

DREAM TEAM LOOKS TO "REIGN IN SPAIN"

After playing to rave reviews during their week-long stint "off-Broadway" at the Basketball Tournament of the Americas in Portland, basketball's version of "The Fantastics" now prepares to take its star-studded act to the biggest stage in the world - the Olympics - for the 1992 Summer Games in Barcelona from July 25 to August 9.

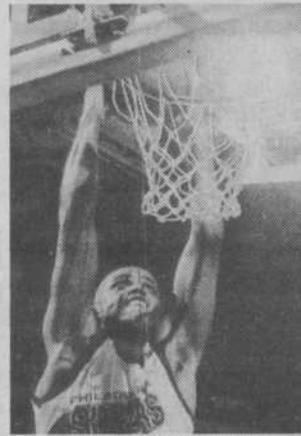
The USA Olympic team won all six of its games by a staggering average of 51.5 points per game en route to winning the gold medal during the Basketball Tournament of the Americas.

In Barcelona, the USA will seek to emerge from the 12-team field with its 10th all-time Olympic gold medal in 12 tries, and its first since 1984. The field, split into two pools, pits the USA in Group A with Spain, the Olympic host country, Angola (the Africa zone champion), Croatia (led by New Jersey Nets

star Drazen Petrovic), Germany (led by two-time Miller Genuine Draft Sixth Man Award winner Detlef Schrempf of the Indiana Pacers) and Brazil (with high-scoring star Oscar Schmidt).

Group B features Lithuania (the European zone qualifying champion, led by Saruna Marciulionis of the Golden State Warriors), Australia (the Oceania zone champion, led by Minnesota Timberwolves center Luc Longley), the Commonwealth of Independent States (led by Atlanta Hawks forward Alexander Volkov), China (the Asia zone champion), Venezuela (with Houston rockets forward Carl Herrera) and Puerto Rico.

The USA begins play against each of the other five teams in Group A on Sunday, July 26, when it faces Angola. The rest of the USA's schedule includes Croatia on July 27, Germany on July 29, Brazil on July 31 and Spain on August 2. The Olympic



CHARLES BARKLEY

Quarterfinals will then be held on August 4, the Semifinals on August 6 and the gold medal and bronze medal games on August 8.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge," said USA forward Charles Barkley, the team's leading scorer (16.3 ppg) and rebounder (6.7 rpg) during the BTOA. "I just want to prove that we have the best basketball team in the world, and bring the gold medal back to where it belongs. If I don't play one minute I'd be happy". "I think the biggest key to our team's success (during

the BTOA) was being able to play together," said Michael Jordan, one of the seven players to average double-figures (12.7 points per game) during

the six games. "I'm happy to be a part of this team and not have to score 30 or 40 points a game. Magic (Johnson) has had a great role in unifying this team; his

leadership was just what we needed. He was the main person to influence this team, along with Larry (Bird) and Coach (Chuck) Daly."

THE FLAME OF HOPE

It's hard to believe, but four years have passed and another Olympic year is upon us. And, with our interest piqued by the 1992 Winter Games in Albertville, France, the eyes of the world now turn eagerly toward the 1992 Summer Games scheduled for July 25 - Aug. 9 in Barcelona, Spain.

An estimated 1 billion television viewers are expected to watch the 1992 Summer Olympics, with satellites linking people around the world in a way that could not have been imagined when the first Games took place in Greece around 776 B.C.

Begun as a tribute to the gods, the Olympic ideal was to replace international turmoil with friendly competition, and all wars ceased during the ancient Games. According to the earliest records, only one athletic event was held in the early Olympics — a foot race of about 200 yards. After the warlike Spartans began participating, however, the Games were expanded to include events such as chariot racing, boxing and the pentathlon — a five-sport event consisting of running, jumping, spear throwing, discus throwing and wrestling.

The original Games were held every fourth year, a practice that continued until the Games were abolished in the early Christian era — around A.D. 394 — by the Roman emperor Theodosius, who felt they had pagan connotations. The revival of the Olympics is credited to a 19th-century French nobleman, Pierre de Coubertin, who was concerned over the lack of physical fitness among his countrymen.

De Coubertin became intrigued by the Greek ideal of the balanced development of mind and body after learning about the recently excavated ruins of the original Olympic stadium. He proposed re-establishing the Olympic Games during a meeting of the Athletic Sports Union in 1892. Two years later, the International Athletic Congress approved the first modern Olympic Games, which were held



Jesse Owens runs for the Gold during the 1936 Olympics.

in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

That year, only 311 athletes from 13 countries met to compete in nine sports. In 1992, more than 10,000 athletes from 172 countries are expected to compete in the 257 events that will make up the Barcelona Games. Particular attention will be focused on the U.S. men's basketball team, which, for the first time, will be made up of top professional players from the National Basketball Association. This year also marks the last time both the Summer and Winter Olympics will be held in the same year; the Games now will be staggered with the next Winter Olympics planned for Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994, while the host city for the 1996 Summer Games will be Atlanta, Ga.

Although the Olympics have weathered many changes, the common thread throughout the years always has been the athletes. One of the most memorable American athletes of this century was Jim Thorpe, who won both the decathlon and pentathlon in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1912. A Native American, Thorpe was later honored as the greatest athlete of the first half of the 20th century. When Nazi Germany hosted the 1936 Games in Berlin, African-American Jesse Owens won four gold medals in what many experts consider the greatest track and field performance in Olympic history. And in 1972, U.S. swimmer Mark Spitz earned seven

gold medals, more than anyone in any Olympics.

The Winter Games also have boasted some outstanding performances. Who can forget, for instance, the 1980 Lake Placid, N.Y., Games when the underdog U.S. hockey team won the gold medal over the heavily favored Soviet team?

Nonetheless, the Olympic history of spirited competition among athletes of all nations has not escaped political division. In 1972, the world was shaken by terrorism at the Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany, with the death of 11 Israeli team members at the hands of Palestinian terrorists. In 1980, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan led to a boycott of the Moscow Summer Olympics by the United States and other Western nations. In 1984, the Soviet Union and the bulk of the Eastern Bloc nations responded by boycotting the Summer Games in Los Angeles, Calif.

Despite the controversy and changes, people and nations around the world ultimately put aside their differences every four years and allow themselves to be caught up in the spirit of the Olympics. Why? Perhaps International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch put it best. "The Olympic flame is the only hope for brotherhood, understanding and dialogue." ■

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★ ★ ★ SPORTS BRIEFS ★ ★ ★

REUNITED - The San Antonio Spurs reunited Head Coach Jerry Tarkanian and former UNLV recruit Lloyd Daniels, signing him to a two-year contract Tuesday. Daniels played this summer with the Long Island Surf of the USBL, averaging 23.7 points, 6 rebounds and 7.8 assists during a 16-game season. Daniels hopes to become a role model for youngsters. "I can reach out to other little kids and say, 'Hey, you don't have to go through what Lloyd Daniels went through,'" he said.

WITHERSPOON LOSES - Former heavyweight champion Tim Witherspoon took a step backward in his quest for another title shot when he lost a split decision to Everett Martin in a 10-round bout Tuesday. Witherspoon, now 37-4 with 24 KO's, had won 12 straight fights.

TARPLEY RECEIVES HONOR - Former Dallas Maverick star Roy Tarpley was named USBL Player of the Year. Banned from the NBA after repeated violations of the league's substance abuse policy, Tarpley played center for Miami and was leading the USBL with a 32.2 scoring average and a 17.0 rebounding average when he left the team to play in Greece.

SOMEBODY'S WATCHING : NCAA rules make it illegal for college coaches and scouts to talk to, or about, any of the players participating in the Nike National Prep Basketball Championship, they are still allowed to watch.

In attendance so far, has been: John Thompson of Georgetown, Jim Boeheim of Syracuse, Jerry Pimm of UC Santa Barbara, Randy Ayers of Ohio St., Denny Crum of Louisville and Bob Thomason of Pacific.

UNDEFEATED : The Las Vegas Stars, the team comprised of local high school players for the Nike Championship were undefeated, at press time, with a 3-0 record. L.V. was scheduled to play at 8p.m. last night. The championship game is scheduled for Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m.

ROUND MOUND OF SOUND : Charles Barkley was at it again, speaking of the foreign cultures he is experiencing. "I'm quitting the team for the swim team. I'm going to the pool as long as there are babes with no tops." Then he commented on the Prince of Monaco when he did not show up to watch the Dream team practice. "He didn't show up and I don't appreciate that, him standing us up. They told us you can't touch him and have to call him 'your majesty.' I haven't called anyone 'your majesty' since Harold Katz." Speaking on the prices of beer, Barkley had this to say: "Twenty dollars for one beer? This is the place for alcoholics to come if they want to quit drinking."



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