

LAS VEGAS

# Sentinel Voice Sports

## UNITED STATES TEAM A "BASKETBALL MACHINE"

By W.G. Ramirez

If sports books were able to put the Basketball Tournament of the Americas (BTOA) or the Olympic Games on the board for open betting, there is a strong possibility that you would see the highest spread ever on a basketball game.

As of Wednesday, the United States basketball squad had throttled their opponents, on the average, by 61 points, including an opening day 79-point victory over Cuba.

The NBA-dominated team not only disperses their opponents, but they show absolutely know mercy. Then again, how could you when you have All-Pro players coming into the game off the bench.

Imagine coaching this remarkable team, and having Chris Mullin, Scottie Pippen, Clyde Drexler, Karl Malone and David Robinson as your "second squad."

"That is a basketball machine - a perfect basketball machine," Cuba Coach Miguel Calderon Gomez said following the 136-57 massacre.



CLYDE DREXLER: "THE SIXTH-MAN"?

Forward Charles Barkley, of the Phoenix Suns, is averaging 16.6 points per game and has led the U.S. in scoring, in two of the first three games played.

"We have nothing personal against the foreign teams," Barkley said. "They may make better cars, better televisions and maybe even better cigars, but we will prove we have the best basketball in the world.

"They can talk all they want about what American workers

lack. But we have a patent on basketball."

Utah Jazz guard John Stockton fractured his right fibula during a game against Canada. USA team physician Dr. David Fischer said the injury should keep Stockton out of the remainder of this week's BTOA. Fischer held out hope that Stockton could play in the Olympics, which start July 25.

"If I have to play in pain I'll do it," Stockton said. "I wouldn't do

anything to threaten my career. If it's a question of pain alone, I can play through it."

Stockton's injury seems to confirm some fears that NBA teams were being put in jeopardy of losing their stars.

Utah Jazz Coach Jerry Sloan said his first concern is not for Utah but that Stockton would not be able to play in July.

"He will be so disappointed if he can't play in the Olympics. That concerns me more."

At press time, the United

States were preparing to tip-off against Argentina.

The 10-team tournament, being held at Portland's Memorial Coliseum, includes teams from 10 countries in North, Central and South America. All of the teams are vying for four berths in the 12-team field that will compete for the gold medal in Barcelona.

The 10 teams are divided into two parts. The U.S. is in Pool A along with Argentina, Canada, Cuba and Panama, while Pool B

consists of Brazil, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

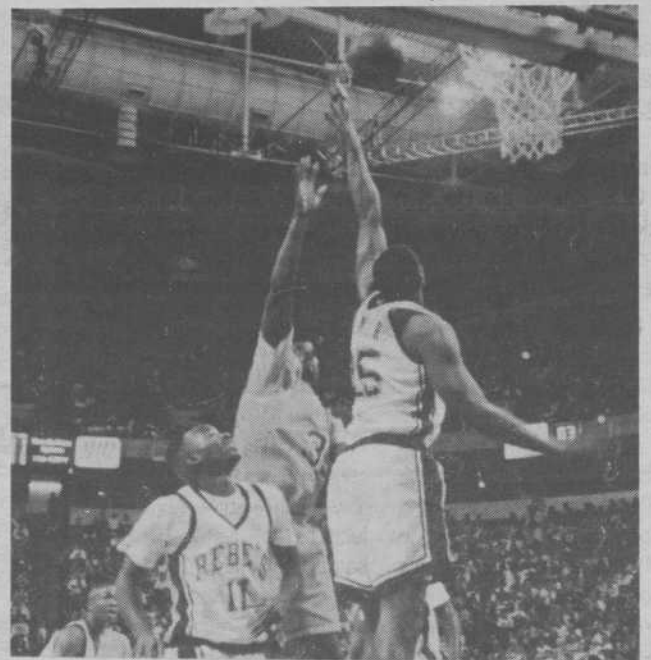
The BTOA (as well as the Olympics) will be played under FIBA rules. FIBA rules differ with those used in the NBA and NCAA in such areas as the distance of the three-point field goal line, the length of the shot-clock, number of time outs, and the size of the court and the lanes.

The championship game, which will be televised by NBC, is scheduled for Sunday July 5 at 1:00 PDT.

## THE DRAFT THAT SHAQ BUILT

As Draft selections go well, let's just say there are episodes of "Three's Company" that carried more suspense. But maybe that's because this one was just as simple as can be.

The Orlando Magic, winners of the May 17 Draft Lottery, took a major step in the building of their young franchise by selecting two-time consensus All-America center Shaquille O'Neal of Louisiana State with the No. 1 pick in the 1992 NBA Draft, presented by Miller Genu-



First round draft picks Shaquille O'Neal and UNLV's Elmore Spencer faced each other at the T & M Center.

ine Draft, on Wednesday at the Portland Memorial Coliseum - the first NBA Draft ever held outside of New York City.

The 7-1 O'Neal, who became the first early entry candidate to be selected at No. 1 overall since Hakeem Olajuwon of Houston in 1984, averaged 24.1 points per game as a junior, leading the nation in blocked shots (5.2 bpg) and ranking second in rebounding (14.0 rpg).

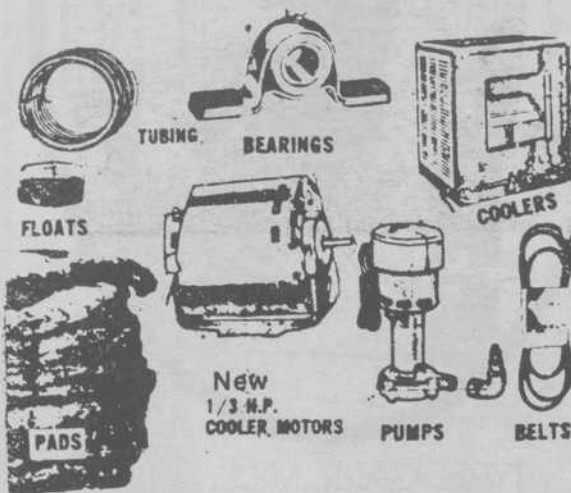
"We all have to remember he's only 20 years old," said Orlando Coach Matt Guokas. "He still has a long way to go. But while we're waiting for him to develop into the kind of player that we expect him to be, he still has the ability to do a lot of things to help us."

"I feel very fortunate to be selected by the Magic," said O'Neal, who may be reunited with former LSU teammate and fellow center Stanley Roberts. "I'm not promising a championship in the first year; things take time. But I'll learn the ropes, get my feet wet and after that...I think I'll be pretty hard to stop."

O'Neal was hardly the only plum selected in this year's Draft, considered one of the deepest in years by many. Charlotte, picking second, selected 6-10 Big East Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year Alonzo Mourning of Georgetown, who projects as another strong center in the tradition of former Hoyas Patrick Ewing.

(See the Draft, Page 15)

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