

SPORTS

Pistons name Dumars president of operations

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) — If the Detroit Pistons never recapture their glory days, it won't be for lack of effort.

Not with Joe Dumars running the show. In one of a series of moves Tuesday, the Pistons appointed Dumars president of basketball operations.

"I can make a difference here," the former star guard said at a news conference on the court at The Palace. "I'm only here for one reason: to bring us back a championship."

In other moves to strengthen their front office, the Pistons brought back Brendan Suhr to be director of player personnel and signed George Irvine to coach the team.

"I'm excited about the direction we're going," said Irvine, who four months ago took the job on an interim basis and said he wasn't interested in the position full time.

If they can sign star forward Grant Hill, the Pistons' chances of becoming one of

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the NBA's elite teams would be even better. Dumars said he was confident Hill would stay in Detroit.

The moves break down like this:

— Dumars, who played for Detroit for 14 seasons, including the Bad Boys era when the Pistons won consecutive titles, will relinquish his duties as director of player personnel to become president of basketball operations.

— Irvine, 52, who guided the Pistons to a 14-10 record as interim coach after Alvin Gentry was fired last March, was signed for three years.

— Suhr, a top assistant to former coach Chuck Daly during the championship years, will take over as director of player personnel.

— Rick Sund, Dumars' mentor during the past year, retains his basic role as general manager while relinquishing his basketball op-

erations chores to Dumars.

— Tom Wilson, who was the team's president, will continue to oversee business operations.

After winning NBA championships in 1989 and 1990, the Pistons lost their competitive edge. Some of the blame for the slide fell on the front office, which has hired six coaches in the past nine years.

These latest moves are expected to make the franchise better both on and off the court.

"Starting today, there should be no doubt that the future of this franchise lies on the shoulders of Joe Dumars," Wilson said. "Joe will be the one demanding results, and getting results. He will turn this thing around."

But so much hinges on being able to sign Hill.

The All-Star forward is

expected to opt out of his contract on July 1 and test the free agent market.

The promotion of Dumars, however, gives the Pistons hope that they can sign Hill to a one-year contract on Aug. 1, allowing them time to surround him with enough talent to make a strong playoff run.

"He hasn't given me any reason to believe that he isn't coming back," Dumars said.

Detroit has qualified for the playoffs four of the last five years, never advancing past the first round.

"I want guys who are tough-minded, who want to be Detroit Pistons, who get it done without a lot of hype," Dumars said. "That's kind of the way I was."

Dumars, who answers only to team owner Bill Davidson, played with Hill until his retirement at the end of the 1999 season. The two remain close.

"We've talked a lot in the past few weeks," Dumars said. "My personal relationship with Grant is what I base my confidence on."

Tyson cleared to fight in Scotland

EDINBURGH, Scotland (AP) — A women's anti-rape group lost an appeal Friday to bar Mike Tyson from entering Britain for a June 24 fight against Lou Savarese.

The Court of Session in Edinburgh rejected the appeal from the Glasgow Rape Crisis Center to overturn last month's decision by Home Secretary Jack Straw to let the former heavyweight champion enter the country.

A 60,000 sellout is expected at Glasgow's Hampden Park, with 36,000 tickets already sold.

This will be Tyson's second fight in Britain in five months. He knocked out Julius Francis in the second round in January in Manchester, England.

Sandy Brindley, a spokesman for the rape crisis group, said despite the ruling "it was important to go through the process and challenge what we saw as economic considerations being placed above the trauma experienced by women who suffer from sexual violence."

The Scottish judge, Lord Matthew Clarke, is to release his written opinion at a later date.

Promoter Frank Warren said Tyson had served his time and deserved a right to fight.

"This is the second time that pressure groups had tried to use the courts to hinder promotions featuring Mike Tyson, and on both occasions they have failed," he said.

Paul Cullen, the lawyer representing Warren, said cancellation of the bout would cost his client millions.

"Mr. Warren has invested a substantial amount of time and money in promoting the fight and has paid a nonrefundable deposit to secure Hampden Park for the fight," Cullen told the judge.

"Not only will Mr. Tyson be inconvenienced if the fight does not proceed, but there are 12 other professional boxers scheduled to fight on that night."

British law bars entry to anyone who has served a jail sentence of a year or more. But Straw cited "exceptional circumstances" in allowing Tyson to enter in January. Tyson served three years for a rape conviction.

Straw said Tyson behaved on his previous visit. He added that his fights offered strong commercial benefits and banning him would harm Britain's reputation for holding major sports events.

Holyfield-Ruiz fight canceled due to injury

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Evander Holyfield's fight with John Ruiz for the vacant WBA heavyweight title was called off last week after Holyfield was injured in training.

Holyfield had been scheduled to fight Ruiz on June 10

at Caesars Palace for the piece of the title taken from Lennox Lewis by a judge for not defending it against the top-ranked contender.

Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission, said he was told last Wednesday after-

noon that Holyfield injured a hand and that the card was canceled.

Holyfield's manager, Jim Thomas, and Caesars Palace officials were not immediately available for comment.

Holyfield was to have tried for a fourth time as heavy-

weight champion in a bout that had attracted little interest because of the way the title was declared vacant.

Lewis holds the other two major portions of the title, and beat Holyfield last November when they met for the undisputed title.

NCAA minority hiring up

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The percentage of ethnic minorities hired by the nation's colleges and universities for administrative and coaching positions has only increased a small amount since 1995, the NCAA reported recently.

The 1999 Race Demographics of NCAA Member Institutions' Athletics Personnel report said the percentage of all African-American administrative staff at NCAA institutions increased by 0.3 percent, up from 8.4 percent in 1995 to 8.7 percent in 1999.

This includes athletic directors, associate and assistant athletic directors, senior woman's administrators and academic advisers. Among these positions, the only increase in minority hiring came among academic advisers, which increased from 20.9 percent to 21.7 percent during the same period.

The percentage of black athletic directors decreased from 7.5 percent in 1995 to 7.1 percent in 1999. Among Division I directors, 7.5 percent were black compared to 10.1 percent four years ago.

Divisions II and III showed small gains in the same category, increasing from 10.8 percent to 11 percent and from 3.4 percent to 4.2 percent, respectively.

The NCAA studies race and sex breakdowns of athletic personnel at member institutions every two years. The NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, formed in 1991, has used this data since 1995 to measure broad changes over time.

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Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

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- Motorcycle Accidents
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