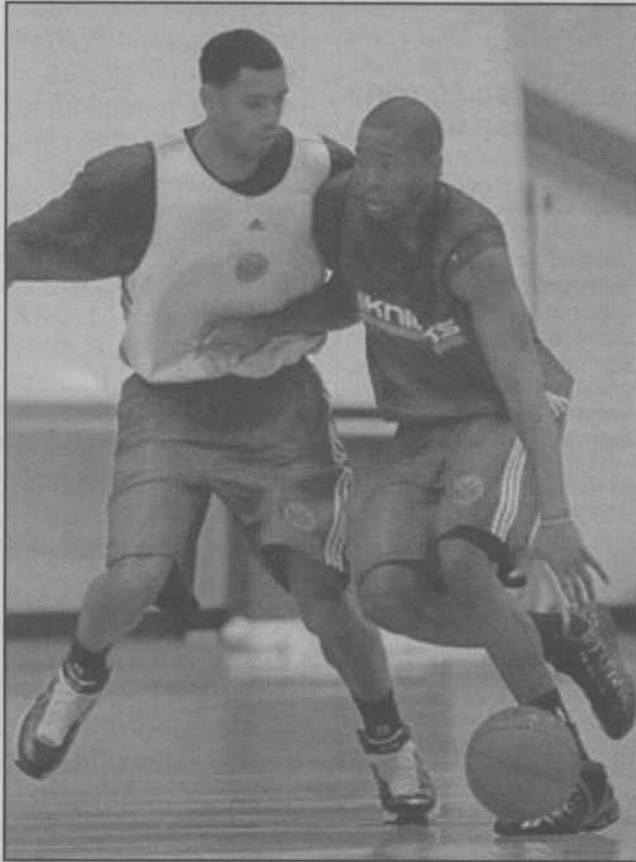


# Houston nixes Knicks' comeback, citing time



New York Knicks' guard Jamal Crawford, right, drives up the court against sharp-shooter Allan Houston during practice at the Knicks' practice facility in Tarrytown, N.Y.

NEW YORK - It only took one exhibition game and 10 days of workouts for Allan Houston to end his National Basketball Association comeback bid with the New York Knicks.

Houston has now called off his effort, saying he does not have enough time to prepare himself physically for an NBA campaign that opens for the Knicks on November 2 against Cleveland.

The 36-year-old guard, a two-time NBA All-Star, had

not played in either of the previous two seasons because of arthritis in his left knee.

He last played an entire season in the 2002/03 campaign.

"After much consideration, I have decided to end my comeback with the Knicks," Houston said.

"While my body and my knees, in particular, feel fine, I know what is required for me to be truly effective in the NBA again. It involves a tim-

ing and progression that would not be fair to the Knicks right now. With the season opening [soon], I think it is best for the team to move on without me. I appreciate the opportunity. I wish the team nothing but success."

Houston averaged 17.3 points, hitting 40.2 percent of his 3-point shots, in a career that spanned 12 seasons with the Knicks and Detroit.

# Report: Six refs disciplined by NBA for gambling issues

NEW YORK - Six National Basketball Association referees have been disciplined by the league for breaching its anti-gambling rules, The *New York Daily News* reports this week.

The newspaper said the unnamed officials had committed infractions, such as visiting casinos, and their cases were not related to that of Tim Donaghy, the referee who pleaded guilty in August to betting on games he officiated.

"Nobody's getting suspended," the report quotes a source as saying. "They were

reprimanded and punished, but nobody lost their job."

Donaghy's case sent a tremor through the league over the summer.

The 40-year-old official faces up to 25 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and conspiracy to transmit gambling information through interstate commerce.

He admitted taking cash payoffs from gamblers and betting on games he officiated.

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# Money put into NFL retirement

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - The NFL added \$10 million to its medical fund for retired players this week, designating the money for joint replacement surgery, cardiovascular screening and assisted living.

The sum will be added to a \$7 million fund agreed upon in July by the league and its players' union. It will be supplemented by money from player fines, plus contributions from the NFL Players Association and other retired players groups.

This is the latest step in a dispute concerning retired players and their pensions. Last year, a group of prominent retirees targeted Gene Upshaw, the NFLPA's executive director, for paying too much attention to current players and not enough to former players.

In May, the NFL, the NFLPA, the Pro Football Hall of Fame and the NFL alumni association formed what was dubbed "The Alliance" to help retired players. Two months later, commissioner Roger Goodell, Upshaw and 11 retired players met in Washington and announced a \$7 million fund for medical needs.

"We're continuing to work on the other needs of retired players," Goodell said at the final briefing of the two-day owners' meeting.

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