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Jeremy Lin looks for another fresh start

By Mike Street

Special to The Asian Reporter

There hasn't been much new Asian talent in the National Basketball Association (NBA) lately, but there's been an Asian-American NBA star that many fans might have forgotten about entirely. Once the talk of the league, Jeremy Lin has played just a handful of games over the past two seasons, thanks to hamstring and knee injuries. Now he has a chance to establish himself again in a league that once described the emotional charge he brought to the basketball court with a single word: Linsanity.

When the Taiwanese-American guard entered the game on February 4, 2012, Knicks fans could be forgiven for not noticing him. With the Knicks in the 2011-2012 season, Lin had played just a bit over 53 minutes in nine games, never starting and only once appearing for more than seven minutes. Before coming to New York, he had played in only a handful of games for the Golden State Warriors during the 2010-2011 season.

Hardly the stuff of legends, but the Knicks weren't that great, either. Prior to the dawn of Linsanity, their record was 8-15, and they were one game out of the divisional basement.

On that fateful February night, however, Lin ignited a fire under the moribund New York team and their fans. Knicks coach Mike D'Antoni ran a full-throttle offense that focused on the point guard, and Lin flourished in that system. He exploded with 25 points, seven assists, and five rebounds to lead New York to a 99-92 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Lin started New York's next game, against the Utah Jazz, and he poured in 28 points and dished out eight assists. For the month of February, he would average 20.9 points and 8.4 assists, leading the Knicks to a 10-5 record with dazzling plays and heart-stopping buzzer-beaters. Pure Linsanity.

The Linsanity continued into the start of March, though Lin's numbers slipped a bit to 15.5 points and 7.5 assists over the month's first eight games. Then D'Antoni resigned, and Lin's star began to fade in new coach Mike Woodson's offense: Lin's numbers fell to 13.3 points and 5.4 assists in the next seven games.

Thanks to Lin's midseason spark, New York made the playoffs, though they lost in the first round to the eventual champions, the Miami Heat. After the season, Lin signed with the Houston Rockets on a three-year, \$25-million deal, a big contract that seemed to indicate he would be running Houston's offense.

Instead, the Rockets acquired superstar guard James Harden, who became the focus of the offense instead. He



(AP Photo/Tony Dejak)

and Lin started together most of their first season together, but the following season, Rockets coach Kevin McHale went with Patrick Beverley as the team's starting point guard.

Though disappointing for Lin, the decision made sense. Both Lin and Harden need the ball a lot to succeed, and it's difficult — if not impossible — to have two players like that in your backcourt. And the Rockets had played better with Beverley running the point.

Lin took the demotion graciously, saying "it is not that big of a deal ... being able to attack [off the bench] and have that freedom to be able to be freelancing a bit. I think that will be fun." Regardless, the writing was on the wall for Lin.

At the end of the season, Houston traded him to the Los Angeles Lakers, another poor fit for his talent. Here, too, he would share the backcourt with another player who thrives on having the ball a lot, Kobe Bryant.

FRESH START. There hasn't been much new Asian talent in the National Basketball Association (NBA) lately, but there's been an Asian-American NBA star that many fans might have forgotten about entirely. Once the talk of the league, Jeremy Lin (#7) has played just a handful of games over the past two seasons, thanks to hamstring and knee injuries.

So Lin sought greener pastures in free agency, signing a two-year deal with the Charlotte Hornets worth \$4.37 million, a mere fraction of his Houston contract. But Charlotte's up-tempo play was more his style, and Lin would be helping starting point guard Kemba Walker learn the ropes in the NBA.

Though Lin's statistics were pretty much a wash from the previous year — some up, some down — what mattered more was the team's improvement. Charlotte had gone 33-49 the previous year, but with Lin, they improved to 48-34.

That improvement can't all be ascribed to Lin, of course, but he finished seventh in voting for the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year and impressed the Brooklyn Nets enough to offer him a three-year, \$36-million contract to be their starting point guard. It seemed like the perfect opportunity for the 27-year-old to rejuvenate his NBA career and, perhaps, bring Linsanity back to New York City.

Instead, Lin was bitten twice by the injury bug. In his first season with Brooklyn, a hamstring injury limited him to just 36 games. In the first game of the following season, Lin ruptured the patellar tendon in his right knee and missed the rest of the season.

Brooklyn never gave Lin the chance to redeem himself in the final year of his contract, choosing instead to trade him to the Atlanta Hawks before this season. With Atlanta, Lin will return to his now-familiar role of playing backup point guard and serving as a mentor to fifth overall draft pick Trae Young, Atlanta's point guard of the future.

With his wide experience with different teams and offenses, along with his excellent character, Lin should have plenty of good advice for Young. But to make the most of the opportunity, he will have to stay healthy and regain his form after a season-and-a-half dealing with injuries.

"The toughest thing about coming back is definitely getting up to the level that you were before, whether it's your speed, your rhythm, your explosiveness, your shot, your decision-making," Lin said.

Still, he doesn't need to be a superstar to succeed. He just needs to stay healthy, so that occasionally he can show off the talent that held the world's attention during that memorable February not so long ago.

Lin and the Atlanta Hawks face the Portland Trail Blazers at the Moda Center in Portland on January 26 at 7:00pm. The squads meet again in Atlanta on March 29 at 4:30pm.

"Huge win" for sex assault victims, says California victim

By Jocelyn Gecker

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Years before the #MeToo movement, Yee Xiong embarked on a quest for justice after she says she was sexually assaulted at a college party.

What followed was a tumultuous legal battle that included two trials ending in hung juries, followed by her attacker taking a plea deal for felony assault, then turning around and accusing her of defamation. That lawsuit, in which he objected to Facebook posts calling him a rapist, was quickly dismissed.

But Xiong was determined to hold him accountable. She filed a civil suit against him that resulted with a jury in October finding her attacker, Lang Her, liable for sexual battery and awarding her \$152,400.

That was the full amount of damages she sought for medical expenses and pain and suffering, her lawyer said.

"This case was not about money. It was about vindication for Yee. And, she was absolutely vindicated by the jury's verdict," said Justin Giovannettone, a lawyer with Sacramento-based Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, which took on her case for free.

Xiong said she is relieved the case is over and now has a sense of hopefulness.

"I think this is a case that is a huge win for survivors around the world," Xiong, who is now 26 and lives in Davis, California, said in a telephone interview. She hopes it sends "a very powerful and positive message to the world that people will be held accountable for their actions, no matter how long it takes."

Xiong was a 20-year-old student at the University of California, Davis, when she went to an off-campus party on July 9, 2012, and drank too much, according to court documents. She woke up in a bed early the next morning



with her arms pinned at her sides to find him having intercourse with her.

They knew each other before the party. Both were students at UC Davis and part of the tightknit Hmong community at the school. Their families also knew each other. California has the highest population of Hmong, a Southeast Asian ethnic minority, in the United States.

She reported the assault to police the next day. A rape-kit evaluation found his semen. Her, now 26, was charged with one count of rape of an intoxicated person. He testified that he believed Xiong wanted to have sex with him, and his attorneys questioned why Xiong stayed the rest of the night in the apartment if she had been raped.

The case was tried twice in 2015 and 2016, and both

ACCOUNTABILITY. Yee Xiong, 24, sits for a photo at her attorney's office in Sacramento, California, in this August 12, 2016 file photo. As she prepared to leave the sentencing hearing for Lang Her, who she said sexually assaulted her when they were students, she felt ready to finally put the case behind her after four years. Then, she was handed a \$4 million defamation lawsuit. That lawsuit, in which he objected to Facebook posts calling him a rapist, was quickly dismissed. (AP Photo/Darcy Costell)

times a jury deadlocked. Prosecutors were ready to try the case a third time when Her took a plea deal that included a year of jail time and five years of probation. He also had to register as a sex offender.

Her is still on probation and served six months of the one-year sentence, said Giovannettone.

Xiong thought the plea deal was the end. But on the day of Her's sentencing in July 2016, he served Xiong with a \$4 million defamation suit, saying that she and her three siblings colluded to alienate him from their Hmong community by calling him a rapist on Facebook.

A court dismissed the defamation suit in October 2016, but Xiong decided to fight back with a civil suit.

"Even though he took the plea deal he was not going to accept responsibility," she said. "He was trying to use the legal system to harass me, so I wanted to fight back in the same way."

A four-day trial in Yolo County Superior Court ended October 12 with a unanimous verdict in her favor.

Xiong credits the #MeToo movement with having shined a light on how victims of sexual assault react to attacks, which she thinks may have informed the latest jury.

"In the other two trials, some of the jurors did not understand why I allowed him to drop me in my apartment (after the attack) and let him take me to campus," she said. "I think people understand now, you do what you need to, to survive."