

## NBA headed downhill in a hurry

◆ Who is going to watch the NBA's bunch of spoiled superstars once Michael Jordan retires?

BY ADAM LUCAS  
Editor-in-chief

In the year 2005, the NBA standard-bearer could be Latrell Sprewell.

Maybe you'll see Gatorade commercials with a catchy little jingle such as, "If I could be like Latrell, I wanna be I wanna be like Latrell."

It might not be as far-fetched as it sounds.

Sooner or later, Michael Jordan is going to retire. While it might not be this year, as he has previously said, it will certainly be some time in the next three seasons. He is too proud a competitor to end his career as Dr. J did, struggling to make a layup.

When Jordan leaves, where does that leave the NBA?

Well, they'll always have Korleone Young, the high-schooler who declared for the draft this week. Short of that, however, they've got Grant Hill and a bunch of guys that can't make a 20-foot jump shot.

Name almost any marquee player in professional basketball and the first thing that jumps to mind is not points or rebounds, but misdemeanors or felo-

nies.

Chris Webber? He's been in trouble with the police before, and this week he found himself and teammate Juwan Howard accused of sexual assault.

Allen Iverson? He likes to call himself "The Answer," but it's not entirely clear what the question is. Maybe it's, "Who is one of the

few NBA players that actually started on their criminal record before entering college?"

The list goes on and on, but the point is clear. Short of Hill, Jordan, and a few other choice citizens—most of whom

are aging out of the league very rapidly—the NBA's superstars are a spoiled, undesirable bunch.

The game they play isn't much better. Hey, if you like to be pick-and-rolled to death, then the NBA is the league for you.

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Otherwise, though, you're better off watching Arena football.

The league likes to say that they don't allow zone defenses in order to increase offense.

The reality is that if zones were allowed, those coaches pulling down million-dollar salaries might actually have to draw up an original play.

It sounds harsh, but it's true. Valpo's Homer Drew formulated a

game-winning play in the NCAA Tournament that was executed to perfection by his players.

Meanwhile, in the NBA, Phil Jackson is hailed as a Zen master for—this is going to shock you—finding a way to win with Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen on his team. Imagine that. Against all odds, Jackson has discovered that winning is possible if two of the top 20 players of all time are on your team.

This is not to say that the NBA is entirely without merit, however. In the playoffs, it actually makes for pretty good theater. Even the most petty whiner—er, we mean player—puts aside his salary demands and tries his best.

Things may even get interesting in the post-Jordan era, when teams other than Chicago have a chance at the world championship.

Of course, their games will be interrupted by commercials singing, "Like Latrell, if I could be like Latrell..."

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