



Richard Tijerina
Senior Sports Writer

Texas teams live for the Lone Star state

Thus far, the NBA Playoffs have taken on an almost fairy tale-like atmosphere for the Houston Rockets, Dallas Mavericks and San Antonio Spurs.

It's true, Dorothy. There's no place like home.

Through the first 16 playoff games, the home team has gone 15-1. That shouldn't be surprising. During the regular season, the home team won 64 percent of its games.

When you take an NBA playoff game, with intensity turned up a couple of notches and the home crowd buzzing, that advantage becomes a huge one.

Just ask the Rockets. Sneaking into the eighth and final

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Rockets' Chaney guarantees sweep in Summit games

HOUSTON (AP) — Coach Don Chaney of the Houston Rockets didn't back off from his victory guarantee Monday and the Los Angeles Lakers think he's doing the right thing.

"I think that's exactly what he should do, get his players to thinking they can win," Lakers center Mychal Thompson said. "These guys are capable of beating us here as they almost did in Los Angeles."

The Lakers rallied from deficits of 13 and 17 points in the first two games and took a 2-0 lead in their best-of-5 first-round NBA playoff series.

After Sunday's loss, Chaney guaranteed Houston would win Tuesday and Thursday in The Summit and return to Los Angeles for the final game Sunday.

"That was the word (guaranteed) that I used," Chaney said. "Of course, nothing is guaranteed, but our guys know we can win two games in our building."

"Then we can go back to Los Angeles and that one is a toss up."

The Rockets will have to find more fourth-quarter consistency in order to win Tuesday and extend the series.

The Rockets took a 13-point lead in the first half of the series opener, but eventually lost 101-89. They led 65-48 at the half in Sunday's second game before losing 104-100.

Only twice in NBA history has a team ral

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Playing it safe



Photo by Scott D. Weaver

Houston's Fred Lopez scores a run in the fourth inning of A&M's loss Saturday as Texas A&M catcher John Wood searches for the ball after an errant throw from pitcher Rich Robertson. The Cougars' three-game sweep over the Aggies dropped them to No. 24 in Monday's ESPN/Collegiate Baseball Poll. See related story, page 10.

Dallas coach checks referee for vendetta

DALLAS (AP) — Mavericks coach Richie Adubato says he may be overreacting, but he intends to double-check game records to see if an NBA referee has a "personal vendetta" against guard Derek Harper.

"It seems like Hue Hollins has given Derek a technical in every game he officiates," said Adubato, angered because Harper was issued a technical Saturday night in the 114-107 playoff loss at Portland. "And last year, he threw Derek out of a game in Utah."

"There seems to be a personal vendetta here. We're double-checking to see if it's true. If it is, then we expect the league to look into it."

Adubato said Harper did not deserve a technical after Trail Blazers guard Drazen Petrovic began shouting in Harper's face midway through the second period Saturday. Replays indicated Harper did not retaliate, but both players received technical fouls from Hollins.

The Mavericks coach said Harper's play dropped off during the rest of the first half.

"I think something like that has a psychological effect on a player," Adubato told the Dallas Times Herald.

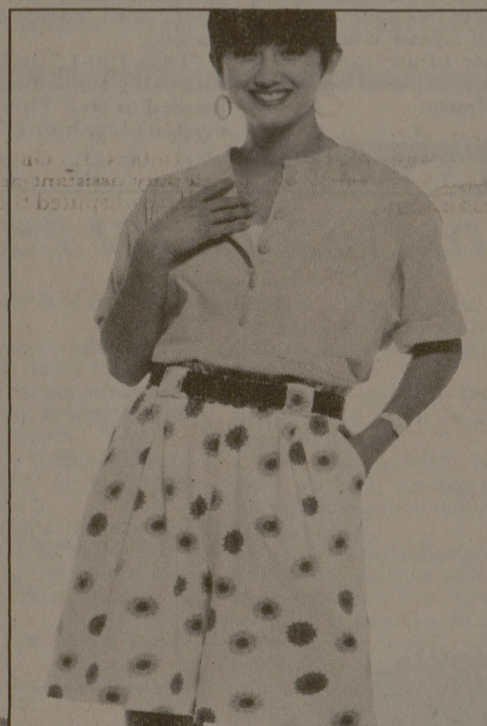
"It definitely affected Derek for three or four minutes. It's not good for Derek and it's not good for our team."

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