

FOOTBALL

SAN DIEGO

Schottenheimer to return to Chargers next season

Marty Schottenheimer will stay on as coach of the San Diego Chargers next season, but he turned down a one-year extension for 2008 worth \$4.5 million.



SCHOTTENHEIMER

Three days after the talented Chargers melted down in a 24-21 playoff loss to New England, team president Dean Spanos announced that the embattled coach will be back for the final year of his contract.

Speculation grew following Sunday's loss that Schottenheimer might be fired due in part to the front office's expectations of a Super Bowl run and the coach's icy relationship with gen-

eral manager A.J. Smith.

"I have decided that Marty Schottenheimer is the best person to lead the Chargers in the 2007 season," Spanos said in a statement Wednesday. "General Manager A.J. Smith and I agree on this fundamental point."

SOUTH BEND

Notre Dame announces starting times for games

Notre Dame's first four home football games next season will kick off at 3:30 p.m., while the final three games will start at 2:30 p.m.

The games that will start at 3:30 p.m. are Georgia Tech on Sept. 1, Michigan State on Sept. 22, Boston College on Oct. 13 and USC on Oct. 20. The games against Navy on Nov. 3, Air Force on Nov. 10 and Duke on Nov. 17 will start at 2:30 p.m.

All the games will be broadcast on NBC.

BASEBALL

PITTSBURGH

Pirates add LaRoche

After two months of trying, the Pittsburgh Pirates finally landed a deal for Atlanta power hitter Adam LaRoche on Wednesday when they agreed to acquire the first baseman for left-handed reliever Mike Gonzalez and another player.

The 27-year-old LaRoche hit .285 with 32 homers and 90 RBIs last season and was seventh in the NL with a .561 slugging percentage.

Gonzalez was 3-4 with a 2.17 ERA last year and was 24 for 24 in save conversions.

MILWAUKEE

Brewers keep pitcher

Left-hander Chris Capuano and the Milwaukee Brewers agreed to a \$3.25 million, one-year contract Wednesday, avoiding arbitration.

Capuano made the NL All-Star team last season but then had a poor second half, winning only one more game and finishing 11-12 with a 4.03 ERA in 34 starts.

He asked for \$3.7 million in arbitration Tuesday, and the Brewers offered \$2.8 million. He earned \$450,000 last year.

TENNIS

NEW YORK

Sampras elected to Tennis Hall of Fame

Pete Sampras was elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Wednesday, joined in the 2007 class by Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Sven Davidson and Russ Adams.



SAMPRAS

"It's kind of icing on the cake for having a good career," Sampras said.

"It's an honor to be included with (Rod) Laver and the older generation, (John) McEnroe and (Jimmy) Connors. All those guys." Sampras has never visited the Hall of Fame in Newport, R.I., but he'll get a chance when he's there for the July 14 induction ceremony.

He'll also participate in an exhibition the next day.

Sampras won 64 singles titles, including his haul of majors: seven at Wimbledon, five at the U.S. Open and two at the Australian Open.

GOLF

PALM DESERT, Calif.

Allenby takes early lead

Robert Allenby got the benefit of a late-morning tee time and went on a birdie binge in the afternoon Wednesday on the way to a 9-under 63 and a two-shot lead in the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic.

Mark Calcavecchia and Craig Kanada were tied for second at 65. Phil Mickelson made his 2007 debut with a 70, and defending champion Chad Campbell also had a 70.

The leaderboard initially had Allenby finishing at 12-under, but the volunteer tracking his score had done his math wrong.

MELBOURNE, Australia

Clijsters, Hingis win, advance to third round

Kim Clijsters extended the winning start to her farewell tour, beating Akiko Morigami 6-3, 6-0 today to reach the third round of the Australian Open.

The 23-year-old Belgian, who has announced she is retiring at the end of this season in the hope of starting a family, recovered from an inconsistent opening set to run through the second in 24 minutes.

She started the year with a win against Maria Sharapova in the final of a Hong Kong exhibition tournament and last week won the Sydney International.

Recently engaged Martina Hingis, into the second year of her comeback after three seasons on the sidelines, had a 6-2, 6-2 win against Russian Alla Kudryavtseva to move closer to a quarterfinal rematch with Clijsters.

Clijsters won her first-round match without dropping a game but was erratic early against Morigami, making more unforced errors (12) than winners (11).

BASKETBALL

INDIANAPOLIS

Butler gets transfer

Avery Jukes, a 6-foot-8 freshman at the University of Alabama, has transferred to Butler and will become eligible to play basketball in December.

Jukes, who averaged 17 points and 12 rebounds as a senior at South Gwinnett High School in Georgia, played three games for Alabama this season before deciding to transfer.

He will begin classes at Butler this week and have three years of eligibility remaining when he joins the team next season. He must sit out the rest of 2006-07.

• Pacers

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

"I think he was in a difficult environment for him," Pacers CEO Donnie Walsh said of Jackson, who averaged 14.1 points this season. "No matter what he was going to do, he wasn't going to outlive that environment. So I think it's good for him to go to another city and start fresh, and I think it's good for our team as well."

The deal left injury-plagued Golden State with just six healthy players on its roster for Wednesday night's game against the Los Angeles Clippers, two fewer than the NBA minimum required to avoid forfeiting a game.

The Warriors quickly signed NBA Development League forward Renaldo Major a 10-day contract, and they planned to suit up injured center Adonal Foyle to avoid the forfeit.

Harrington was one of the Warriors' top targets in free agency last season but went back to Indiana, where he started his career, in a sign-and-trade deal with Atlanta. He averaged 15.9 points and 6.3 rebounds this season, second on the team in both categories to O'Neal, who plays much the same position.

"That's the heartbreak in it," Walsh said. "He would have fit in here, but he was playing (small forward) more than he was playing (power forward). I'm not sure he's a good fit at (power forward) with Jermaine. When you really looked at it, I don't know if the two players complemented each other as well as we thought they could."

Murphy, a former Notre Dame star battling injuries this season, is averaging 8.9 points and 6.0 rebounds, both his lowest totals since his rookie year. Dunleavy, the No. 3 overall pick from Duke in 2002, has scored 11.4 points in another disappointing season, so the deal rids the Warriors of three players who didn't fit with Nelson's ideas.

Mullin signed Dunleavy and Murphy to contract extensions still worth more than \$80 million

before he hired Nelson. The Warriors pursued Harrington because the rangy forward should fit their new style of play.

"Al is a guy we've looked at for a while," Mullin said. "Al is a guy that's probably a lot stronger than people know. He can guard his man in the post if need be. He's gotten better over the years."

Jackson has a sharp outside shot but has been almost nothing but trouble for the Pacers since his involvement in that infamous brawl in the stands at Detroit two years ago. He was involved in a fight outside an Indianapolis strip club Oct. 6 and is scheduled to go to trial Feb. 12 for firing a gun during the fracas.

"We feel strongly that a lot of those things are behind Stephen, and he's looking to come here, win games and focus on his basketball career," Mullin said.

Matthew Symons, spokesman

• Time

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

and any and every free-agent signing a crap shoot?

Whatever the answer, precious little of what the Pacers have tried in recent years has worked. Consequently, they're paying a steep price in performance and the pocketbook.

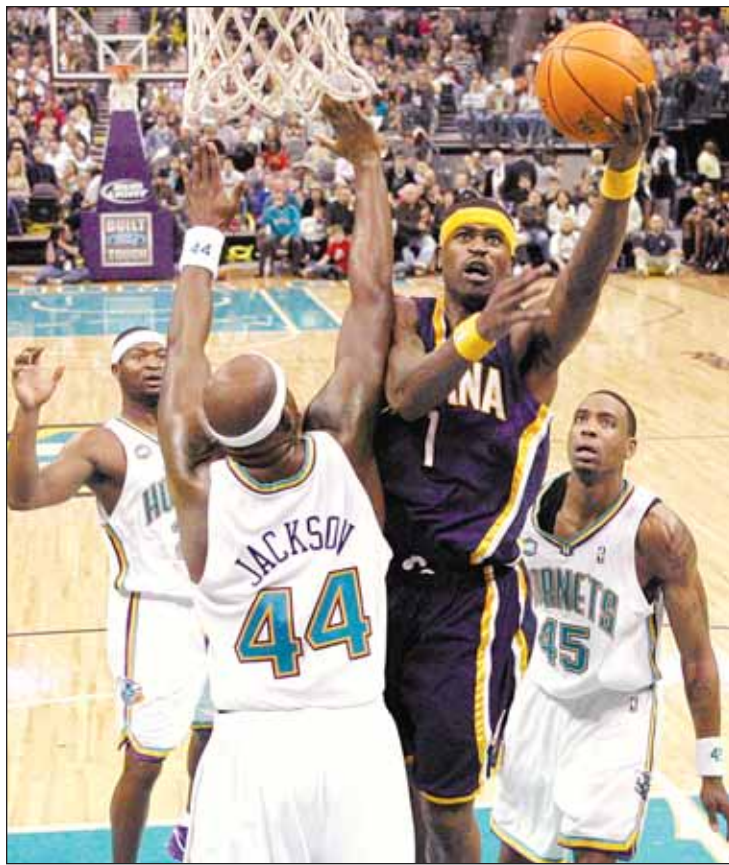
On any given night, the Pacers are mediocre to bad to awful. They're seldom sizzling. And when they're home, they're playing to increasingly smaller crowds.

It's sad and surprising. Once upon a not-so-distant time, Indiana was an elite franchise. Trips to the conference finals were routine. Sellouts were the norm. Fans identified with players. For the better part of a decade, the Pacers were the toast of the town.

Not so anymore. That honor belongs to the Colts. It has the past three years and not just because they've knocked on the door of the Super Bowl.

The fact the Pacers aren't championship contenders themselves has everything to do with it. There's plenty of room in this town for two winners.

For the moment, there's only one. The reason is simple: The Pacers have lost their way replenishing a roster that in the



AP PHOTO

The Pacers' Stephen Jackson, center, goes up for a shot during a game against the Hornets in Oklahoma City on Jan. 6. The Pacers traded Jackson to the Golden State Warriors as part of an eight-player deal Wednesday.

past only needed to be tweaked, never remade.

During his nearly two decades as chief architect, Donnie Walsh's genius was evident and enduring. The Pacers weren't one-hit wonders. They won often and annually.

And they had the unyielding admiration and appreciation of fiercely loyal fans. Walsh was the linchpin. When the Pacers had a need, he identified it and filled it. When they had a problem, he solved it.

Some of Walsh's moves were subtle, like the signing of aging free agents like Byron Scott, Ricky Pierce, Eddie Johnson and Sam Perkins, brilliant master strokes that fortified a team built around familiar starters Reggie Miller, Rik Smits and Dale Davis, who all happened to be Walsh draft picks.

Other of his strokes were bolder, but no less brilliant, like the trades that brought Derrick McKey, Mark Jackson, Jalen Rose and Chris Mullin into the fold.

As a result of these moves, the Pacers went to the Eastern Conference Finals six times. They went to the NBA Finals in 2000.

It's largely been a struggle ever since.

With the exception of the Jermaine O'Neal for Dale Davis swap in 2000, not much has panned out for the Pacers with trades and free agents. They've

mined far more pyrite than gold. For reasons ranging from injury to insanity to incorrigible to incapable, the stream of recent player failures cascades like a sad poem: Jonathan Bender, Ron Artest, Stephen Jackson, David Harrison, Sarunas Jasikevicius, Al Harrington, Marquis Daniels.

Is this the stuff champions are made of?

Clearly not. Of the aforementioned group, only Harrison and Daniels are still around. Why, it's hard to say. Their collective contribution this season adds up to about zero.

But give the Pacers this: They're not giving up. They know the product is flawed. They're trying to fix it.

The question is, do they have the right man for the job?

Since assuming the lion's share of decision-making responsibilities from Walsh, Larry Bird the president of basketball operations has not distinguished himself like Larry Bird the Hall of Fame player or even Larry Bird the NBA Finals coach.

Trades haven't worked, and free agents haven't flourished. After three years on the job, it's too early to declare Bird a front-office failure.

It's a complex, nuanced, high-pressure occupation that can hardly be mastered overnight. Even Walsh, who took over in 1986, needed about seven years to work his magic.

Yet this trade should begin the process of defining Bird's legacy.

By orchestrating it, Bird seems to acknowledge a couple of things: Jackson had to go, and bringing Harrington back for a second go-round (and making such a big production about it in the process) was a mistake.

Admitting mistakes isn't a bad thing. Repeating them is. And only time will tell if this move is just more folly.

It's hard to imagine Mike Dunleavy and Troy Murphy giving the Pacers much of a lift. Both players, and Dunleavy in particular, were disappointments in Golden State.

Warriors coach Don Nelson never masked his displeasure with Dunleavy, a huge underachiever after being No. 3 pick of the 2002 draft.

Murphy is solid when healthy, but, as the previous clause implies, isn't always healthy.

Both players lost their starting jobs as a result of their respective shortcomings.

For better or for worse, they'll get a fresh start here. And for the sake of a once-proud franchise, it would be nice if they make the most of it.

Bird & Co. are, after all, due for a bit of good fortune.

Make that overdue.

O'Neal says trade should help Pacers

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

Jermaine O'Neal made it clear in the past couple of weeks that the Indiana Pacers should make moves toward winning a championship or he and the team should part ways.

The Pacers certainly made a shakeup Wednesday, trading Al Harrington and Stephen Jackson to the Golden State Warriors for forwards Troy Murphy and Mike Dunleavy as part of an eight-player deal.

Pacers CEO Donnie Walsh said he and O'Neal had not discussed the situation but that the moves should help O'Neal, the five-time All-Star who leads the team in scoring and rebounding.

O'Neal looks forward to making the best of the changes.

"I think it's a bold move, but (Walsh and team president Larry Bird) feel like it can help the team," O'Neal said. "You've got to be able to make those moves in pro sports."

Bird said he didn't want to make the moves, particularly in the cases of Harrington and guard Sarunas Jasikevicius. Josh Powell also was included in the deal.

"You have to give up something to get something, and we feel it's a better fit for us," Bird said.

All four Pacers included in the trade practiced with the team on Wednesday. Harrington said he didn't see the trade coming.

"I'm shocked," Harrington told television station WTHR-Channel 13. "I really thought I was going to finish my career here."

O'Neal said he was disappointed that Harrington, one of his closest friends, is leaving. But he also looks forward to helping the new players get acclimated to Indianapolis.

"Everybody expects me to go into such a tirade about one of my better friends in Al Harrington being traded," O'Neal said. "I'm hurt on a personal level. On a business level, we all understand it's a business."



O'NEAL

Advertisement

A Gold Mine in Bedroom Drawers

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