

Philadelphia 76ers Again NBA Title Contenders

If the Philadelphia 76ers do not represent the Eastern Conference in the National Basketball Assn. playoffs six months from now, then the lesson of the baseball World Series means nothing.

The Philadelphia 76ers, the New York Yankees of the basketball world, are a bunch of feuding superstars. An awesome amount of talent took them into the playoffs last year, but Portland, a team which played well together, claimed the NBA's top prize.

Many 76ers' wanted to leave Philadelphia, but here we are in the first week of the new season and the team is still together.

There is just too much talent in Philadelphia to think they won't reach the finals again.

What are the chances of Cleveland making the playoffs?

Very slim.

What good does it do a man to receive a new leg if his heart is cut out? That's what happened when Cleveland acquired Walt Frazier, but lost Nate Thurmond to retirement.

The 76ers may make the Atlantic Division as one-team affair. They can be beaten by a good defensive team with rebounding.

They have no playmaker and seemingly made no effort to get one so they

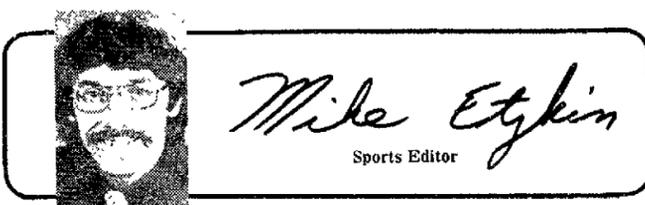
will go with Doug Collins and Henry Bibby in the backcourt with Lloyd Free coming off the bench. Julius Erving and George McGinnis, who started the season 15 pounds lighter than last year, return at forward and Caldwell Jones and Darryl Dawkins will be at center. There is no rebounding help when the big starters are out.

Either New York or Boston will follow the 76ers. Boston is old, unhealthy and unpredictable so the nod goes to New York.

The Knicks moved Bob McAdoo to forward to join Spencer Haywood, which leaves the center position to Lonnie Shelton. The guards will be Earl Monroe and Jim Cleamons. Except for an obvious weak link at center, the Knicks have a quartet of starters who should play well together. For depth, however, New York must look to their rookies.

Boston is paced by John Havlicek (37 years old), Dave Bing (33) and Sidney Wicks. Curtis Rowe and Dave Cowens are the only healthy veterans on the squad. Jo Jo White has sore feet and Charlie Scott plays no defense, can be stopped by playing him tight and fouls like crazy. The Celtics will have to go a lot with rookie Cedric (Cornbread) Maxwell, who is a question mark after playing erratic ball in the preseason.

New owner John Y. Brown is out to



Mike Etkin Sports Editor

settle down the Buffalo franchise. He hired a top coach, Cotton Fitzsimmons, and compiled a fantastic offense. Forward Bill Knight from Indiana will join John Schumate and center Swen Nater from Milwaukee in the forecourt. New guard Nate (Tiny) Archibald will play in the backcourt with Randy Smith.

The problems are that Archibald is out with an Achilles tendon problem and there is very little depth sitting beside him on the bench.

The New Jersey Nets have a new arena and Bernard King to put in it.

In the Central Division, Houston and Washington look too tough. Houston has Moses Malone, who is young, strong and is destined to be one of the greatest in the game. He can play forward with Rudy Tomjanovich or move into center to spell seven-foot Kevin Kunnert. Kunnert has worked so hard with limited

ability, that he has moved from the "stiff" category to the "adequate" classification.

The Rockets tried Mike Newlin at forward, but Rudy White broke an ankle and Newlin moved back in at guard with John Lucas, which leaves no place for veteran Calvin Murphy.

Washington's acquisition of Bobby Dandridge as a free agent could make the Bullets the top team in the division. The Bullets now have a frontcourt of Elvin Hayes, Wes Unseld, rapidly-improving Mitch Kupchak and Dandridge. The backcourt is equally impressive with Phil Chenier, Tom Henderson and Kevin Grevey. Chenier is getting over a pulled muscle in his back which caused him to miss the preseason.

Cleveland and San Diego will battle it out for the third spot. Frazier put on his new uniform and became the best defen-

sive player Cleveland has. His 17 or 18 points a game will be a big help, also.

By the end of the season he might be starting with rookie Ed Jordan. Fitch now has the time to bring Terry Furlow along slowly.

The big weakness is the loss of Thurmond and that will be exploited to the fullest. There will be very little defense played in the forecourt. Cleveland still needs a strong forward who can rebound and score. This should be the year for Campy Russell to gain recognition outside Cleveland.

San Antonio has the most exciting team in the East with its philosophy of "the best defense is outscoring your opponent."

With injuries to James Silas and George Karl, the offense falls on the shoulders of Larry Kenon and George Gervin, who at 6-foot-7 is playing guard in this high-powered offensive alignment. The real pressure will likely fall on Mike Gage, the only defensive player on the squad.

New Orleans is in trouble. Last year they played without a center and they will try to do it again. Otto Moore is not even a second-rate center and vastly-improved Billy Paultz is just reaching that status, but help is on hand under the boards with "Truck" Robinson. Now there is someone to get the ball to Pete

Maravich and someone for Maravich to feed underneath. Gail Goodrich never played much with Maravich in the same backcourt last year before suffering an Achilles injury. He isn't fully recovered.

The story in Atlanta is mismanagement. How about a team of David Thompson, Marvin Webster, Maurice Lucas, Moses Malone, Tom Henderson and the top draft choice from the 1976 college draft which included John Lucas, Scott May, Richard Washington, Leon Douglas and Robert Parish.

However, no money means no players and the ownership didn't want Cotton Fitzsimmons to develop youth, they wanted an instant winner.

Knowing they couldn't pay for the top draft choice, the Hawks traded the rights to him for Joe Meriwether, Malcontent Geoff Petrie, who hasn't signed or played, is with the Hawks instead of Maurice Lucas or Malone from the American Basketball Assn. dispersal draft.

Atlanta also traded Henderson for Robinson then let Robinson go to New Orleans. But the best move was when Atlanta got Rich Laurel. Portland's No. 1 draft pick, in a controversial deal, Laurel went 0-for-16 in his first exhibition game.

Poor John Drew. He is all alone in Atlanta.

Lexington Raps Big Red, 21-0

By Mike Van Sickle
LEXINGTON — Football coach Bill Stoner of Lexington sat in the coaches' office and pondered his team's turnaround.

"I'd like to say I did some wonderful things," he smiled, "but it's these kids. Give them the credit, they've done it themselves."

The Minutemen are a turned-on team. And Saturday afternoon they reached their defensive peak, bruising Johnny Applesed Conference enemy Plymouth, 21-0, for their first shutout of the year.

For statistics and scoring, please turn to Page 4-D.

Lexington middle guards Darrell Cory and Fred Thompson couldn't have penetrated the Big Red backfield any better if they were disguised in red and white jerseys. Employing gaming and reckless tactics, Cory and Thompson twisted Plymouth's arms until the Big Red finally yelled "uncle."

The Mansfield area's third leading scorer, Plymouth's Mike Messer, was held to 15 yards. The whole Big Red bunch only had 30 yards net on the ground and eight more through the air.

The defensive gem now has Minutemen eyes sparkling with optimism. Next Friday night they take their 3-0 JAC record (3-3 overall) to Ontario (3-0) for the outright conference lead and probably the championship.

"The kids really look like they believe in themselves," said Stoner. "Right now we feel we've come a long way from four straight losses to open the year. We'll find out how far next week."

"How far" will depend on Lexington's offense as much as its defense, and that looks fully revived after a four-game coma which saw only three touchdowns

scored. The Big Lex has tallied 80 points in three JAC games.

The reasons for that awakening are the Minutemen M&M boys, Mike Marzetti and Edgar Megger and some sound blocking up front.

Megger usually does most of the damage from his tulleback spot, but Saturday it was Marzetti's turn to churn. The 5-foot-8, 174-pound senior halfback ran for 109 yards in 11 carries for a pair of Lexington touchdowns in the romp.

Megger did his share of deadly damage too, clicking for 64 of the Minutemen's 177 rushing yards and adding a fourth-quarter touchdown on two yards away.

"They were just much quicker than us," said Plymouth's Mike McFarren. "They came off the ball faster on defense and we had difficulty stopping them on offense for the same reason. Then we got behind and had to play catch-up ball."

After Cory recovered a Big Red fumble, it took three plays for Marzetti to tally a 32-yard touchdown on a pitch around end.

On Lexington's next series, the Minutemen drove 69 yards in nine plays, capped off by Marzetti's 25-yard scoring scamper off a counter play with 11:23 left in the second quarter.

Plymouth's strongest offensive threats were aided by Lexington penalties. On one second-quarter march, the Big Red ran 11 plays down to the Minutemen 15 before being stopped by a fumble. Forty-nine yards in Lexington penalties were assessed. The Big Red offense accounted for minus six yards.

Lexington had eight penalties in all for 84 yards, to one for five yards against Plymouth.



DRIBBLING AROUND — Worthington Christian's Sergio Davatian dribbles the ball around a Mansfield Christian player Saturday during high school soccer at Flame Field. Mansfield won the contest, 4-0, to finish the regular season. (Photo by Jim Bikar)

Flames Post Victory

Mansfield Christian's soccer team closed out the regular high school season Saturday afternoon with its fourth shutout of the year, 4-0, over Worthington Christian.

The Flames, who improved their record to 5-3-2, had a goal in each of the four

periods while a good defensive effort kept Worthington away from paydirt.

Mansfield goals were tallied by John Gordon, Bob Kiamy, Dennis Bowers and Joe Haring. Haring's goal coming on a fine shot from 25 yards out.

"Although our team play was not that consistent, I felt we did a good job of taking advantage of Worthington's mistakes," said soccer coach Jim Comstock of the Flames.

Tuesday night, the Flames head into tournament action in the Columbus Class A sectional against Worthington Senior.

Mapleton In Sectional Title

Mapleton won the Class A Section Cross Country tournament at Lorain Saturday with a score of 38. Mapleton cemented its victory by grabbing the top two individual finishes. Lee Comwell came in first at 13:40 followed by Bruce Gierhart, posting a 13:42 time.

Black River was fifth and Hillsdale sixth with 115 and 125 points respectively. Mark Morgan came in fourth with 13:57 to pace Black River. Hillsdale's Scott Koemp placed seventh with a time of 14:07.

Mapleton and second place Norwayne will advance to the Districts in Akron.

CLASS A SECTIONAL CROSS COUNTRY
At Lorain Community College
(Top two teams and top six individuals advance to the District at Akron)
TEAM SCORING — 1. Mapleton, 38; 2. Norwayne, 56; 3. South Amherst, 90; 4. Lutheran West, 108; 5. Black River, 115; 6. Hillsdale, 125; 7. Keystone, 165; 8. Clearview, 198; 9. Smithville, 210.
TOP INDIVIDUALS — 1. Lee Comwell, 13:40; 2. Bruce Gierhart, 13:42; 3. Darryl Foster, 13:59; 4. Mark Patton, 14:32; 5. Bob Schneider, 14:50.
6. Black River — 4. Mark Morgan, 13:57; 16. Blankenship, 14:49; 29. McConne, 15:39; 30. Derrick Ho, 15:39; 36. Mulligan, 16:21.
7. Hillsdale — 7. Scott Koemp, 14:07; 19. Hicks, 14:56; 32. Steerer, 15:45; 33. K. Garrison, 15:53; 34. K. Garrison, 16:01.
INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS — Mark Morgan, Black River; Raddah, South Amherst; Scott Koemp, Hillsdale; Meadell, Lutheran West; Battenhouse, Lutheran West; Belding, Lutheran West.

Northmor Upset

MARION — Jack Taylor scored three touchdowns Saturday night to lead Marion Catholic to a 26-7 Mid-Ohio Conference football upset of league-leading Northmor.

Catholic, 4-3 overall and 3-2 in league play, took a 20-0 halftime lead and went from there to dump the Knights (3-2, 5-2).

Fremont Downs Senior

Fremont Ross downed the Mansfield Senior, 28-12, in a reserve football game. Mansfield Senior is now 2-5 in the season.

Ashland Grabs AAA Cross Country Title

Ashland easily won Saturday's Class AAA Sectional Cross Country meet at Galion for the second consecutive year, finishing with 53 points. Sandusky Perkins was second with 79.

Madison placed fourth with 107, barely missing a trip to the District, and Galion was sixth with 156. Shelby and Lexington were seventh and eighth with 181 and 230 respectively. Mansfield Senior finished 10th out of 12 teams with 241.

Ashland's Dan Shoemaker had a good showing with a third place finish. His time was 12:45, five seconds slower than Joe Zach's first place 12:40. Mike McDevitt paced Madison with a sixth place individual finish with a 13:14 time.

Jim Cerar lead Galion runners with a 10th place, 13:22 finish. Shelby's Vince Sweet followed with 13:26 for 11th. Lexington's Cray Faide was 23 with a 13:51 showing. Wayne Curry paced Mansfield Senior runners with a time of 13:38 for an 18th place finish.

The top three teams, Ashland, Sandusky and Port Clinton, will advance to District competition at Toledo. Also the top nine individual runners not on an advancing team will advance. Those runners are: Mike McDevitt, Madison;

John Van Burskirk, Marion Harding; Bryan Chapman, Marion Harding; Jim Crear, Galion; Vince Sweet, Shelby; Ron Brown, Sandusky; Wayne Curry, Mansfield Senior; Tracey Pickett, Madison; Jim Stewart, Madison.

Ashland's coach, Dave Smalley, said he was extremely pleased. It's nice to be able to call yourselves champions. And champions they are as Ashland posted its second consecutive sectional title and will be looking for its second Cardinal Conference title in two years Tuesday when the intraconference meet is held in Dover.

CLASS AAA SECTIONAL CROSS COUNTRY
At Galion
TEAM SCORING — 1. Ashland, 53; 2. Sandusky Perkins, 79; 3. Port Clinton, 85; 4. Madison, 107; 5. Marion Harding, 114; 6. Galion, 156; 7. Shelby, 181; 8. Lexington, 230; 9. Sandusky, 231; 10. Mansfield Senior, 241; 11. Fremont Ross, 249; 12. Vermillion, 321.
Ashland — 3. Dan Shoemaker, 12:45; 7. Al Hunchouser, 13:44; 12. Larry Coombs, 13:27; 15. Scott Young, 13:31; 16. Mike Miller, 13:33.
Madison — 6. Mike McDevitt, 13:14; 20. Tracey Pickett, 13:41; 21. Jim Stewart, 13:41; 22. Brad Bemmicher, 13:47; 28. Bob Ort, 14:07.
Galion — 10. Jim Cerar, 13:22; 24. Wally Lucas, 13:32; 32. Steve Depmet, 14:00; 43. Carl Seitzer, 14:13; 47. Don Beck, 14:15.
Shelby — 11. Vince Sweet, 13:26; 30. Jeff Ensmen, 13:59; 39. Tony Griffith, 14:08; 46. John Krukowski, 14:15; 51. Bob Allison, 14:32.
Lexington — 23. Cray Faide, 13:51; 45. Mike Galat, 14:14; 49. Jack Harris, 14:17; 54. John Meadows, 14:20; 57. Stevenell, 14:44.
Mansfield Senior — 18. Wayne Curry, 13:38; 33. Wendel Harkins, 14:02; 51. Eddie Lindsey, 14:23; 63. David Baker, 14:50; 76. John George, 15:51.

Hallabrin Gains First

TIFFIN — Sophomore sensation Mike Hallabrin of Malabar was about 20 yards ahead of his nearest opposition and will represent the Falcons in District cross country action after finishing first Saturday in the Class AA Sectional meet here.

Hallabrin legged a fine 13:08 timing and will be one of six local harriers attending the District meet. The top three teams and nine individuals made the District cut.

Willard High School placed second with 110 points and its entire team of Lee McClish (13:13), Keith Click (13:37), Dave Howard (13:38), Doug McClish (14:00) and Chris Cole (14:26) will be at Upper Sandusky for District competition.

Other local runners advancing include two from Ontario; Scott Jones (13:19) and Todd Duffner (13:24), two from Wynford in Ken Kocher (13:26) and Dave Datson (13:30); and Clear Fork's Shannon Kern (13:29).

Behind Willard, Wynford had the highest area team finish with 143. Bucyrus finished right behind in fifth place with 148. Malabar was sixth (156). Clear Fork seventh (171). Ontario 10th (216) and Colonel Crawford 15th (354).

Malabar's Hallabrin is the first sophomore from his school to ever qualify for district competition as an individual.

"He's run against some outstanding people during the season and that's what helped him a lot here," said Falcon coach Gordon Shipley.

CLASS AA SECTIONAL CROSS COUNTRY
At Tiffin
(Top three teams and nine individuals advance to Districts at Upper Sandusky)
TEAM SCORING — 1. Willard, 110; 2. Wynford, 143; 3. Bucyrus, 148; 4. Malabar, 156; 5. Clear Fork, 171; 6. Argenta, 172; 7. Huron, 200; 10. Ontario, 216; 11. Edison, 249; 12. Newark, 261; 13. Bellevue, 325; 14. Mohawk, 329; 15. Colonel Crawford, 354.
MALABAR — 1. Mike Hallabrin, 13:08; 26. Oliver Harrison, 13:57; 33. Dave Hanning, 14:04; 43. Steve Pritchard, 14:18; 53. Randy Inman, 14:34.
Willard — 2. Lee McClish, 13:12; 15. Keith Click, 13:37; 18. Dave Howard, 13:38; 30. Doug McClish, 14:26; 47. Chris Cole, 14:26.
INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS — Halabrin, Malabar; Jones and Duffner, Ontario; Datson and Kocher, Wynford; Kenar, Clear Fork; Bill Hestler, Merga; Retz, Brown Huron; Rick Lyden, Bellevue.

Top Chieftains, 19-13

By Wil Hane
LUCAS — Mama and Papa Bear are mighty happy.

Before a Parent's Night crowd of 800 fans, the Lucas High School football team turned in one of the most exciting wins of the season Saturday night. The Cubs scored with 25 seconds left in the game to shade Hopewell-Loudon, 19-13.

For statistics and scoring, please turn to Page 4-D.

It was the Cubs' final home game of the season. The win also kept the Cubs undefeated in their home den all season.

At game time the rain stopped and the Cubs and Chieftains went through the first half of the contest neck and neck. Both teams scored the first time they took possession of the ball.

Then in the second half, when it appeared that disaster was only two yards

Danville Wins Over Highland

Danville downed Highland, 28-8, Saturday afternoon in a non-league high school football contest. The victory boosts Danville's record to 4-1-2 while Highland slips to 3-4.

The score tells the story. Total dominance by Danville. The Blue Devils rolled up 171 yards rushing and 109 yards passing with their quarterbacks having a perfect 7-7 day. The Danville defense held Highland to only 52 yards rushing and 55 yards passing. Highland completed five passes out of 14 attempts and had one picked off. Steve Boeschart had a good day for the Blue Devils. He ran for a four yard score and threw a 12-yard strike to Jeff Durbin. Boeschart also kicked two extra point.

Highland's only touchdown came on a one yard plunge by Dan Harris.

Cubs Record Win

Hopewell-Loudon had driven to the Cub five-yard line. It was first and goal and the Chieftain bench was screaming for the go-ahead touchdown. In four tries the Chieftains could gain only three yards. It was the most inspired defensive stand of the season and the sweet smell of success spread to the offensive team.

Taking over on the two-yard line, the Cub offense marched 98 yards for a score. Albert Lape went outside his end for the last 36 yards and the touchdown.

Victory looked "in the bag" until a deflected pass from quarterback Randy Harvey was scooped up by Chieftain end Tom Holtman who then sprinted 80 yards to knot the score at 13-13.

Then the little bears showed their character. Taking the ball on their own 40, the Cubs drove 60 yards with Harvey sneaking over for the winning score.

Larry Ashcraft was shifted from his regular tackle position to guard for the final play of the drive with the ball on the one-yard line. When the ball was snapped, Ashcraft moved his man deep into the end zone with Harvey following him every step of the way.

Ashcraft, who should be named King Bear for this outstanding performance, led the goal line unit in its game-saving effort.

Buckeye Central Falls

WYNFORD — Unbeaten River Valley (7-0) rolled nearer to a North Central Conference high school football championship Saturday night with a 35-7 thrashing of Buckeye Central.

Trojans Winners

NORWALK — A 14-point fourth quarter Saturday night helped South Central top Norwalk St. Paul in high school football action in the Firelands Conference, 23-14.

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