

◆ The Houston Roundball Review ◆

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September 2003

September 4, 2003

BASKETBALL FOR THOUGHT by Kris Gardner, e-mail: KGardner@TheHRR.com

Basketball Doesn't take a Vacation



have procrastinated long enough. Since the Sacramento

Monarchs eliminated the Houston Comets in the first round of the 2003 WNBA Playoffs, it's time for the move to begin. If you're wondering 'which move?', you'll find out in due time; but, the move is not a move from Houston.

Let's talk basketball. If anyone ever believed basketball is not a year-round entity, just look at the month of August. Hoops was in the news practically every day. Some of the news was shocking; some was disturbing; some news was good while other news was bad.

The entire saga at Baylor University was all of the above except good news. Former Bears' head coach **Dave Bliss** lost respect from every basketball person in the country with his sad, desperate actions. Bliss' actions continued a downward spiral as he put up a false front of comfort at a memorial for murdered Baylor basketball player, **Patrick Dennehy**. Bliss tried to cover up his payments to players (including Dennehy) by instructing his current players to lie to

investigators. Unfortunately for Bliss, one of his assistant coaches taped some of the conversations where Dave



teammate. Byears, and at least one man have been accused (not yet charged) with committing the assault June 5. The fact a

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was "coaching" his guys what to say when questioned. The entire Baylor story deteriorated into a mess with current players transferring to other schools; parents of players taping meetings with Bliss in order to protect their son; demands for the president of Baylor to step down; on and on it went. I wish the newly named head coach of the Bears' men's basketball team, **Scott Drew**, luck because he's going to need a lot of luck in order to ease the pain in which Bliss left the program.

Another bit of disturbing news involved a WNBA player. Former Los Angeles Sparks player **LaTasha Byears** is under investigation for allegedly sexually assaulting a former

woman could sexually assault another woman really disturbed (and surprised) many people; however, nothing surprises me anymore in today's world in which we live.

The WNBA barely mentioned news of the investigation because of the negative attention the league would attract from conservatives and detractors alike. If Byears is charged and the identity of the victim becomes known, a maelstrom of publicity will shower upon the league whether it wants it or not. One ironic thing is with LA Lakers star **Kobe Bryant** involved in his court case surrounding his alleged sexual assault on a 19-year old woman, this bit of news

has hardly created a ripple in Los Angeles.

The good basketball news in August was the United States men's team winning the gold medal in the Olympic qualifying tournament held in Puerto Rico the last two weeks of August. **Larry Brown** coached the team of NBA stars which included **Tim Duncan, Jason Kidd, Elton Brand, Tracy McGrady, Vince Carter, Mike Bibby, Richard Jefferson, Jermaine O'Neal, Allen Iverson, Kenyon Martin, Ray Allen** and rookie **Nick Collison** dominated the Americas and finished a perfect 10-0 in the competition by playing team basketball and the game of basketball the right way. Unfortunately for me and other hoop fans, the games were only available via a specific pay-per-view outlet; so, not many people had the chance to witness Americans playing fundamentally sound, yet exciting basketball. Go figure.

Typically, head coaches are not hired or fired in August or September; but, imagine **Isiah Thomas** how feels about being fired as head coach of the Indiana Pacers mere weeks before the start of training camp. Goodbye Zeke, hello **Rick Carlisle**.

A move is as good as you make it. I'll find out soon.