

# Ewing, Olajuwon, Riley selected to Hall of Fame

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

SAN ANTONIO -Broadcaster Dick Vitale, a man who had limited success as a coach but brought the game of basketball to millions of TV watchers, was selected to the game's Hall of Fame on Monday alongside Pat Riley, one of the most successful NBA coaches of all time.

Overcome with emotion, Vitale broke into tears during the announcement in San Antonio, site of the NCAA Men's Final Four.

"I can't run, can't jump, can't shoot, but just have had a tremendous — I'd like to think — passion about the game," said Vitale, who had a short stint as an NBA coach in the late 1970s but made his name as a college basketball analyst.

Others in the Class of 2008 were Hakeem Olajuwon and Patrick Ewing, two greats who battled on the court for years; player Adrian Dantley; coach Cathy Rush; and William Davidson, owner of the Detroit Pistons since 1974.

Over the decades, Vitale created his own lexicon with phrases such as "Get a T-O, baby," "You're a P-T-Per," and "Awesome, baby."

Monday, he said he "cried like a baby" upon learning of his selection and thanked Hall of Fame coach Bob Knight — now a fellow ESPN analyst — for spearheading a letter-writing campaign on his behalf.

"When I saw those letters, whether I'd ever gotten in the Hall of Fame or not, that was going to be my hall of fame," said the 68-year-old who was forced off-air for two months after throat surgery.

No matter how strong their credentials, each member of the Class of 2008 seemed a bit star-struck.

Riley, the third-winningest NBA coach ever, called his election "unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable."



*Naimsmith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame inductees Hakeem Olajuwon, left, shakes hands with Patrick Ewing at a news conference on Monday in San Antonio.*

Riley won four NBA titles with the Los Angeles Lakers, then grabbed another one two years ago with Miami. He also has one championship as an assistant and another as a player.

"Last night I lost my 64th game of the regular season," he said, referring to the Heat's current struggles. "And the next day I'm in the Hall of Fame. I think there's an integrity in the Hall of Fame that far surpasses whatever your record is, if you have a body of work."

The new class, which Riley joked will be the best-promoted ever because of Vitale's inclusion, will be inducted Sept. 5 in Springfield, Mass., home of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

Olajuwon and Ewing both played in three Final Fours, with Ewing's Georgetown team beating Olajuwon's Houston squad for the 1984 national championship.

"We both are warriors. We both want to excel. We both wanted to dominate. And when you play against the best, you want to perform at your best" Ewing said. "So we both definitely looked at each other as the best."

Olajuwon got his revenge as a pro, leading the Houston Rockets to the first of two straight titles with a seven-game victory over Ewing's New York Knicks in the 1994

NBA finals — a team coached by Riley.

"Growing up in Nigeria I didn't really understand the magnitude of what it means to be a hall of famer," said Olajuwon, a 12-time All-Star. "I still cannot believe that I'm in the same company with all these great legends."

Ewing, the Knicks' all-time leader in points, rebounds, blocked shots, and steals, among other categories, remembered field trips to the Hall of Fame as a child and said he never imagined being a part of it.

"And now I am," he said. Dantley, a six-time NBA All-Star, played for seven teams during his 15-year NBA career, including Davidson's Detroit Pistons.

Hall of Famer Joe Dumars, who works for the 85-year-old Davidson as the Pistons' president of basketball operations and played with Dantley in Detroit, said in an e-mail to The Associated Press: "I can't think of two more deserving people than Bill Davidson and Adrian Dantley."

Dantley was a finalist six

times before finally making it in — more than anyone in the current class.

"It happened," he said. "It took a long time, but it happened."

Rush certainly understands. She led Immaculata University to three consecutive AIAW national championships from 1972 to 1974, won 149 games in seven seasons and lost just 15 — a .908 winning percentage.

A five-time finalist before her election, she joked she'd lost more nominations to the Hall of Fame than games.

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## Ex-Viking Eller arrested

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Former Minnesota Vikings great Carl Eller was arrested after he refused to give a breath test for drunken driving early Wednesday.

The 66-year-old Eller was jailed about 2 a.m. on suspicion of driving while intoxicated, fleeing police and assaulting a police officer.

The report said police stopped Eller's vehicle and Eller punched at least one officer.

The officer later received medical treatment for bruises. Injuries to another officer were identified as minor.

Eller didn't immediately return calls to his home and cell phones.

In 2006, Eller was charged with driving under the influence. He later pleaded guilty.

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