

New Orleans Hornets basketball coach, Byron Scott, poses with the Red Auerbach Trophy which is presented to the as the NBA Coach of the Year on Tuesday in New Orleans.

Scott runs away with coach vote

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW ORLEANS -Byron Scott was voted the NBA coach of the year by a wide margin following a regular season in which the Hornets won a franchise-record 56 games and earned their first playoff berth in four years.

"This is a very humbling experience for me because this is something you never think about," said Scott, joking that the statuette of [Red] Auerbach "kind of looks like me."

"All I think about is getting great guys and trying to make them better and trying to win basketball games, so this is very special," Scott said. "I've got an unbelievable group of guys that I enjoy being around every day. They are a special group. I love them dearly. There's not a coach in this business that has a better job than I do."

Scott received 70 first-place votes, while Boston Celtics coach Doc Rivers received 23 and Houston Rockets coach Rick Adelman 17.

It is Scott's eighth season as an NBA coach, including four with the New Jersey Nets before joining the Hornets. Scott won three NBA titles as a player with the Los Angeles Lakers and twice coached the Nets to the NBA finals.

Scott accepted the trophy hours before the Hornets defeated the Dallas Mavericks in their first round playoff series on Tuesday night.

Owner George Shinn, general manager Jeff Bower, players and numerous front-office personnel crowded into a room in the New Orleans Arena for the presentation.

Bower called the award a reflection of a team "growing together, struggling together and improving together to get the point where we stand here today to celebrate what's generally noted as one of the premier awards in the game.

"We have a great man here who has done an incredible job with his team. We have a great team here who has bonded together and allowed him to coach them," Bower said. "That is a fact that is so undervalued. It has to be a joint effort and it only exists and only comes together when there's that spirit that everybody understands why they're being asked to do things."

Scott cited his playing days under Pat Riley in Los Angeles and Larry Brown in Indiana, and his time as an assistant under Adelman in Sacramento as key influences in his coaching career.

"I've had three guys that have taught me how to approach this game from a coaching standpoint," Scott said. "It's kind of rubbed off. I always though, if you didn't take something from those guys then you were doing yourself an injustice."

Scott became available to coach the Hornets when the Nets fired him during the 2003-04 season. New Jersey had been to the finals the previous season, but Scott's relationship with certain players, including then-Nets guard Jason Kidd, appeared to be strained at the time.

Scott took over the Hornets in 2004-05 and went 18-64 while presiding over a roster overhaul that included the

(See Scott, Page 11)

Pacman Jones traded to Cowboys

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The NFL formally approved Tennessee's trade of suspended cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones to the Dallas Cowboys on recently.

"I think for Adam's sake it's a very good first step,"

Jones' agent Manny Arora said. "We still have to get through the NFL commissioner's office. I think once we do that we can breathe a sigh of relief and get back to playing football."

Jones must still be rein-

stated by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell.

Arora declined to discuss the details of the contract Jones signed.

Dallas gave the Titans a fourth-round pick in this year's draft and a sixth-rounder next year for Jones. The Cowboys would get back a fourth-rounder in 2009 if Pacman isn't reinstated, or a fifth-rounder if he returns then gets punished again.

The Titans and Cowboys agreed to terms, and the teams submitted all the pa-

perwork to the league office immediately.

The Dallas Cowboys are braced for the players association to quibble over the contract, but Jerry Jones said Saturday that can't block the trade.

Tennessee used that fourth-round pick, No. 126 overall, on California receiver Lavelle Hawkins. Told that was the draft pick used to select him, Hawkins said he realizes his name will be linked now to Jones.

"First of all, let me just say thanks to Pacman Jones

because if it wasn't for him, I probably wouldn't be a Tennessee Titan so thank you Pacman Jones," Hawkins said.

Goodell suspended Jones last April for repeatedly violating the league's personal conduct rules. He's been arrested six times and has been involved in 12 incidents requiring police intervention.

"Basically, he's been given all the tools by Dallas to succeed," Arora said. "And now it's really just up to us to make it happen."

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