

# BASKETBALL

## Artest not taking care of his dogs

Dogs owned by Sacramento Kings forward Ron Artest have spent a total of 77 nights at the pound since July because of poor care by their owner, costing the NBA star \$1,942 in boarding and impound fees, county records show.

Placer County animal control officers have gone to Artest's five-acre estate seven times in that period in response to callers' complaints about dogs being loose or not being fed.

The latest incident came Sunday, when animal control officers took Artest's Great Dane, Socks, saying the animal wasn't being fed.

Artest said he hopes to get Socks back and has hired a new caretaker for the dogs. He blamed Socks' condition on the fact that another dog, an American bulldog, was taking all of the food.



ARTEST

# Celtics getting used to bad breaks

By JIMMY GOLEN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## BOSTON

Paul Pierce didn't get a chance yet to read the inspirational book Celtics owner Wyc Grousbeck left for him.

The Boston captain was in the hospital with an elbow infection that derailed his return from a bad foot, and the book remained in his locker.

Wally Szczerbiak left the book behind when he went to get his ankle taped after a 91-79 loss to the Miami Heat extended Boston's franchise-record losing streak to 16 games Wednesday.

And Tony Allen's copy of "The Adversity Advantage," by blind mountaineer Erik Weihenmayer, was still in his locker, too; it's probably difficult to carry a lot of stuff when you're walking in a full leg cast.

The first blind climber to summit Mount Everest, Weihenmayer was honored during a break in the Heat game Wednesday night as part of the Celtics' "Heroes Among Us" campaign. Grousbeck insisted the visit was long-planned and not timed to snap the team out of its franchise-record losing streak.

"If there's an advantage in adversity, I haven't found it yet," he said. Neither has his team.

The Celtics matched their magic number with their 16th loss in a row, one for each of the titles that once made them the pride of the NBA. The league record of 23 straight in one season was set by the Vancouver Grizzlies in 1996 and matched by the Denver Nuggets in '98.

"Every game they're close," Grousbeck said. "Every game, there's two or three players that

"Every game they're close. ...  
But it's time for a 'W.'"

Wyc Grousbeck  
Boston Celtics owner  
on team's 16-game losing streak

succeed. There's someone scoring 23, someone scoring 27, getting rebounds, people diving for loose balls. There's a lot to like about it, and they're playing hard for Doc.

"But it's time for a 'W.'" The Celtics won 16 titles from 1957-86 to establish themselves as the NBA's most prolific dynasty. But it's been a long time since the Celtics, who named their mascot "Lucky" and wear a shamrock on their uniforms, have had any good fortune.

The deaths of Reggie Lewis and Len Bias; the transparent tanking of the 1996-97 season in an attempt to obtain Tim Duncan, only to get a bad draw in the lottery; and the disastrous tenure of Rick Pitino all set back the quest for banner No. 17.

This year, it's been injuries that left the youngest team in the league without veteran leadership or talent.

Center Theo Ratliff played just two games before being sidelined with a bulging disc. Allen tore his ACL just as he was emerging with a streak of 20-point games.

Pierce missed 22 games with a stress reaction in his foot, then went back to sick bay with an infection and fever just as he was on the verge of returning.

"Obviously, it's a tough break," coach Doc Rivers said. "But we've gotten used to that."



The Celtics' Rajon Rondo watches from the bench during the closing moments of Wednesday's 91-79 loss to the Heat.

# TENNIS

## Serena Williams to play in Fed Cup

Serena Williams has agreed to play for the U.S. Fed Cup team for the first time since 2003.

Fresh off her Australian Open title, Williams will join older sister Venus on the squad that faces Belgium in the first round of the Fed Cup in April.

"I was very happy when Serena called me and said she wanted to play, especially coming after her big win in Australia," U.S. captain Zina Garrison said Thursday.

Venus Williams, Serena's sister, announced last week that she would play in the Fed Cup.



S. WILLIAMS

# TECHNOLOGY

## ESPN starts over with mobile service

ESPN is relaunching its shuttered cell phone service through Verizon Wireless, this time delivering its flashy feed of sports scores, news and video highlights through a top industry player instead of competing for subscribers with its own full-blown wireless brand.

The multiyear agreement giving Verizon Wireless exclusive U.S. rights to offer the Mobile ESPN application on its VCast phones was announced Thursday.

ESPN also announced that a broadcast TV service for cell phones that Verizon plans to introduce soon will feature an ESPN channel with sports programming drawn from its cable networks.

Verizon expects to offer the service over MediaFLO, a separate wireless network developed by Qualcomm Inc. that can broadcast up to 20 TV channels, in at least one market by the end of March.

# Major sports still need openly gay athletes

A pro athlete who waits until his career is over to declare he's gay, the way John Amaechi just did in a new book, is yesterday's news.

He has something to sell, little to lose and does less to advance the cause he's fighting for, helping sports get over its homophobia, than he might have.

There's no dishonor in that. It's what happens when you work within the system: you spark debate, maybe change some minds over the long haul and pick up a few bucks for baring your pain.

So no disrespect to John Amaechi. But it's been done before. Homosexuality has been one of sports' little morality plays since the ancient Greeks made contests of running, jumping and boxing, then gossiped about them afterward.

Long and loud as the discussion has

been at times, nobody from any of the big team sports has gone on the record while still playing the game. Not much will change until he does.

But you better find a seat. Something tells me the final act of "Waiting for Gaydot" could start any minute.

"It's a shame all gay people can't turn green for just one day, so everybody's jaw would drop, and then maybe we could move past a lot of this stuff," said Jim Buzinski, co-founder of Outsports.com. "Until then, we'll take another small step forward."

"It's always a positive, and I applaud John for what he did. In terms of encouraging others, everybody knows their own circumstances and deals with it. ..."

"I think the fears are overblown," he added, "but until the first person comes out, we won't really know."

No. Even so, it's getting easier to make an educated guess. It's difficult to imagine too many owners balking at the idea of an openly gay athlete on their team, unlike Jackie Robinson breaking baseball's color barrier, back

in the day. Most, in fact, would line up with their wallets out for the opportunity to market him.

Though his players weren't uniformly enthusiastic, commissioner David Stern said about Amaechi's book, "We have a very diverse league. The question at the NBA is always 'Have you got game?' That's it, end of inquiry."

A call to NFL headquarters produced a similar response.

"Society is more open and tolerant than it's ever been. I don't think anybody would care," spokesman Greg Aiello said, "other than how he was performing."

In June, the NFL flew in former defensive lineman Esera Tuaolo, who like Amaechi came out after retiring, to speak to the incoming rookie class about sexual orientation. That was after Tuaolo talked to the league staff about the same topic in New York a few months earlier.

Considering how little the NFL likes being surprised, Aiello was asked whether he could imagine a football player coming out any time soon.

"I'm sure it will happen someday,"

he said. "I don't see why not." You could have come up with a thousand reasons why as recently as four years ago, when an online and print rumor campaign prompted Mike Piazza, who was playing for the Mets at the time, to deny he was gay.

Almost everybody still was fleeing the stigma attached, convinced it could spell the end of a career. Even former major leaguer Billy Bean — who, like Amaechi, waited until he retired to come out — was convinced it would take a player as special as Robinson in every way to publicly acknowledge his homosexuality.

Thousands of ball players have worked, traveled, showered and dressed in the same locker room together. Most understand now it's a numbers game, although something then-Phillies manager Larry Bowa said about numbers during the Piazza episode still applies. "All I know," Bowa said, "is that if he hits .340, it probably would be easier than if he hits .220."

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Send comments to jlitke@ap.org.

I'm a 10!

I'm a 10!

I'm a 10!

Are you a 10?

## Indiana has Found the Perfect 10!

### Insight Broadband 10.0 —

with download speeds up to an incredible 10 Megs!

- The fastest download speeds in your area — up to 10 Megs. That's up to 6X faster than 1.5 Meg DSL!
- Everything you do on the Internet you'll do faster and easier — downloading music, shopping online, sharing photos and more
- 6 GB of total e-mail storage so you can store big files safely and access them even when you're away from home

Everyone's a 10 with 10 Meg Insight Broadband 10.0! Don't miss out!

CALL INSIGHT NOW! 1-800-258-0446

# InsightBroadband 10.0

Cable modem required. Actual Internet speeds will vary. All offers and terms are subject to change, and other restrictions apply. ©2007 Insight Communications Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

Purchase a 3-month prepaid subscription to the

## DAILY JOURNAL

for \$30.<sup>00</sup> and receive a

# FREE

official program of the big game.

Enjoy local news delivered to you six days a week.

Get in-depth coverage, business and economic development, news, entertainment, sports, your favorite columnists and more.

Get answers to your questions about what's going on in Johnson County.

Plus, enjoy unlimited access to thejournalnet.com with any paid subscription.

Limited time only. While supplies last.

- Offer is for new subscribers only.
- Free Internet access with every subscription.
- Does not include mail delivery.
- Offer valid on prepaid orders only.
- Quantities are limited.
- Must live in delivery area.

Call 317.736.2777 to subscribe