

Let's Get it Started

by Jack Moore

The electricity, the drama, the criminal drug charges (*cough* Trailblazers *cough*), yes it is that time of year again, the return of the NBA. (Then again, since you live in Cleveland, chances are you didn't even realize we had an NBA team before last season.) This off-season has been one of the more eventful in recent history. One of the leagues biggest stars, Kobe Bryant, was cleared of rape charges, USA Men's Basketball failed to win gold for the first time since the pros were sent to play, a new team was added to the league (Charlotte Bobcats), and we witnessed a free agency period filled with controversy. Also the addition of the Bobcats has led to Realignment. There are now three divisions of five teams per conference.

Breakdown:

Divisions:
Atlantic: The Nets, led by Jason Kidd, will most likely repeat as divisional champs, even with the loss of Kenyon Martin. The New York Knicks, with the addition of Jamal Crawford, look to be the team most likely to take the Division from the Nets. Jason Kidd will be the MVP of the Atlantic Division. Even though he had surgery in the off-season, he will still be one of the leagues premier players.

Central: The Defending NBA Champion, Detroit Pistons, look to be the obvious favorite to win, not only the Central, but also the entire Eastern Conference. The Pacers will be good this year also, but don't seem to have added enough to improve over last season, which is why my Dark Horse pick for the division is the Cleveland Cavaliers. Maybe it's a homer pick, but with LeBron

leading the charge, the Cavaliers could be one of the most dangerous teams in the league. Jermaine O'Neal of the Pacers is one of the top five players in the NBA and he is only getting better. He will be the MVP of the Central Division.

Southeast: The Miami Heat made THE blockbuster deal of the summer in acquiring the most dominant big man ever, Shaquille O'Neal. They are definitely the favorite of this Division. The Magic are my Dark Horse, because they got rid of Tracy McGrady. In recent history teams that rid themselves of their best player, in favor of a balanced team, have a good season. (Examples include the Knicks after losing Ewing, and the Mariners and the Rangers after losing A-Rod). The MVP of the Southeast is Shaq, hands down.

Southwest: The San Antonio Spurs are one of the most well rounded teams in the NBA, and are led by the league's best player, Tim Duncan. They are the favorite to win the division by a long shot. The Houston Rockets are my Dark Horse, because Tracy McGrady and Yao Ming could be a special combination. Tim Duncan is of course the MVP of the division.

Northwest: The Minnesota Timberwolves looked very good last year and should continue to improve. They are also fortunate enough to have last year's MVP Kevin Garnett. That is why they are my pick to win the Northwest. My Dark Horse in the Northwest is the greatly improved Denver Nuggets. Already a playoff team, led by Carmelo Anthony, they made key additions this off-season, most notably

picking up all-star Kenyon Martin. They could be one of the leagues best teams this season. Kevin Garnett is the MVP of the northwest, with Carmelo Anthony a close second.

Pacific: After the deterioration of the Laker dynasty the Kings look to win this division by default (as they are vastly overrated and have been for years). The L.A. Lakers are the Dark Horse of the Pacific because they have the MVP of this division, Kobe Bryant. He is still one of the best players in the NBA, and he is out to prove that he can take the Lakers just as far without Shaq as he did with him.

MVP Tim Duncan, San Antonio Spurs
Rookie of the Year Emeka Okafor, Charlotte Bobcats
Defensive Player of the Year Ben Wallace, Detroit Pistons

Playoff Predictions

Eastern Conference Playoffs (Round 1)

1. Detroit Pistons Vs. 8. Orlando Magic
2. Miami Heat Vs. 7. Milwaukee Bucks
3. New Jersey Nets Vs. 6. New York Knicks
4. Indiana Pacers Vs. 5. Cleveland Cavaliers

Western Conference Playoffs (Round 1)

1. San Antonio Spurs Vs. 8. Utah Jazz
2. Minn. Timberwolves Vs. 7. L.A. Lakers
3. Sacramento Kings Vs. 6. Dallas Mavericks
4. Denver Nuggets Vs. 5. Houston Rockets

Western Conference Playoffs (Round 2)

1. San Antonio Spurs Vs. 6. Dallas Mavericks
2. Minn. Timberwolves Vs. 4. Denver Nuggets

Eastern Conference Playoffs (Round 2)

1. Detroit Pistons Vs. 3. New Jersey Nets
2. Miami Heat Vs. 5. Cleveland Cavaliers

Eastern Conference Finals

1. Detroit Pistons Vs. 2. Miami Heat

Western Conference Finals

1. San Antonio Spurs Vs. 4. Denver Nuggets

NBA Finals

West: San Antonio Spurs Vs. East: Miami Heat

NBA Champions

Miami Heat



Shaquille O'Neal looks to lead the Miami Heat to a promising season.

...Newnan!

Joey Butchko '06

The St. Ignatius golf team has had an exciting and interesting start to the season. The Golf 'Cats, led by senior standout Dan Rush, have compiled a 65-11 record so far this season. Full of talent and potential, the team is mainly built of juniors, with one freshman and sophomore on the roster. "We're hackin' our way through this year," Junior Brad Mattson says, "And our main goal is to make it to States and be very competitive in the State Tournament." Mattson, along with Rush, is also hoping to capture the individual State Tournament. "We play almost every day, and we hope this dedication will pay off," Dan said. For Rush, the pay off has been huge this year. He is yet to shoot a round over par, and currently holds two school records. "He's the Diesel, he's Dan Rush, he's the best," AJ Merk says. If you get a chance to see these Cats play, you'll see what high school golf is all about.

Football

Chris Milne

Outstanding Contribution:

SACKS



Golf

Dan Rush

Outstanding Contribution:

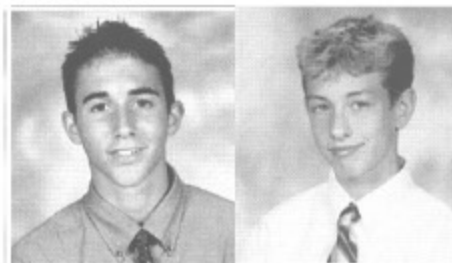
Love of the game.



Soccer

Outstanding Contribution:

Scoring goals and shining shoes.



Mark Barbicus & Kyle Taljan

Cross Country

Pat Sovacool

Outstanding Contribution:

Great legs.



Fall Crew

Tom Paulett

Outstanding Contribution:

Snackpacks.



Bowling

Tony Zupancic

Outstanding Contribution:

Boyish good looks.

