

Jazz jam Rockets with rally

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah's Adrian Dantley scored 35 points, including 25 in the first half, and Houston's Allen Leavell missed a three-point shot at the buzzer as the Jazz beat the Rockets 100-97 in NBA action Tuesday night.

Rickey Green finished with 23 points for the Jazz, including seven down the stretch, as Utah overcame an early Rocket advantage. Thurl Bailey added 18 for Utah.


After trailing 54-52 at the half, Green gave the Jazz their first lead, 63-62, midway in the third period.

Utah led 79-75 going into the final period, and increased the margin to 96-85 with a pair of Green free throws with 5:18 remaining.

Lucas and Sampson went to work, however, and the Rockets drew to within 98-97 on a Sampson tip-in with five seconds remaining.

Green was fouled on the inbounds pass and converted both shots to set the stage for Leavell's missed three-point shot.

Ralph Sampson led the Rockets with 19 points. John Lucas added 17, including six straight in the final



Other Tuesday NBA Scores:
(home team in capitals)

Golden State 116
NEW JERSEY 109

Boston 91
NEW YORK 74

INDIANA 100
Washington 87

Philadelphia 122
CHICAGO 108

MILWAUKEE 114
L.A. Clippers 99

DENVER 112
Phoenix 99

Sacramento 102
SEATTLE 100

two minutes, as the Rockets came back from an 11-point deficit.

Jim Petersen, Lewis Lloyd and Robert Reid scored 14 points each for Houston.

Sampson takes Houston 'center' stage

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The mixed receptions Houston Rocket Ralph Sampson received at power forward early in the season have turned to rave reviews now that he's temporarily replaced injured Akeem Olajuwon at center.

Sampson has become the rallying point for the Rockets, who have scratched out a 3-3 record without Olajuwon.

When Olajuwon was lost Feb. 15 for two to three weeks with a sprained right knee, Houston Coach Bill Fitch returned Sampson to his familiar center position and inserted second-year reserve Jim Petersen at the power forward position.

Both players have adjusted well to their roles. Sampson said it should be no surprise that he would be able to return to center and take over the scoring and rebounding load.

"That's my normal position," Sampson said. "It took me a couple of games to adjust, but now it feels good to get the ball down low and score."

Sampson showed his confidence Saturday prior to a game with the Dallas Mavericks when he walked to the Rocket broadcasters' table and wrote "35 points, 20 rebounds" on their score sheet.

Sampson scored 38 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in a 111-104 victory over Dallas.

"It's easier to be the leader when you're at center," he said. "You're the focal point. You're the last man to get the ball."

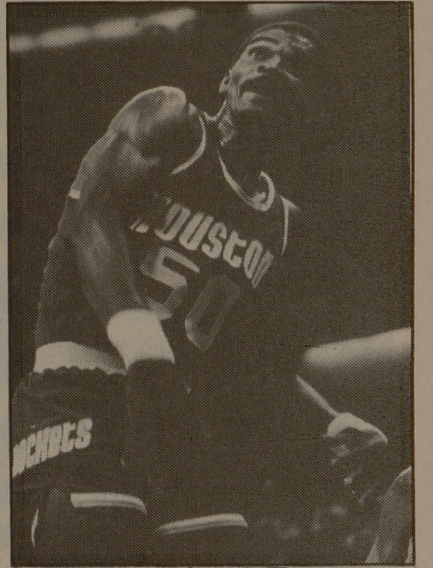
So far, Sampson has flourished with the added playing time and extra pressure. He's played 47, 48 and 47 minutes in three of the five games Olajuwon has been sidelined.

Petersen, meanwhile, is also getting more playing time and his confidence is improving with each performance, Coach Bill Fitch said. He scored 19 points and got seven rebounds in Monday night's 115-110 victory over Dallas, including a game-tying jumper with 55 seconds to play.

"It makes things harder on me playing more minutes than I'm used to but I've adjusted," Petersen said. "It's been a total team effort, playing without Akeem. All of our games have been hard-fought."

Petersen, in his second season out of Minnesota, was better prepared for the rigors of the NBA starting the season. He worked hard on building his stamina for the 82-game regular-season schedule.

"Right after the All-Star break (last season), I was already burned out," he said. "I didn't know how to handle the grind of the schedule."



Ralph Sampson

NBA boots Nets' Richardson after positive cocaine test

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New Jersey Nets guard Micheal Ray Richardson was permanently banned from the NBA Tuesday after testing positive for cocaine, Commissioner David Stern said.

Stern called it "a tragic day for Micheal Ray Richardson, nothing less than the destruction by cocaine of a once-flourishing career."

A player who is disqualified is eligible for reinstatement in two years.

"However, the reinstatement is

not automatic," Stern said. "In order to be reinstated, it must be approved by both the NBA and the Players Association."

Richardson, who Stern said was tested Monday night, is the second NBA player banned from the league since its drug agreement with the

union was instituted in January 1984.

Early last month, when Richardson tested positive for drug use after a five-day disappearance, the league ruled that it constituted his second violation, although he had twice previously undergone treatment.

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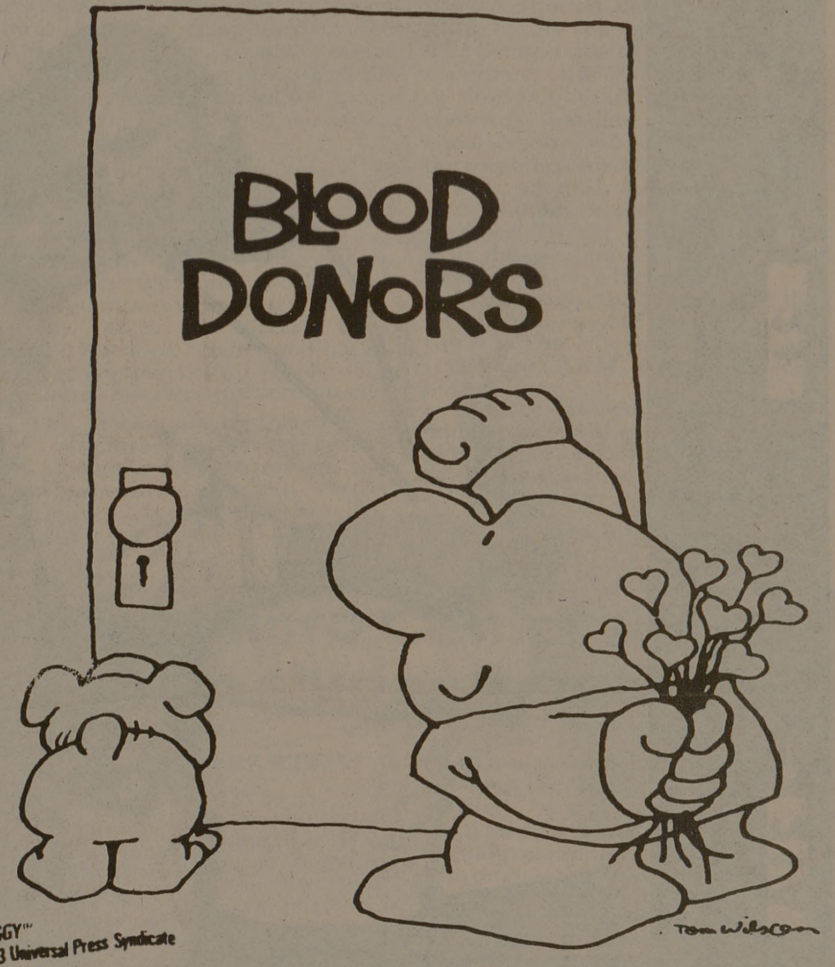
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