

NBA

76ers deep six the Raptors in Saint John

by Peter J. Cullen
Brunswickan Sports

The National Basketball Association made its highly touted return to Saint John on Monday evening. If the lure of professional sports was not enough, Canada's new favourite team, the Toronto Raptors, was playing their second exhibition game, this one within the confines of Harbour Station. Although the Raptors were beaten severely the crowd appeared quite pleased to witness NBA action again.

Despite the lopsided 121-93 score, the match-up between the Toronto Raptors and the lowly Philadelphia 76ers proved entertaining in the least. The 6297 fans on hand witnessed the heralded emer-

gence of rookies Damon Stoudamire, Toronto's first-ever draft pick, and Philly's Jerry Stackhouse, proclaimed to be "the next Michael Jordan." The game itself, although occasionally flat and listless, was not terrible; however, the Raptors could never make it close. Scoreless through the first 4:44 of the contest, forward Andres Guibert finally tallied two points to get the Raptors on the scoreboard.

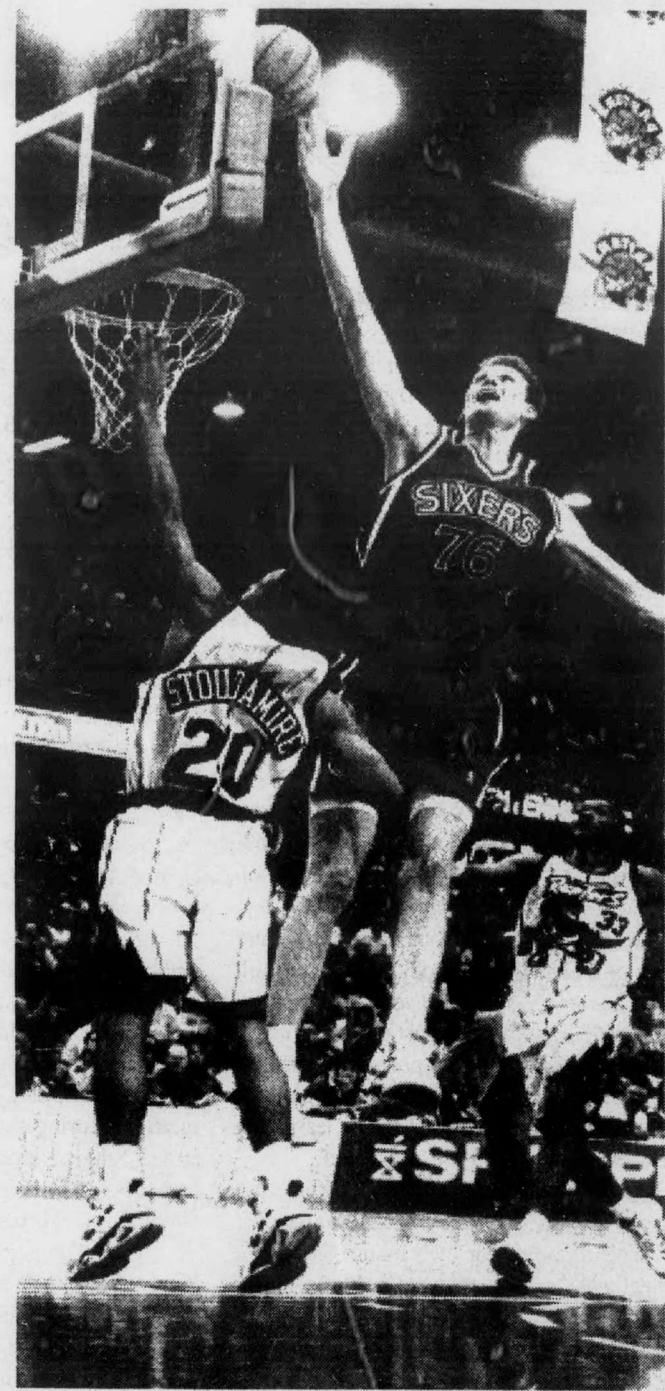
Despite the shellacking, several unknown players definitely displayed impressive talent. The 6'11" Carlos Rogers, following on the heels of his somewhat disappointing rookie year, recorded 29 points on 10-for-13 shooting, often going right through Philly's big men like Richard Dumas and the sky scraping 7'6"

Shawn Bradley. Toronto's head coach, Brendan Malone, was impressed with Rogers' performance, saying, "I think Carlos Rogers showed us a lot tonight. He will continue to score down low and we'll continue to go to him." Chris Whitney, after getting splinters from his pine time in San Antonio the past two seasons, also made his presence known for the Raptors with his all-around contributions Monday night.

But the 28 point loss prompted Coach Malone to admit that his team fared very poorly against the 76ers, whom they defeated 120-107 Saturday night in Halifax. "[Philadelphia was] stung, probably embarrassed, and they weren't going to let that happen twice. ... We had 30 turnovers [and] 16 assists, and that's never gonna win a game. They scored 14 lay-ups on transition because we were too impatient on offence. ... The quick shot resulted in a long rebound and they were off to the races." He summarised by saying, "It's a learning experience and we're gonna see a lot of games like that this year."

Despite losing, the Raptors were undeniably the night's main attraction, perhaps to the point where the promotion became blatant advertising. Sporting their white home jerseys and donning the title of "Canada's team," the Raptors were rewarded with tremendous cheering, applause, and whistles for each dunk, steal, and block. The dinosaur logo emblazoned on the gigantic overhead scoreboard and the Raptor banners dangling from the roof left no doubt that the 76ers were strangers in a strange land.

The Raptor prize packages, the dancing dino mascot, and the "Raptor-ettes" all hyped the game at different stages. But with the appreciation displayed by the fans for the professional basketball talent, the NBA will most likely, and wisely, schedule another game for next year in its attempt to capture more small market audiences.



7'6" Shawn Bradley of the 76ers welcomes 5'10" Toronto rookie Damon Stoudamire to the NBA. photo by Mike Dean

Rowing

UNB rowers visit Connecticut

"Beware the Eastern Crew" is the UNB Rowing Club's motto. After the team's performance last weekend at the prestigious Head of the Connecticut Regatta, UNB's competition is taking special notice of the phrase.

Despite UNB's rebuilding year billing, UNB athletes were strong at the catch in claiming two gold medals and four top ten finishes.

Chantelle Hanley and Lisa Nussey won gold by placing first in the Varsity Women's Pair. Nussey later linked up with Becky Daye, Jane Thornton, Anna Robak, and Krista Phillips to take UNB's second gold in the Women's Youth Coxed Four. Natasha Powers stroked to a strong fifth place finish in the Women's Novice Single Scull.

Despite having worked out together as a Varsity crew for less than a month, Jeff Faulkner, Steve Olmstead, Leigh Alexander, and Rene Alexander turned in a solid performance in the hotly contested Men's Open Coxed Four. The four finished just over two minutes be-

hind the New York Athletic Club in a crowded affair that included 28 crews. Olmstead and Faulkner teamed up in the Men's Open Double Scull and finished behind NYAC and Yale University.

"We clicked in Connecticut and are definitely getting stronger," said Olmstead of the men's crews. "Last weekend was very positive for all of us."

Strong showings also came from UNB's Novice Women's Eight crew of Chantelle Durell, Krista Smith, Tara Jarvis, Jenny Hughes, Michelle Atkins, Carla Lam, Michelle Morin, Rachel Rozen, Heather Sisk, and Karen Wilson; and the Novice Men's crews with Anthony Branscombe, Devin Coffin, Steve Thompson, Luke Vallee, Ilango Silva, Johnathan Greer, Jess Walker, Ryan Gamble, Collin Hunter, and Justin Clark.

Having established themselves in Connecticut, UNB athletes are now poised for their next test later this month in Saratoga Springs, New York.

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