

# Sports

## Three Suns' players test negative for drug use

PHOENIX, Ariz. (AP) — Mandatory drug tests conducted the day after three Phoenix Suns basketball players were indicted on drug-related charges found no traces of illegal drugs in any of the players' systems, the National Basketball Association said Monday.

James Edwards, Grant Gondrezick and Jay Humphries underwent urinalysis tests on Friday, the day after they, former Suns players Garfield Heard and Mike Bratz and five other people were indicted by a Maricopa County grand jury in Phoenix. Charges against the five ranged from possession to trafficking in cocaine and other illegal drugs.

"We're pleased that the results were negative in each case," said Tom Ambrose, a spokesman for the Suns. "We're pleased for the players. We're pleased for the organization."

The three players were tested under an anti-drug agreement between the NBA and the Players Association, Ambrose said. He said the players may be tested three more times within the next six weeks.

"I hope they do that and I hope they do it at random," said William Friedl, an attorney for Humphries. "Before we took the test, we gave them (the NBA) a letter saying we'd like to be tested as many times as possible and that we'd like for the tests to be conducted at random."

Under the NBA's anti-drug agreement, a player who fails a mandatory drug test is banned from the NBA for a minimum of two years. A player who is convicted of a drug charge or pleads guilty also faces the minimum two-year suspension.

Sylvia Lopez, a spokeswoman for Maricopa County Attorney Tom Collins, said Monday that two other people were indicted Thursday, but their names were not made public because they had not been arrested.

Lopez said she didn't know if the two were Suns players.

Larry Fleisher, general counsel for the NBA Players Association, told The Phoenix Gazette that it was his "understanding that no more ball players are involved."

Fleisher indicated that he had been told that pending indict-

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ments involve "businessmen . . . yuppies."

Edwards' agent, Reggie Turner, said in Phoenix last week that he had been told by former Suns' player Alvin Scott that Scott, All-Star guard Walter Davis, rookie center William Bedford and former player Johnny High all were granted immunity in exchange for their testimony before the grand jury.

Collins declined to comment, saying his office is "ethically bound not to discuss details of the case and we will stand by it."

The indictment said Davis, Bedford, Scott, High and former Suns Don Buse and Curtis Perry either witnessed drug transactions or knew about them, but they were not charged.

Davis, a six-time All-Star and the all-time leading scorer in the Suns' 19-year NBA history, turned himself into league officials Friday for drug rehabilitation. It was his second such involvement in 16 months and he was suspended without pay.

## Boston and L.A. still stand as NBA's dominant teams

By Ed Bodde

Assistant Sports Editor

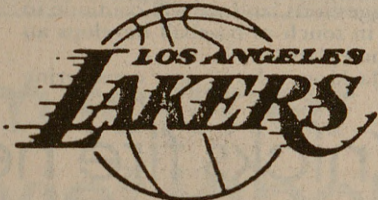
The NBA playoffs are just around the corner, and once again almost anyone who's a betting man will be laying his money on either the Celtics or the Lakers.

### Viewpoint

And who can argue. Boston and Los Angeles have won six of the last seven NBA Championships. Julius Erving led the Philadelphia 76ers to the title in 1983.

Somehow, year after year, these two teams continue to succeed, while others rise to the top for a season or two and then fall back down to mediocrity. In short, the Celtics and Lakers are the elite of the NBA — the Big Two.

So, is there something that can be



pinpointed as the reason for both teams' tremendous success?

Yes, the key to Boston and L.A.'s success lies in the front office.

It's there that each team builds for the future, and nobody does it better than these two. Especially when you consider that the NBA draft is designed to help the weak teams in the league, something which the Celtics and Lakers aren't.

It's both organizations' eye for talent that keeps them on top. One has to wonder what other teams are thinking about as the Celtics sign a free agent such as Bill Walton or when the Lakers trade for a proven veteran like Mychal Thompson as the playoffs approach.

When Larry Bird and Magic Johnson, two of the game's greatest players, came out of college in 1979, it was Boston and L.A. who landed the two stars. And in a sport where few players

drafted beyond the first round make it, the Lakers have come up with Michael Cooper, a third-round pick in 1978, and the Celtics have Danny Ainge, a 1981 second-round pick.

But where both teams excel is in trading for talent while not giving up anything too substantial. The Celtics got starting point guard Dennis Johnson and a first- and third-round pick for Rick Robey and two second-rounders. Robey isn't exactly burning up the nets. Johnson, however, is an integral part of Boston's team. He plays great defense and is a solid point guard.

The Celtics were also able to pick up sharp-shooting Jerry Sichting two years ago for a 1990 second-round pick and future consideration.

In 1983, the Lakers got Byron Scott and Swen Nater from the San Diego (now Los Angeles) Clippers for Norm Nixon, Eddie Jordan and two second-round picks. Norm Nixon, once an outstanding point guard, hasn't even played this year because of injuries and is already past his prime. Scott made the all-rookie team in 1984 and fits in perfectly to the Lakers running game.

But perhaps the greatest steal the NBA has ever seen was when the Lakers got Kareem Abdul-Jabbar from Milwaukee in return for such legends as Elmore Smith, Brian Winters, Dave Meyers and Junior Bridgeman. Only Bridgeman still plays.

It's such deals that allow the Lakers and Celtics to play the game a cut above everyone else during the regular season and in the playoffs.

Contrary to what some people may think, the other teams in the league still have some catching up to do to reach the same plateau as Boston and L.A.

After last season, Rocket fans thought their team had arrived. And the success of the Hawks and Mavericks this year has given rise to talk of the Big Two becoming the Big Four. But it isn't possible, not just yet, anyway.

Although a team may put together a great year, like Houston did

last season, it's still a club's record over the long haul that defines it as elite or as a dynasty. And only Boston and L.A. have proved they're capable of contending for the title each year. If some team other than Boston or L.A. can win three titles in the next six years, then come talk to me about dynasties.

Neither the Lakers nor the Celtics are ready to give up their throne atop the NBA. The Celtics are hoping to be the first team to repeat as champions since they did it themselves in 1968-1969. And the Lakers are out to avenge last year's loss in the Western Conference finals to



Houston. Both teams are hungry and ready to play the type of basketball required for the playoffs.

And the playoffs are a different brand of basketball from the regular season.

Scoring machines like Dominique Wilkins of Atlanta, Adrian Dantley in Detroit and Mark Aguirre of Dallas won't say, "What?" when the coach asks them to play defense. Loose balls will be contested as though they are a player's last paycheck. And the games will be more physical than an Ali-Frazier rematch.

Yes, the Celtics and Lakers will be pushed to win their respective conferences; and the NBA finals will once again be Boston vs. L.A., the Bird Man vs. the Magic Man. Look for the Lakers to prevail 4-2 and win their fifth NBA championship.

My prediction for 1988. Easy. Either the Lakers or the Celtics.

## Septien upset with Dallas' front office

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Veteran placekicker Rafael Septien, waived by the Dallas Cowboys after pleading guilty to a charge of indecency with a child, complained in an interview published Monday that the club management turned its back on him.

"I'm let down by the attitude of the Cowboys' management, which turned its back on me when the criticism increased," the Mexican citizen said in the interview with the newspaper *Excelsior*.

Speaking by phone from his home in Denton, Septien told *Excelsior*: "I pleaded guilty because of the advice of my lawyers and of the Dallas kicking coach, since they assured me that I wouldn't have greater problems."

"I'm not an American and carrying out a long trial could have been very prejudicial. But it was the communications media that started a campaign of harassment, and they even said I raped the girl when nothing could ever be proved."

"The incredible thing was that my team, instead of supporting me, said that public opinion was adverse and the best thing for my career was to go to another team. That hurt me a lot because I did very positive things for Dallas," Septien said.

"Despite everything, I'm calm and confident that I will continue as a kicker somewhere else."

Asked about reports he might sign with the Los Angeles Raiders, Septien said he would like to play in Los Angeles.

"Ever since I was contracted by Dallas, Al Davis was very interested in my services and now that I'm free, there are great possibilities," Septien said. "Personally, I would like to play in Los Angeles."

Septien, 33, pleaded guilty April 8 in Denton in exchange for 10 years deferred probation and a \$2,000 fine. He was indicted Jan. 22 in the sexual assault of a 10-year-old girl, who was a friend of his roommate's daughter.

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