

The Medium Sports View

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SUPER SONICS IN REVIEW

By: Larry Denenholtz, Public Relations Director
Seattle Supersonics

Having just completed a road trip with the Seattle SuperSonics which took me to Detroit, Boston, Kansas City and finally, the All-Star Game in Chicago, The Medium asked that I write my impressions from this trip as well as comment on what the rest of the season holds for Bucky Buckwater and his players.

It was a much more relaxed group of Sonics than I had seen all season as we got on the plane Monday, January 15, to begin a long two-weeks on the road which would include for some a stop over at the All-Star game. The players were obviously more at ease and you could sense their feelings as we arrived in Kansas City for our game against the Kings the next night. Polishing off the Kings and then Detroit in order, it looked as though we would at least break even on the trip. Back-to-back losses to Boston and Baltimore found Seattle doing just that at the All-Star break.

On the road once more we gave a game to Phoenix where we twice had 11 point leads and then were humiliated by Los Angeles before returning home the end of January to face Houston and Chicago at the Coliseum. At this writing, Coach Buckwalter has a respectable 5-8 record and things look somewhat brighter for next season than anyone would have thought when the year began.

There is every reason to believe that the Sonics are capable of playing at or near .500 ball for the rest of the year which would go a long way towards healing some deep wounds. Spencer Haywood, of course, has been outstanding again this season as he was last. The move up to starter for Kennedy McIntosh means much tighter defense from the forward position than Kennedy McIntosh means much tighter defense from the forward position than we have seen. Jim Fox and Dick Snyder have been positive factors in whatever success Seattle has experienced this season. Bud Stallworth and Joby Wright continue to show improvement, and also that it is tough to learn the NBA just one year out of college.

One of the real bright spots from the Sonics camp has been the predicted emergence of Fred Brown as playmaker and floor leader. Fred, who saw very little action last season, has begun to demonstrate why he was Seattle's No. 1 draft pick in 1971 and he should have a great career in the NBA. With the kind of season Seattle has experienced thus far, Coach Buckwalter must concentrate on making the best of what remains and at the same time, build towards the 1973-74 campaign. Despite all the bad publicity, problems and attendant team changes Seattle has had, the fans have been extremely loyal and have come to the Coliseum at better than 9,100 per game.

Since Seattle has been in the NBA their most wins for one season came last year when they finished 47-35. In 1967-68, (th first year) Seattle managed only 23 victories while losing 59 times. If this year's edition of the Sonics hope to improve on that mark, they will have to win at least six of the remaining 24 contests between now and the last day of the season--March 28.

Much has been written and said about the Seattle franchise and the many changes which have occurred which possible removed them from the position of a sure playoff spot to one of the poorer records in the NBA. A series of circumstances have evolved which finds Seattle once again having to build and look to the future.

In discussions with many NBA coaches around the league, one thing became abundantly clear. We have an excellent franchise, outstanding talent and a great fan following. With ingredients such as these, a professional sports team should be able to overcome a rough growing period and emerge on top if given the chance.

Black National Sports in a Capsule

By MARK SOUTHERLAND

NBNS

As the NFL pro-football draft approached many teams went to the trade in hopes of improving their rosters. Most active were the Chicago Bears who obtained troubled running back Carl Garrett from the New England Patriots for the first round draft choice they received earlier in a trade with the Detroit Lions for tight end Craig Cotton. Meanwhile the Kansas City Chiefs picked up running back Willie Ellison and quarterback Pete Beathard from the Los Angeles Rams for linebacker Bob Stein and two draft choices and traded defensive end Aaron Brown to the Green Bay Packer.

The draft itself appears to have pleased the NFL coaches who have called these college seniors "a bumper crop" but a few college standouts were dissatisfied with being passed over for less known players. Running back Chuck Foreman of the University of Miami said "I was shocked I was around that long," when he learned that he had been picked 12th in the first round following two other running backs, Otis Armstrong at Purdue and Sam "Bam" Cunningham of the University of Southern California. This year's Heisman trophy winner, wide receiver Johnny Rodgers of Nebraska also expressed his surprise at lasting so long, 25th in the first round, and said "I'm determined to prove to the San Diego people that they made a good choice. I'll bet some of those other pro teams will wish that they'd picked me before I'm through playing." Rodgers was bypassed because of size, 5-foot-nine, as was his teammate and winner at the Outland and Lombard trophies as lineman of the year Rich Glover. Glover, who was selected by the New York Giants in the third round, was equally determined to prove himself and said, "I know I can make it in the pros."

George Allen may not have had any draft choices, nevertheless he came out of the two day draft with a blue chip player through a trade, all-pro linebacker Dave Robinson of the Green Bay Packers. Robinson at age 31 is the experienced performer that Allen favors and will fit easily into the Washington Redskins system should he decide to end his short-lived retire-

ment. Coming off an Achilles tendon injury, suffered in 1970 Robinson had two superlative years before he became disenchanted with the Packers and accepted the post as director of Minority Affairs for the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Co. Knowing Allen's ability to stretch players' careers as he did with veteran linebacker Jack Pardee, whom he brought out of retirement while with the Rams, Robinson will be a Redskins next year.

men compete on the professional circuit, thus far this money has paid for lessons for Bonnie Logan and cross-country air fare for Sylvia Hooks. The fund, which includes \$10,000 from a group endorsement of a playing surface various fines and even some of Miss Heldman's private contributions, is also helping Ann Koger of Baltimore and Bessie Stockard of Washington.

In an attempt to open up the sport of tennis to more blacks Gladys Heldman, the organizer of the Women's International Tennis Federation and the Virginia Slims tour, has formed a fund to aid four black wo-

The amateur status of miler Kip Keino of Kenya is in question following an article in the Nairobi Daily Nation that said he has accepted free air passage to the United States. Earlier there was rumor that Keino would turn professional after one meet in the U.S.

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