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Knicks may negotiate with Motta, Mavs say

DALLAS (AP) — The New York land Providence College Coach Rick Knicks can interview Dallas Maver- Pitino, Larry Brown of Kansas or icks Coach Dick Motta but the Mavericks general manager said Thurs-day he hopes the NBA team's only coach in its seven-year history sticks around.

"He's a great coach. Let's hope he stays here," said Norm Sonju. "He is a good coach, and I can't blame someone for wanting him.

Sonju said he gave the Knicks permission Wednesday to contact coach the highest paid in the league. Motta, who is vacationing at his summer home in Idaho. Sonju said he warned Motta to expect a call from 1980, giving the expansion Maver-the Knicks and to call him back "if it icks instant credibility. A 19-year vet-

said

Motta said Wednesday he would listen to any offer, but "it would have to be something pretty sensational."

"I don't know if they (Knicks) want me to be a candidate or whether the job is mine," Motta said. The Knicks have been unable to vacation by Monday.

Pitino, Larry Brown of Kansas or Don Nelson of the Milwaukee Bucks.

The New York Daily News re-ported Thursday that Motta planned to fly to New York to meet with officials of Gulf & Western, which owns the Knicks. The Knicks have indicated that

they are willing to make their new

Dallas hired Motta on July 16, gets interesting." eran, Motta previously coached in The Los Angeles Clippers ex-pressed an interest in Motta, Sonju ington, where he won the league crown in 1978

> Motta probably will be inter-viewed next week, according to published reports. Richard Evans, president of Madison Square Garden, was expected to return from a European

Norman, Stewart tied in Byron Nelson Classic

IRVING, Texas (AP) - Australian Greg Norman, a painful playoff loser in the Masters, rode a short eagle putt to a 64 on Thursday and tied Payne Stewart for the firstround lead in the \$600,000 Byron Nelson Golf Classic

Norman, who hasn't won in the United States since the 1986 Kemper Open, and Stewart, the Southern Methodist University graduate who has never won in Texas, shared a one-shot lead over a

par-shattering field. Norman hit a 341-yard drive and a 193-yard 3-iron to within four feet of the seventh hole. He made the putt for eagle on the way to a 31 on the front side.

Norman had to weather the gusty afternoon winds to catch Stewart, who posted his score in the morning before the greens dried out.

"It's a nice feeling to finally have a good first round," Norman said. "I really haven't been a serious threat in the five tournaments I've played after the Masters. I haven't really been mentally keyed in. I've only played good on the weekends.

Norman lost the Masters to Larry Mize's miracle chip shot on the second hole of a playoff.

"I'm just more tired than any-thing," Norman said. "I'm going to hit the beach for two weeks."

Stewart, the No. 2 money winner on the PGA Tour and the Bay Hill Classic champion, made two 40-foot putts and used only 27 strokes on the lush bent grass greens of the stride

Tournament Players Course at Las Colinas Gary Hallberg, Fred Couples, and

Gary Krueger each had 5-under 65s over the 6,767-yard course

Former Nelson champion Ben Crenshaw had a 66, highlighted by a 35-foot chip-in with a sand wedge on the fourth hole.

Also at 66 were Duffy Waldorf, Steve Elkington, D.A. Weibring, Mark Wiebe, and Tom Byrum.

Paul Azinger, who collected \$225,000 for winning last week's Las Vegas Invitational, shot 69.

Fifty-five players shot sub-par rounds and 14 were at even par. Two who didn't crack par were defending champion Andy Bean and former Nelson champion Tom Watson. Each shot 72.

"I'm back in the saddle again," sang Stewart, in an off-key rendition of Gene Autrey's old western song.

Stewart has a string of secondplace finishes in Texas, including a disastrous 1985 Nelson Classic in which he double-bogeyed the final hole and lost in a playoff to Bob Eastwood with another double-bo-

Stewart was second two weeks ago at Houston and lost in a playoff last year in the Colonial National Invitation at Fort Worth. Stewart said he doesn't feel jinxed

when he plays in Texas. "What has happened in the past is history," Stewart said. "I just take

what's happened in the past in



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Rockets batter Sonics

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to close series gap

SEATTLE (AP) — Akeem Olaju-won scored 22 of his 33 points in leading Houston to a 23-point half-time lead as the Rockets breezed to a 102-84 victory over Seattle Thursday night to cut the SuperSonics' lead in an NBA second-round series to 2-1

The Sonics scored only 13 points in the second quarter as Houston championship series to Boston in six built a 56-33 halftime lead, and games last year, limited Seattle to 36 Seattle couldn't challenge thereafter.

The fourth game of the best-ofseven series will be played in Seattle Saturday afternoon with the fifth game in Houston Tuesday night.

Beaten by a combined seven points in the first two games, the Rockets exhibited a stifling defense in limiting the Sonics to the lowest halftime total in the team's playoff history.

Dale Ellis, who averaged 32 points in the first two games against Hous-ton, was limited to 12 points Thursday. Tom Chambers led the Sonics with 24.

rest of the way. The closest Seattle could get was 77-62 in the first two minutes of the final quarter.

The Rockets, who lost in the NBA percent shooting in the first 24 minutes.

Olajuwon scored 14 points and Sampson 11 as the Rockets, who enjoyed a 19-5 run over the last 51/2 minutes, took a 29-20 lead after one quarter. The Rockets outscored Seattle 16-4 in the first 6¹/₂ minutes of the second quarter for a 45-24 lead to effectively decide the outcome.

The Sonics won the first two games at Houston, 111-106 in overtime last Saturday and 99-97 Tuesday night.

Jackson passed drug tests during year — UTEP official

EL PASO (AP) - Police investigating the sudden death of Texas-El Paso[°] basketball player Hernell "Jeep" Jackson said Thursday no more arrests are expected in the lapsed while sitting on the bench and case, but they are awaiting lab tests was pronounced dead an hour later. that may tell more about whether cocaine was a key factor.

Jackson, 23, died last Saturday during a benefit basketball game, and an autopsy said cocaine appeared to be a contributing cause of death.

rested Wednesday on drug charges after an unidentified witness signed statement saying the woman gave Jackson cocaine at his apartment the night before he died.

"We don't anticipate any more (arrests) right now," said El Paso police Capt. Luis Barba, who is charge of the investigation. "We'll wait for the toxicology report.

Jackson was playing in a benefit basketball game with some Houston Oilers football players at the Fort Bliss military reservation. He col-

A senior criminal justice major, Jackson passed three drug tests during the basketball season, said UTEP interim athletic director Richard Burns.

eath. The first was a routine test Oct. 14 A 19-year-old woman was ar- for all UTEP athletes; the second was March 2 for the basketball team, before the NCAA regional tournament in Tucson, Ariz., and the third was conducted March 13 by the NCAA, said Burns.

"I think it's obvious we'd want to know before (the NCAA test) to avoid any embarrassment to the individual, the team and the univer-sity," Burns said of the March 2 test.

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