

Globetrotters find rewards in worldwide road show

by Frank L. Christlieb
 Sports Editor

Player-coach Jimmy Blacklock sat in the locker room thumbing through some of his fan mail before the Harlem Globetrotters' game Monday night with the California Chiefs in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

While his teammates joked about their experiences during the first part of their current Texas tour, Blacklock seemed intensely involved in wading through the five- and six-page letters he held in his hands.

"Dear Mr. Blacklock," he read aloud. "I am your favorite fan." At that point, he lowered his voice and began reading the letter to himself. A few moments later, he looked up, and it was obvious from his expression that he and his teammates are accustomed to receiving daily loads of fan mail.

"We get all the mail at our main office (in Los Angeles, Calif.), and it's sent to us wherever we're playing," Blacklock said. "It helps us pass the time."

The 56th Globetrotter squad defeated the Chiefs 86-60 Monday night, but no more than 50 of the 3,500 spectators will remember the final score. Those people will recall only the 40-foot hook shots, fancy passing drills, disco dance routines and water-pail tricks performed by the most unusual basketball squad in the world.

Texas A&M University was only the second stop on the Globetrotters' Texas tour, which will take the team through Nacogdoches and Waco in the next two days. Next week, the Globetrotters will begin a two-month stay in Australia and New Zealand.

Osborne Lockhart, who has played for the Globetrotters for four years, said it's easy to explain his reasons for staying with a squad that travels around the world for nine months each year.

"I'm doing something that I like, which is playing basketball," Lockhart said. "I get to see a lot of the world and meet a lot of different people. I love kids and I get to see a lot of kids every day."

Lockhart said that, as a result of constantly being together, the Globetrotters have formed strong friendships among one another.

"You get up each day and see these guys more than you see your family, so you have to be close," Lockhart said.

The referees who travel with the team may not attract as much attention as the players, but one of them says he wouldn't do anything else.

"I had been refereeing as a sideline for 16 years before starting with the Globetrotters two years ago," Terry Flanagan said. "It's an opportunity to travel and get to meet people."

Flanagan, who gave up a career in accounting to join the Globetrotters' road show, said: "Since we (he and referee Terry Horning) travel with them so much, we get to develop close friendships."

Art Kim, the Chiefs' coach, said his players enjoy playing the Globetrotters, even if losses are almost always inevitable.

"It's a great experience, in as far as the fellows get to see a lot of the world and meet a lot of people," Kim said. "Many people have the concept that it's all comedy, but it isn't. As far as my

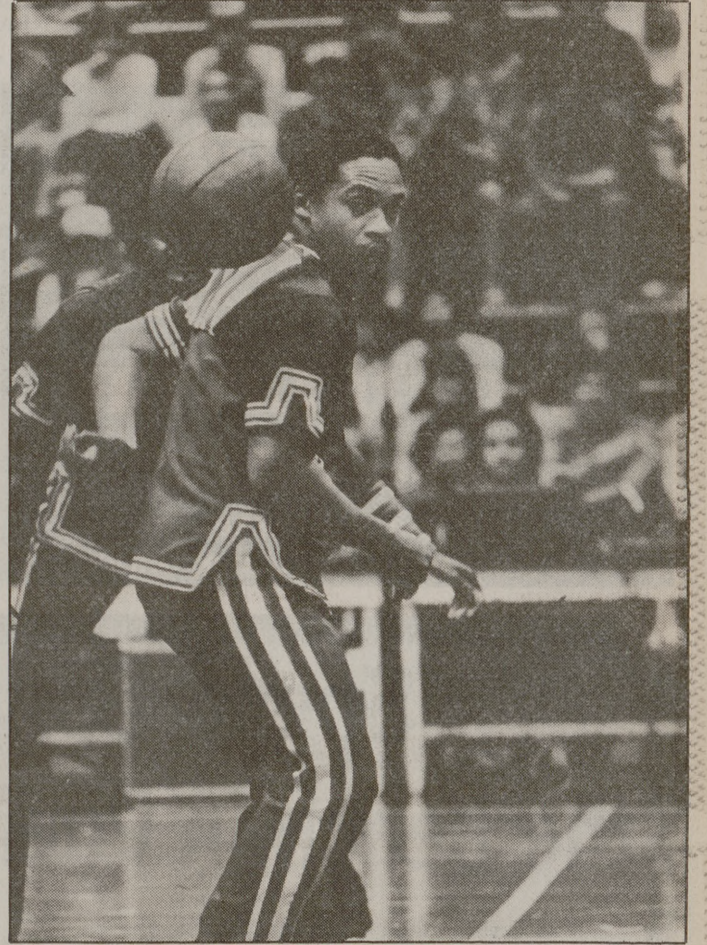


photo by C. Michel Chang

Osborne Lockhart of the Harlem Globetrotters performs tricks with the basketball during the team's pre-game warm-up Monday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.



photo by C. Michel Chang

James "Twiggy" Sanders gives a lift to a happy youngster during the Harlem Globetrotters' game with the California Chiefs Monday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

basketball players are concerned, we go out and play as hard as we can each time we play. As long as we can go out and give them a good game every night, we're satisfied."

PERSPECTIVES ON SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY



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