

sports

Weary 76ers resume role as underdogs

United Press International
INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The Philadelphia 76ers return to their familiar role as underdogs tonight in the fourth game of the NBA championship series against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Los Angeles took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series Tuesday night, using a blitzkrieg attack for an easy 129-108 victory. The best-of-seven series returns to Philadelphia for Game 5 Sunday with a sixth game on the Lakers' home court Tuesday, if necessary.

The Lakers, based on their performance Tuesday night, have everything going their way.

But the 76ers don't seem to mind it.

"We're optimistic," Philadelphia Coach Billy Cunningham said Wednesday before he put his team through a light workout. "We've been in this situation many times before in the playoffs. We've been beaten badly and came back. This is nothing new for us."

He said the 76ers won't make many physical changes but he expects a different performance from his players.

"I think both teams will make adjustments as the series goes on," he said, "but I don't expect any major changes. It's too late for that."

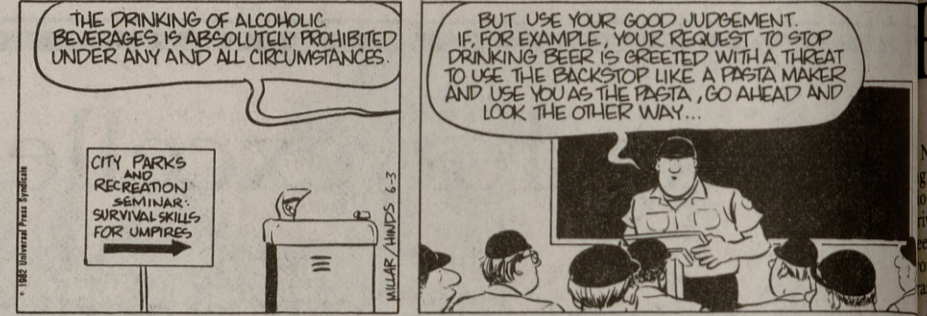
"Tuesday night they were a step quicker than us in all aspects of the game. But Sunday (in a 110-94 Philadelphia win) they were a step slower than us. We've got to regain that level we were on Sunday."

Philadelphia's Darryl Dawkins said the 76ers know what they have to do and would rather play the next game than talk about it.

"I'm not one to make excuses," the 6-foot-11, 250-pound center said.

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hill



Brewers choose Kuenn to bring back harmony

United Press International
At one time, the Milwaukee Brewers' clubhouse was the garden spot of the world. You never saw so much harmony.

Then a terrible thing happened.

George Bamberger, the man who was born to manage the Brewers and one the entire city of Milwaukee fell in love with, left to go and manage some team called the New York Mets.

That was the end of all the harmony.

But this should not be taken as any indictment of Bob "Buck" Rodgers, who was fired as manager of the Brewers Wednesday and replaced by Harvey Kuenn, one of the team's coaches.

Rodgers is a good manager. Good enough to have led the Brewers to the American League Eastern Division title last year for the first time in their history. But he still wasn't Bamberger, or "Bambi," as everybody in Milwaukee called him.

Harry Dalton, the Brewers' executive vice president and general manager, had a master plan. Bamberger was part of it.

Dalton felt that Rodgers, who had been under fire at one point last year, deserved another chance this year after having won the division title. Rodgers hadn't done badly at all by the Brewers, taking over as acting manager twice in 1980, the first time when Bamberger had to undergo heart surgery that spring and once again after Bambi announced his retirement on Sept. 9.

Bamberger subsequently was given a "lifetime job" with the Brewers as a scout and consultant with them, and part of Dalton's plan called for him to come back and manage the club again this year in case Rodgers ran into any problems.

There was only one hitch. Bamberger went with the Mets last October and that knocked him out of the box with the Brewers.

So Dalton tapped Kuenn, one of the best line-drive hitters around during his 15 years in the majors. Kuenn has been with the Brewers 11 years, barely even taking time out from his coaching duties after his right leg was amputated below the knee two years ago because of blood clot complications.

"The most important thing I have to try to do is get the harmony back," Kuenn told me when I spoke with him Wednesday in Seattle where the Brewers, who have dropped 7 of their last 10 games and are in sixth

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