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Columns, Scores, Profiles, Predictions

Black On Sports

There'll Be No Mass Exodus This Year

By **ROBERT ELLER**
Sports Editor

When the deadline for applying for the NBA draft under the so-called hardship rule passed recently with only six of the nation's top underclassmen doing so, the "experts" who predicted a mass exodus from college basketball started looking for somewhere to hide.

Those experts expected more underclassmen to make the move due to the first-year salary ceiling imposed by the new NBA collective bargaining agreement.

When the new pact was announced late last month and its details explained, there were a great many "in-the-know" fans and writers who claimed that the agreement would cause the best talent to flee the college ranks for the NBA's large salaries while the getting was good. But it just hasn't happened.

In fact, with only six players going hardship, this just may be the smallest and least talented

group of undergrads to come out since the hardship rule went into effect.

Still, the Houston Rockets could care less about the kids that stayed in school, since they won the coin toss and will get a chance to call Ralph Sampson's name on draft day.

The Indiana Pacers, on the other hand, will have to settle for less than what they may have hoped for after losing the flip.

Even though the Pacers would have been unhappy at losing the flip no matter who came out, now, with the likes of Pat Ewing of Georgetown, Akeem Olajuwon of Houston, Earl Jones of UDC, Keith Lee of Memphis State and North Carolina's dynamic duo of Sam Perkins and Michael Jordan all ready for another year of college ball, the Pacers will find the drop-off in talent behind Sampson even greater.

The opinion here is that the top underclassman to declare his draft eligibility is Houston swingman Clyde Drexler. A silky smooth leaper, Drexler is a superb defensive player who may end up as a guard in the NBA. And with players with the size and ability of Magic Johnson, George Gervin, Michael Cooper and others now playing guard, his value should be high.

Another top guard prospect is Ennis Whatley

of Alabama, who will give up his last two years of college eligibility. Whatley may have benefited from another year of college experience but still should be a first-rounder because of his size, strength and quickness.

Byron Scott of Arizona State hasn't gotten a great deal of press, but his nearly 22-point average will be of interest on draft day.

Illinois guard Derek Harper may be the best shooter of the guards to decide to turn pro early and he also has good size. And Marquette's Glenn Rivers is yet another underclassmen who could push the likes of seniors Stewart Granger, Greg Jones, Dirk Minniefield and possibly even "Rocket" Rod Foster down the line in the draft.

At 6-10, power forward Russell Cross of Purdue is the biggest of the lot of underclassmen to come out.

The fact of the matter, however, is that this year, for the first time since 1980, the first player to be picked in the NBA draft will not be an underclassman. That is no surprise, however, since Sampson would have been the first player picked no matter when he decided to turn pro. The big surprise may be that, over the past two seasons, the first five players picked have been underclassmen.

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Chairman Of The Boards

Moses Malone, who led the Philadelphia 76ers to one of the best regular season records in the history of the National Basketball Association, is a leading candidate for the league's "Player of the Year" award, sponsored by Miller High Life. Malone averaged 24.3 points and a league leading 15.3 rebounds per game during the regular season in leading the 76ers to a 65-17 record.



Eller

Sports From The Press Box

Lanier, Malone: Clash Of The Titans

Time and uniforms have changed. But Dick Vitale says the battles between Moses Malone and Bob Lanier remain the same. Back in the mid-70s, Vitale was coaching a Detroit Pistons team that included Lanier. Malone was playing for the Houston Rockets at the time, and Vitale recalled recently that Lanier would prepare for a game against Malone like a gunslinger getting ready for a showdown at High Noon.

"He'd whirlpool, have his knees taped and sit there looking down at the floor," Vitale said. "He'd tell me: 'Have Leon Douglas (Lanier's back-up) ready early. Malone is going

after every rebound like it's his last meal.'" ... Fans of the Pittsburgh Pirates now talk of the Cobra -- Dave Parker -- as if he were just another snake, but they haven't broken his belief that a healthy Parker still is capable of doing things on a baseball field that other players only dream about.

"All the negative stuff started when I became the first million-dollar ballplayer in '79," Parker said. "My being rich, famous, talented, outspoken and a proud black man was too much for some people to take. The money never changed me; it just changed how people

reacted to me. A guy earning \$30,000 is going to resent someone getting \$1 million of playing a kid's game. But they forget that we're artists. Being able to squarely hit a little round ball traveling 90 miles per hour with a round piece of wood qualifies as art."

There's a double standard in baseball just as there is in life. No one complains about Pete Rose's contract or that he's outspoken. When Pete says something, he's articulate. When a black or Latin says the same thing, he's arrogant."

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Black College Sports

Don't Look Now, Sports Fans, But There's A New League Coming

By **BARRY COPPER**
Syndicated Columnist

Even though the United States Football League, in its first year, is fighting for survival, yet another league has decided to open for business. It is the International Football League, which plans to begin play in March and compete during the spring and summer with the USFL.

Only one IFL franchise has been awarded so far, that one going to a group of South Florida businessmen. They hope to base their club in either Miami or Ft. Lauderdale.

The IFL is thinking of fielding 10 franchises this year, with prospective owners investing \$2 million at the start.

The IFL, which has not yet been taken seriously by the NFL, USFL or the media, intends to develop by taking players who were released by USFL clubs.

That could mean third-rate players, but it also could mean that even more college players will advance to the professional ranks.

The \$25 Million Man

Twenty-five million dollars. That's how much David "Deacon" Jones says he is worth.

Jones, inducted recently into the Florida Sports Hall of Fame, says he owns assorted businesses in Southern California, including extensive real estate holdings.

Jones, also a member of the National Football League Hall of Fame, played for the Los Angeles Rams. He started at South Carolina State.

Interestingly, Jones left S.C. State before his eligibility was complete. He played his senior season at Prairie View after falling out with the S.C. State coaching staff.

Knicks' Coach Applauds Johnson

Hubie Brown, coach of the New York Knicks, says he knows a good basketball player when he sees one, and he says Clemon Johnson is a mighty good one.

Johnson, the former Florida A&M standout who is now a back-up center with the Philadelphia 76ers, could be a star in the league, Brown says.

"Just give him some time," Brown says. "He has all the tools you want in a center and he is just a great offensive rebounder."

Johnson, who has played for Portland and Indiana, also has never been a full-time starter in the league, but coaches consider him the best back-up center in the NBA.

Johnson will be a free-agent after this year, and many expect him to sign a contract worth \$400,000 or more.

Another black college player who has made it to the NBA is "Audacious" Audie Norris, a 6-10 center from Jackson State. The Portland Trailblazers were extremely pleased with Norris' development this year.

Union's Wooten, Hearn Honored

By **ROBERT ELLER**
Sports Editor

Virginia Union's Barvenia Wooten, who led her team to the NCAA Division II women's national title, and Union Head Coach Lou Hearn were named Player and Coach of the Year, respectively, in women's basketball by the National Association for Women's Sports, it was announced late last week.

Wooten, a 5-8 senior, was the top vote-getter in the balloting for the all-America team. Joining her on the first team were sophomore Belinda Copeland of Tuskegee, who received 90 votes, and seniors Mary Stallings of Mississippi Valley State and Concetta Smith of Fayetteville State, with 75 votes each.

Senior Jimi Gatlin of South Carolina State and junior Chanel Hamilton of UDC, with 70 votes each, rounded out the first team.

Florida A&M sophomore sensation Cynthia Lee paced the second team with 65 votes. Wooten's junior teammate Maria Nicholson and Norfolk State senior Norma Knight each received 55 votes.

The second team was rounded out by seniors Jackie Franklin of Dillard and Regina Pope of Albany State, with 50 and 45 votes, respectively.

Knight was a member of the 1982 first team.

Making the third team were junior Irma Jones of Bethune-Cookman and seniors Darlene Jones of Mississippi Valley, Deborah Davis of Claflin, Thelma Bogues of Clark, Beverly Scott of Lincoln and Joyce Williams of Paul Quinn.

Hearn, in his first year as head coach after serving as an assistant under the late Tom Harris, led the team to the national title after seeing them beaten in the CIAA tourney title game by arch-rival Norfolk State.


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