Nuggets under 40 percent from the floor in four of the five games in this series.

"It's just a great feeling," said Brand, who played in 544 regular-season games before making his playoff debut April 22. "It's still kind of surreal. I might not appreciate it until we start the second round."

The Clippers meet the winner of the Lakers-

Suns series. Should the Clippers face the Lakers, it would be the first postseason meeting ever between Los Angeles teams in the NBA, NFL or major league baseball.

Cassell was one Clipper who made it clear who he'd like to face next.

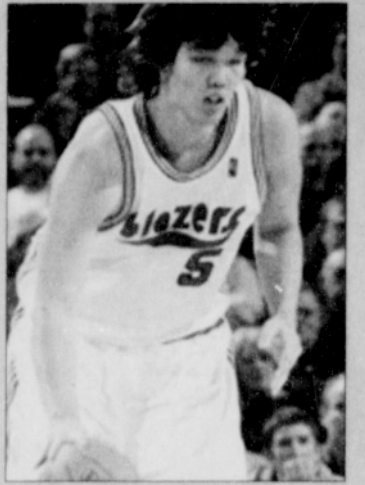
"I was always a Laker fan - Magic Johnson, James Worthy, my main man Norm Nixon," Cassell said. "Kobe Bryant's my favorite player. It would be the battle of Hollywood - it would be great for the city."

Blazer on Friendship Team

Portland Trail Blazer Ha Seung-Jin will join NBA players in Shanghai, People's Republic of China on June 8-11 to participate in Basketball without Borders basketball camps.

Ha Seung-Jin is the first South Korean to play in the NBA, and is one of several current and former NBA players along with team personnel to coach Basketball Without Borders.

The global basketball instructional camp for young people promotes friendship, healthy living and education with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The camps visit four conti-



Ha Seung-Jin

nents this year, arriving in Lithuania and Puerto Rico for the first time.



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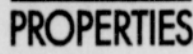
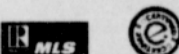
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