

NBA Dwayne Wade excited to join hometown Bulls

By JAY COHEN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — When Dwyane Wade was a free agent in 2010, he got a Chicago Bulls jersey when he met with his hometown team. He took it home, put it on and took a picture. Then he deleted it.

He got another Bulls jersey Friday, and there were more pictures. Lots of pictures, and there was no need to erase anything this time around.

The long dance between Wade and the Bulls took the next step when he was officially introduced as a member of his favorite team growing up in the Windy City. The 12-time All-Star had two workouts with the Bulls before he was drafted by Miami in 2003, and then had two more meetings with the team before deciding to stay with the Heat six years ago.

"My dream of becoming an NBA player started here, started here in my hometown," Wade said. "I know it took a long time to get here, but I am here and I'm excited to be here."

Wade announced he was leaving Miami for Chicago on July 6, and the Bulls confirmed the deal two weeks ago. But his introductory press conference was delayed by a trip to China for Wade and his wife, actress



AP Photo/Tae-Gyun Kim

Chicago Bulls general manager Gar Forman, left, and Dwyane Wade hold a uniform during a news conference Friday, July 29, 2016, in Chicago.

Gabrielle Union.

Judging by the smile on the face of general manager Gar Forman, it was worth the wait for the Bulls.

"Knowing him and studying him over the years, his makeup and character, his work ethic and his commitment to winning is something that I think is really going to serve our team well," Forman said. "You look at our team and we basically got a young team. We've got 10 players now with three years or less experience, and to have Dwyane come in and kind of show these guys the

way, I don't think you can put a value on something like that."

Wade's two-year contract worth about \$47 million is part of a delicate balancing act for Forman and the Bulls, trying to get younger and more athletic while staying in contention. After finishing 42-40 and missing the playoffs for the first time since 2008, Derrick Rose was traded to the New York Knicks, and All-Star center Pau Gasol left for a free-agent deal with San Antonio.

But the Bulls convinced Rajon Rondo and Wade to

come to Chicago, adding two more dynamic guards to play with Jimmy Butler. While Rondo and Wade are on the wrong side of 30 and have never been strong 3-point shooters in a league with increasing emphasis on the outside shot, everyone with the Bulls think they will be able to work it out.

Scoring has never been a problem for the 34-year-old Wade, who leaves Miami as the franchise's career leader with 20,221 points. The 6-foot-4 guard averaged 19 points and 4.6 assists in 74 games last season, his highest total since he appeared in 76 games in the 2010-11 campaign.

After the Bulls missed out on him in the draft, Wade turned into a beloved figure in South Florida, helping the Heat win NBA titles in 2006, 2012 and 2013. He had repeatedly returned to the only NBA franchise he had ever known, but he said the direction and focus for each side was a little different this year than in the past.

"I had a contract offer in Miami that I could have taken. I decided not to take it," Wade said. "It was my decision to be selfish and to live out a dream of mine. I brought a lot of excitement to Miami and it's a home to me. It will always be. I want to bring a little bit here to Chicago while I have a little bit left."

Olympics

Russian weightlifters banned from Rio Olympics for doping

By PABLO GORONDI
Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — All of Russia's weightlifters were banned from the Rio Olympics on Friday for doping for what the international federation called "extremely shocking" results that brought the sport into "disrepute."

The eight competition spots have been offered to other countries.

The International Weightlifting Federation said the "integrity of the weightlifting sport has been seriously damaged on multiple times and levels by the Russians." It said the punishment was an "appropriate sanction" to "preserve the status of the sport."

To replace the eight Russian lifters in Rio, five countries were offered places in the men's competition — Belarus, Croatia, El Salvador, Mongolia and Serbia. For the women, Albania, Georgia and Moldova became eligible. Because of the lateness of the decision, the IWF said it was not clear whether all the spots would be filled.

In justifying its actions

against Russia, the IWF said retests of samples from seven Russian weightlifters who took part in the 2008 Beijing Olympics or 2012 London Olympics resulted in positive tests, and more were expected.

Two female weightlifters — Tatiana Kashirina and Anastasiya Romanova — were withdrawn by the Russian federation for earlier doping offenses. The names of the other banned lifters were not announced.

Four additional weightlifters were mentioned in World Anti-Doping Agency investigator Richard McLaren's report — which alleged a massive cover-up of failed drug tests — as having benefited from the "disappearing positive methodology system" used by Russia to mask doping results.

The IWF ruling took time because on Tuesday it asked the International Olympic Committee and WADA for "further clarification" on the recent IOC ruling giving individual sports federations the responsibility of deciding which Russian athletes can compete in Rio.

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