

VIEW From The Cheap Seats

By Mark Savoie

If you were a betting man, a good bet to have made a couple of years ago would have been that Michael Jordan would be returning to basketball and the Chicago Bulls. While it has yet to be confirmed, presumably while the details of his contract are worked out, it appears that the Bulls will once again be the Chicago Michaels. It even appears that the "Jordan Rules" will be put in effect immediately, as Jordan has insisted that Scottie Pippen be retained and the team's general manager be fired.

Jordan's return to basketball calls into question the reasons why he 'retired' in the first place. After all, returning to basketball is hardly the act of a man who retired from the sport because he was tired of being in the spotlight and he wanted to spend more time with his family. Of course, cruising through AA ball with the Birmingham Barons on your private jet is also hardly the action of a family man seeking a little privacy.


Jordan's baseball exploits with the Barons were the stuff of movies. *The Bad News Bears* comes to mind. Jordan's inability to play baseball competently at even the AA level shows just how absurd is all the hype about him being the greatest athlete in the world. Michael Jordan is simply a great basketball player with a half-decent golf game on soft courses. I'm not convinced that he is the greatest basketball player in the world today and throughout his career, let alone the best player of all time. After all, where would Michael Threesteps be if NBA officials were willing to enforce traveling with only half the rigidity that they do at the university level? Remember that while Threesteps was a star at university, there was never an indication that he would become the NBA's number one poster boy. In fact, I seriously doubt that Michael Threesteps would have ever become a household name were it not for the NBA's status as a freakshow league that bans zone defences. Threesteps would have had more traumatic journeys into the paint if he was forced to deal with human sequoias like Mark Eaton and Robert Parish when he got there.

Of all the theories that I have heard about Threestep's return to the NBA, the one I find most plausible is that the NBA lifted its suspension on him for gambling. My favourite theory is that his bookies have decided to let him return to the sport. Perhaps they have realised that they won't be able to make as much money betting for the Barons' opponents this year as they did last season. After all, once the novelty wears off, even the most casual bettor will be unwilling to wish his money on a team that at fields a defensive liability in right field who bats .220 with no power.

To be honest, I have no idea why Jordan retired from the NBA, and I have even less of an idea why he is considering coming out of retirement. I suspect that even Jordan has little idea of why he has made the decisions he has. One thing that Jordan has succeeded in doing is discrediting all the mealy-mouthed platitudes about how wonderful it was to see an athlete retiring while he is at the top of his sport. I argued at the time that this was a pile of unmitigated crap, that by retiring when he did Jordan only managed to rob fans of a chance to see more of his skills. Now we will get a chance to see more of those skills again, albeit after a two year layoff, but at least now we won't have to read incessant stories about the gracefulness of his departure from the NBA out of the pens of toadying reporters.

It should be obvious by now that I am not particularly a fan of ol' Threesteps. I have long considered him to be a prime example of the type of athlete for which I have long had a disliking; that being all flash with little substance. The scoring titles, MVP awards and NBA titles began to mount up, I actually began to question the accuracy of my 'little substance' supposition. With his unretirement I now feel that I was right all along. The whole way that he has orchestrated his return shows that the flash aspects are far more important to him than is the substance of what he is doing. In fact, it calls into question the reasons behind many of his actions. Did he spontaneously go after the ball following the Bull's third consecutive championship, or was it a more calculated move to increase his marketability, especially in light of a possibly planned retirement?

While I'm in the process of bashing superstar athletes who have erroneously been called the best of all time at their sport, I would like to take this opportunity to revel in the fact that Wayne Gretzky now has the second lowest plus/minus in the NHL. Over the last few years Gretzky has been a player whom I would only allow to see the ice on power plays and when behind late in the game. This season his play has deteriorated to such a level that he wouldn't even see the ice during the father/son game. As I've written before, early in his career Gretzky was so good offensively that he actually did deserve a few of his Hart Trophies as the NHL's MVP. His defensive liabilities, however, make it absolutely ludicrous to suggest that he is the greatest player of all time. Even the very best of his seasons cannot be considered on a par with the best seasons of Bobby Orr, Guy Lafleur or Larry Robinson. Had the NHL bothered to keep plus/minus stats in the days of the Original Six, I am sure that we would find that Gretzky would find himself mostly outdistanced by players like Eddie Shore, Gordie Howe and Jean Beliveau. Still, I would never argue that Gretzky does not fully deserve to be known as 'The Good One.'



the brunswickan
Wishes everyone good luck on their exams

Drink straight coffee grounds!
It helps.

Athletics Dept

Womens Volleyball and Wrestling provide Red Athletes of the Month

The UNB Varsity Reds Athletes of the Month for February are Carla Mason and Jamie Eastwood.

The Female Athlete of the Month honours go to Carla Mason of the Varsity Reds volleyball team. Carla is a fifth year business student from Newcastle, NB. In spite of an injury to her hitting hand requiring six stitches, the 1993-94 AUA MVP and league All-Star has been an impact player again this month.

The Varsity Reds finished the AUA regular season in first place and Carla lead the team to their second consecutive AUA Championship with 19 kills against UdeM in the AUA Championship Game. Her strong performance in the AUA Playoffs also saw her selected as AUA Athlete of the Week. Carla's fine play over the course of the 1994-95 season was further recognized by her second consecutive selection as AUA MVP.

Jamie Eastwood of the Varsity Reds wrestling team is the Male Athlete of the Month. A fourth year Engineering student and a 1993-94 Academic All-Canada



Ron Antworth, Carla Mason, Jamie Eastwood, Rob Knesaurek. Photo Jud DeLong

dian, Jamie won his first AUA wrestling championship this year by defeating Dave Wilson of Concordia and Bill Jefferies of Memorial. Jamie was on a mission this season after finishing second for the past three years.

His victory helped UNB capture their 6th straight AUA Championship. Jamie

pinned all of his opponents at the AUA meet and was selected as the AUA tournament MVP. His efforts also saw him honoured as AUA Athlete of the Week. Unfortunately, a shoulder injury hampered his performance at the CIAU Championships in Calgary at the end of the month.

Mens Basketball Reds split with MUN as Hoop Reds miss playoffs

by C Hawk
Brunswick Sports

The Reds ended their season on a low note, missing the AUA playoffs by a mere two points. Needing to win both home games against the visiting Memorial Seahawks, and rely on other results, the Reds could only split the series.

Saturday the Reds jumped out early as Andy MacKay came out on fire. Unfortunately UNB were unable to keep up the pressure and the Seahawks were able to draw back behind John Coaker's composed play at guard. The see-saw half ended with the teams tied at 38.

UNB kept the defensive pressure up in the beginning of the second half but to no avail as MUN's guards Coaker and Michael Woods started to take the game away from them. After falling behind by 62-68 the Varsity Reds called a time out to try to regroup. However the Reds continued to play catch up as the Seahawks kept them at bay.

The game started to get physical at this point, particularly when Reds Brian Elliot caught MUN's Glen Squires around the neck on a rebound forcing Squires to the floor. A shoving match between the players on the court ensued with Elliot receiving a technical for his

part in the fracas.

The Reds fought till the very end with Andy MacKay and Jon Stevenson both being fouled out in the last few minutes of the game. MUN were convincing winners, taking the game 100-85.

With the playoffs out of their reach, the Reds came out Sunday with only pride to play for. UNB took the lead early, leading 46-36 at half-time. By the end of the game, in which both teams rested their

better players, the Reds had put on a strong defensive show to down the Seahawks 92-85.

In his final game as a Varsity Red Andy MacKay was named the Player of the Game for tossing in 16 points. Stanleigh Mitchell also excelled as he ended the season ranked 5th in the AUA scoring statistics. He also led the Reds in rebounds and free throw shooting in only his second season in the AUA.

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