

Out of shape, answers Miami's ready to fall

Continued from 1C

road before — as recently as the Eastern Conference playoffs.

"Everybody has written our team off, even in Chicago, when we lost two games in Chicago. Then we got buried by New Jersey in the first game and we were history. Then we were history against Detroit. Even when we were ahead 3-1, we were history. So I'm sure we're history right now," he added. "We'll see what happens at home."

The normally loquacious O'Neal held his tongue after the Mavericks' 99-85 win gave them a 2-0 lead in the series. That bit of restraint cost him \$10,000, and the Heat organization another \$25,000, but saved him at least that much in embarrassment.

Two years ago, not long after Shaq fled LA for Miami, Dampier signed a big deal in Dallas and immediately declared himself the second-best center in the league. O'Neal responded by renaming Dampier "Erica," then got a little extra mileage out of the gag by insisting the only place Dampier would be a dominant center was in the WNBA. And when an injury in the playoffs last year limited his effectiveness, he couldn't resist telling reporters he was "playing like Erick Dampier."

Shaq should be so lucky. Out of shape or patience, or maybe both, he was outplayed by Dampier everywhere on the court and across the stat line. As promised, the Heat pound-

ed the ball down into O'Neal in the post on their opening possession and he dropped in a nifty layup. But the Mavericks settled into essentially the same defense as in Game 1, doubling and tripling O'Neal on every subsequent touch, forcing him to pass the ball out of the post and daring his supporting cast, again, to beat them.

In his prime, O'Neal would have gone over or through Dampier and his second, DeSagana Diop, as often as necessary, but now he needs help. The Heat provided more than the first time around, but not much. They shot 41 percent from the floor, after a frightful 37-percent performance in the opening game.

Dallas, meanwhile, added a variety of screens at the other end of the floor to create room for Dirk Nowitzki to operate, which in turn freed up Jerry Stackhouse for a handful of wide-open jumpers, and the outcome was effectively sealed at halftime. Shaq sat most of the second half, Riley conceded, to conserve energy in what was by then a lost cause.

Teams that come out flat in finals series rarely recover — 25 of the 27 that took a 2-0 lead have gone on to win — but most respond by changing things up in a hurry. Riley's strong suit as a coach has always been motivation, as opposed to strategy, but he looks like someone who has run out of answers.

When he deep-sixed Stan

Van Gundy and traded a seat in the executive suite for one on the bench, the plan was to coax more effort from a veteran team.

"I don't think it had anything to do with energy," Riley said about Sunday night's loss. "The whole thing now is about the next game, and trying to leave this behind us. Maybe set a fire under us to do something different than what we did here."

Of course, that was the plan after the Heat got pounded in Game 1. Miami is fighting a deficit in the effort department, but it's hardly the only one O'Neal can rouse himself to take over games for a short time, but the cavalry isn't going to arrive in time. The Heat still have no answer for Nowitzki, or Josh Howard or Stackhouse. And no matter how many inspirational plays Riley cooks up in the locker room, it's clear he's out of ideas once Miami sets foot on the court.

For different reasons, he and Shaq got so swept up in the idea that these finals would be their crowning achievement, the payoff for doing things the way they always had in the past, that they never drew up a Plan B. And now it's too late.

Yet when someone asked Dwyane Wade, the young superstar who was supposed to pick up the slack, what the Heat had to change heading into Game 3, he didn't hesitate.

"Everything," he said.

CIAA rivals highlight HBCU doubleheader in New York City

Continued from page 1C

"Madison Square Garden is honored to host the inaugural Big Apple Classic," he said in a statement. "It is a great addition to the storied tradition of college basketball at MSG."

Johnson Inc. will own and operate the doubleheader.

The inaugural event, scheduled for Dec. 2, will feature a men's basketball doubleheader of historically Black universities, with games between CIAA rivals Virginia Union and Bowie State as well as MEAC foes Hampton and Howard.

Johnson, the 43-year-old founder, owner and president of the Jackson Ward company, said he came up with the idea of bringing HBCU basketball to the Big Apple three years ago. He said he started meeting with Madison Square Garden officials in February and signed a contract two weeks ago.

"It's always been a part of our growth strategy," Johnson said. "We thought it was a perfect market for this event. Live gone to New York several times and our research shows a huge void. This is a tremendous opportunity to bring HBCU-style basketball to New York City. Many of these institutions have graduated folks from the northeastern corridor. Virginia has had a link with these institutions and it was a natural link for us."

"For me, it's another opportunity to do quality work," he said. "It's an opportunity to present quality basketball to the northeastern corridor and to showcase the good qualities of these institutions."

Johnson said he now is negotiating television rights for broadcast of the games. He also is in the process of selecting a charity to be a beneficiary of the event.

Meanwhile, the commissioners of the two conferences heaped lavish praise on the event.

"We are thrilled to have Virginia Union University and Bowie State University repre-

sent the CIAA in the Big Apple Classic," CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry said. "This classic falls in line with our efforts as a conference to provide meaningful and lasting experiences for our student-athletes."

"What place in the country offers more diversity in the cultural arts, endless entertainment and record-breaking sports than New York City? Congratulations to Johnson Inc. for creating such an enormous opportunity for our students."

MEAC Commissioner Dennis E. Thomas said, "This is a tremendous opportunity for MEAC institutions, Hampton and Howard universities, to have exposure for their institutions and basketball programs. Madison Square Garden is a perfect place to showcase MEAC basketball."

Johnson promises to produce an atmosphere similar to that of the NBA All-Star weekend, with a kick-off event, halftime performances, celebrity appearances and after-parties.

The new classic builds on the success formula Johnson has used to develop his company since he launched it 12 years ago. He already has created a stable of annual events in Richmond. They include the Freedom Classic basketball game between CIAA rivals Virginia Union and Virginia State that is played each year during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend.

Other events include the yearly Fridays at Sunset summer concert series and the Sister-for-Sister fall conference.

Johnson's company also is a joint-venture partner in managing the Richmond Coliseum.

He's also been influential in city and business circles. He helped usher in the \$170 million Richmond Convention Center in the 1990s during his tenure as chairman of the area's convention and visitors bureau and helped set housing policy during four years as chairman of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Livingstone to induct nine for hall

Continued from page 1C

Watkins '95 of Durham, former football stand-out Troy Veale '95 of Bertie County, N.C., and administrator track and field standout Clifton Huff '85 of Wilmington.

The induction ceremony, at University Hilton on Harris Boulevard is a black tie affair and is open to the public at \$100 per plate. The

celebrity golf tournament, at Rocky River Golf Course in Concord, is also open to the public at \$85 per individual or \$325 per foursome. All profits will benefit the Livingstone Athletic Scholarship Foundation.

For information on hall of fame events, call Livingstone's athletic department at (704) 216-6012, or alumni affairs office at (704) 216-6009.

IT'S A SLAM DUNK!



FREE CD to the 1st "5" New Advertisers that sign prior to June 15th

OWN IT JUNE 6

PG-13
FOR SOME MATERIAL, INCLUDING LANGUAGE
© 2006 Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, LLC. All Rights Reserved. "Twentieth Century Fox" and their associated logos are the property of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

PROFESSIONAL FLOORING

Visit Our Showroom
4930 Albemarle Road
Charlotte, NC 28205

MOBLEY'S

Residential & Commercial Carpet Cleaning, Sales & Service

• New Carpet Sales • VCT • Hardwood Flooring • Ceramic & Marble Tile

Thanks to God, this is our "25th Anniversary Special" **New Carpet Installed**

Carpet, Pad & Labor

Only \$21.⁹⁹ per yard



Carpet Cleaning

"3" Rooms & Hallway

Only \$105.⁰⁰

under 400 Sq. ft.

Vinyl Floor

Congoleum & Armstrong

Only \$15.⁹⁹ per yard



Duct Cleaning

Only \$20 per vent

"For Your Health" Remove the Dust From Your Vents!

"SPECIALS" Valid With This Ad Only

Eddie Mobley, Sr. • Eddie Mobley, Jr.

Ph: 704-531-0155 • Fax: 704-536-4272

Go beyond the score

The Charlotte Post