

Hardaway: I'm good, I do not hate gays

MIAMI (AP) - Former NBA All-Star Tim Hardaway apologized again Sunday for his anti-gay remarks, telling a Miami television station that he "didn't mean" to say what he said in a South Florida radio interview last week.

Hardaway, in an interview at his home with CBS affiliate WFOR, acknowledged he made a major mistake by

saying "I hate gay people" when asked how he would react to having a gay teammate.

"I don't hate gay people," Hardaway said. "I'm a goodhearted person. I interact with people all the time. ...I respect people. For me to say 'hate' was a bad word, and I didn't mean to use it."

Hardaway made the anti-gay comments Wednesday, a



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— Tim Hardaway
Former NBA All-Star

with heterosexual players, then added, "I don't like gay people, and I don't like to be around gay people."

On Sunday, he acknowledged "that was very bad."

His remarks quickly drew criticism from both the NBA and several gay and lesbian groups, and Hardaway said the firestorm surprised him.

"It was like, you know, I had killed somebody. ...I never knew that this was going to escalate that high," Hardaway said.

Hardaway was banished

from some NBA-sanctioned appearances he was scheduled to make in Las Vegas as part of the All-Star weekend. He also lost at least one of his endorsement deals, and he ordered his name dropped from advertising at a car wash he owns in Miami, saying he made that decision to ensure the safety of his employees.

Hardaway played parts of 13 NBA seasons with Golden State, Miami, Dallas, Denver and Indiana and played in five All-Star games.

Dungy to return to champ Colts

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - Tony Dungy is coming back for another season with the Super Bowl champs. Dungy made it clear Monday that he will return to the Indianapolis Colts sideline, quashing any talk that he might step down after becoming the first Black coach to win a Super Bowl ring.

"Obviously, you want to come back. You want to defend the title. We've got such a great group of guys, that that's eventually what draws you back every year," Dungy said in advance of the NFL Scouting Combine. "I wouldn't say it was an easy decision, but it was the right one, and it didn't take overly long to make."

While there had been speculation concerning Dungy's return for the 2007 season, the suspense didn't trouble team president Bill Polian.

"I wasn't terribly concerned," he said. And with that out of the way, the Colts can focus on next season.

The Colts' first NFL championship since the franchise moved from Baltimore

23 years ago also gave them the last pick — 32nd — in the draft in April, meaning there's little time to decide where to focus direction.

"We know we have to get back to work," Dungy said. "I still haven't come down yet. I'm a pretty even-keel guy, but it's still a special time. It's been great, it's been fun, but we have to zero in on the 2007 season."

The first step will be the annual Scouting Combine that begins today in the Colts' home stadium. They already addressed free agency in a big way Monday.

Polian put the franchise tag on defensive end Dwight Freeney, keeping him with the Colts one more year while they work on a long-term contract.

Now they will look at other available players.

"You have your wish list," Dungy said. "You know if you get Item A, you may not be able to get Item B, C or D. It's just a tough road to navigate. As a coach, you want everybody back, but you know that's not going to happen."

week after John Amaechi became the first former NBA player to reveal his homo-

sexuality. Hardaway said he didn't believe gay players should share a locker room

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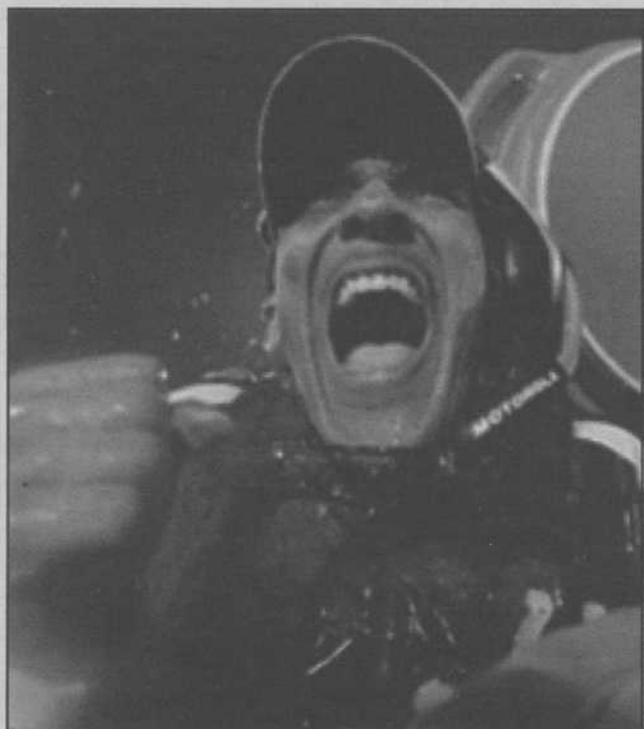
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Indianapolis Colts head coach Tony Dungy reacts to a Gatorade shower after winning the Super Bowl this month.

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