

Sports

Stars make series memorable

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — James Worthy, Isiah Thomas, Magic Johnson.

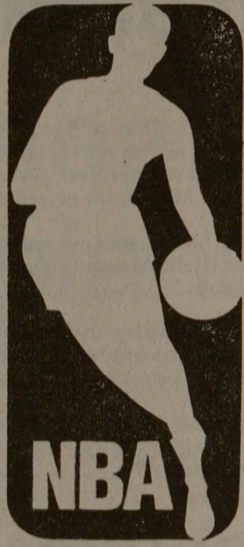
In their own ways, all guaranteed that the 1988 NBA Championship series would be a memorable one.

Worthy won postseason Most Valuable Player honors by averaging 28.5 points in the Los Angeles Lakers' four victories over the Detroit Pistons. He had 36 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists in the Lakers' 108-103 victory in Game 7 that gave them the NBA's first successive titles since 1968-69.

The first "triple-double" in Worthy's career gave him MVP honors for the first time.

"I guess this was my greatest game, under the circumstances," Worthy said of Tuesday night's performance. "I gave it all I had. I knew I had all summer to rest."

Thomas, the Pistons guard whose courage in the face of a badly sprained ankle nearly won the series for Detroit, said Worthy's performance made the difference.



"I wasn't surprised that he would have a game like that," Thomas said. Thomas, who said Monday that it would take a miracle for

him to play, was still on crutches when he arrived in the Forum before the game.

He played 19 minutes in the first half and scored 10 points, four of them in the final seconds of the second quarter to give Detroit a 52-47 halftime lead.

But he managed only nine minutes and no points in the second half.

"In the second half, it tightened up on me and I couldn't do much," Thomas said.

Thomas said he didn't consider losing to the Lakers a devastating defeat.

"We lost to one of the best teams in history, so it's not disappointing," he said. "If we were beaten by any other team than the Lakers, it would be disappointing."

Johnson, who had 19 points and 14 assists in the seventh game, won the MVP award in 1980, 1982 and 1987, but he was outpolled 7-4 by Worthy.

"Playing in this championship series was the hardest thing for me to do," Johnson said. "Trying

not to be friends with Isiah — that was the most difficult thing I ever had to go through."

Scott, taking advantage of Thomas' worsening limp, saved the Lakers with 12 points in the first 6:25 of the third quarter, helping Los Angeles turn the five-point halftime deficit into a 70-59 lead.

Detroit never caught up after that although the Pistons got within two three times in the fourth quarter.

Worthy won a series-long scoring battle with Detroit's Adrian Dantley by outscoring him 36-16 in Game 7.

The Lakers built a 94-79 lead midway through the fourth quarter, but Detroit closed the gap to 98-96 with 2:50 left. A tip-in by Worthy with 2:25 left gave Los Angeles a 100-96 edge, and he added a free throw with 14 seconds to go, making it 106-102.

"When we were up 15, we kept saying to ourselves that we have to be strong," Worthy said. "The Pistons are known as an aggressive team. They're not quitters."

Hornets, Heat could add former stars

NEW YORK (AP) — Seven former all-stars are among the players available to the Charlotte Hornets and Miami Heat in Thursday's NBA expansion draft.

But because of age, injuries and big contract obligations, there is no certainty that any of the six will be among the 23 players selected by the expansion teams which begin play in 1988.

Denver's Calvin Natt, Marques Johnson and Norm Nixon of the Los Angeles Clippers, New Jersey's Otis Birdsong, Andrew Toney of Philadelphia, Walter Davis of Phoenix and Kelly Tripucka of Utah are the all-star names on the list of unprotected players.

Miami, which will choose first, will get 12 players and Charlotte 11. Each existing team will lose one player.

The Hornets will choose eighth and the Heat ninth in the college draft on Tuesday.

It was also reported that the Heat is interested in Atlanta guard Randy Wittman as its possible first pick.

NBA personnel who were not identified told the *Miami Herald* the Heat would probably choose Wittman first, then trade him for a future No. 1 pick or a pick in the college draft.

At 28, Wittman would be more useful on the bench of an established team than with an expansion team, sources said. Wittman averaged 10 points per game for Atlanta this year.

Tripucka, at 29 the youngest of the former all-stars, is the most attractive to the expansion teams despite a long-term contract for close to \$1 million a year.

Tripucka, who averaged from 19.1 to 26.5 points in five seasons with Detroit, wasted away on the Jazz bench the last two seasons.

He declined to talk to the media before the draft, but his lawyer, Bob Woolf, said Tripucka "is excited about the opportunity to play again. That's the most important thing to him."

"I just wanted to be thin, beautiful...perfect."



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'87 champ 'Cash'es in on comeback victory

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Defending Wimbledon champion Pat Cash, playing on the same court where Boris Becker was dethroned in the second round last year, avoided a similar fate Wednesday with a stirring comeback.

The brash Australian was pushed to the brink by 21-year-old Javier Frana of Argentina before rallying for a 6-2, 4-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 victory before a standing-room-only crowd at Court 1 of the All England Club.

Berating officials and himself after losing two sets in a row, Cash appeared to be following in the footsteps of Becker, who was shocked by Australian Peter Doohan in last year's tournament. But he regained his composure and his strokes to win the final two sets and move into the third round, where he will face countryman John Fitzgerald.

"He played fantastically well for two sets," Cash said. "There was only one way for him to go, and that was down."

Frana, who was beaten 6-1, 6-1 by Cash two weeks ago at Queen's Club, was playing in his first Wimbledon

tournament. But he obviously wasn't intimidated by his opponent or the historic surroundings.

"Once I got onto the court, I forgot where I was and who I was playing," said Frana, ranked 80th in the world.

About 50 yards away on Court 2, Becker was wiping out the memory of last year's defeat with an impressive 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 victory over Karel Novacek of Czechoslovakia. The 20-year-old West German, who won the title in 1985 and 1986, boomed 17 aces to give him a total of 37 in his first two matches.

Top-seeded Ivan Lendl had a more difficult time against Australian Darren Cahill, a grass-court specialist who beat Cash in the third round at Queen's Club. Lendl prevailed 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4, but not before he gave the Centre Court crowd an uncharacteristic display of emotion.

Lendl, who made a couple of behind-the-back returns on service faults, was slapped with a warning for verbal abuse after shouting at umpire Richard Ings in the final set.

Clutch Bell hit keys Astros

HOUSTON (AP) — Bob Knepper and Juan Agosto combined on a six-hitter and Buddy Bell's two-run double highlighted a four-run eighth inning as the Houston Astros defeated the Cincinnati Reds 5-1 Wednesday night.

Danny Jackson, 7-4, retired the first two batters in the eighth but Glenn Davis singled, Kevin Bass walked and Bell doubled home both runners. Rafael Ramirez singled to score Bell and Alex Trevino hit an RBI double to chase Jackson.

Bell started Houston's winning rally with a double Tuesday.

Knepper worked seven innings, allowing five hits, walking three and striking out four. Agosto, 5-0, allowed one hit in two innings.

Knepper had held the Reds to two hits before allowing Cincinnati to tie the game in the sixth.

Nick Esasky doubled to left, went to third on Lloyd McClendon's groundout and scored when Dave Concepcion hit a 3-2 pitch for a single.

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