

# Piston's Rodman named league defensive player of year over Houston's Olajuwon

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Dennis Rodman, who has flustered many of the NBA's best shooters, shed tears of joy after being named the league's defensive player of the year.

Rodman, whose intense defense helped the Detroit Pistons allow the fewest points in the NBA this season, edged Houston's Akeem Olajuwon for the honor in voting by writers and broadcasters.



"It's a dream come true for me," Rodman said Monday. "I was disappointed when I didn't win it last year. I take pride in defense. I think I do a good job of it."

Rodman was outspoken and bitter

last year when Utah's Mark Eaton won the award.

"I said I was going to work harder this year, and it's worked out," Rodman said following Monday's practice session.

Then, tears running down his cheeks, Rodman's voice broke up. "I wanted this award so bad," he sobbed.

Pistons general manager Jack McCloskey put his arm around Rodman's shoulder and walked him around a corner, away from the lights and cameras.

Later, Rodman was laughing. "I tried to hold it back. I tried, but it didn't work," he said. "It's gratifying to me that I won it."

Rodman received 49 of a possible 92 votes. Olajuwon had 35 votes, followed by Detroit's Joe Dumars and

Dallas' Derek Harper with two votes each. Chicago's Michael Jordan, New York's Patrick Ewing, Milwaukee's Alvin Robertson and Eaton each received one vote.

Pistons coach Chuck Daly, while acknowledging that Isiah Thomas is the team's catalyst, said Rodman might be the club's MVP.

"The debate was over whether it should be Dennis or Olajuwon," Daly said. "My contention is that Dennis plays more people."

"It's a work ethic. I don't know if there's a more valuable player on this team than Dennis. The most important thing is that Dennis has become a student of the game. That's made him so much better."

Rodman was the league's top sixth man before stepping into the Pistons' starting lineup for the final 42 games of the season. The team went

on a 25-1 streak that essentially sewed up the Central Division and assured them home-court advantage throughout the Eastern Conference playoffs.

The Pistons and Knicks open the Eastern Conference semifinals at the Palace on Tuesday.

Though he averaged only 8.8 points per game, Rodman's defense was enough to land him on the All-Star team for the first time in his four years in the NBA.

Rodman, a 6-foot-8 forward from Southeastern Oklahoma State, led the Pistons in rebounding with 9.7 per game while generally guarding the opponent's most dangerous shooter. With him setting the tone, the Pistons allowed just 98.3 points per game this season, the lowest figure in the league.

# Pair of crashes may cost team Indianapolis start

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Helme-garn Racing, hit by a pair of crashes that demolished two cars and sent one of its drivers to the hospital, is in a battle with the clock.

With the start of qualifications for the Indianapolis 500 on Saturday, every minute off the track is a lost opportunity for practice. And the crashes by Bill Vukovich III and rookie Buddy Lazier cost the team a lot of time, as well as equipment.

"The damage to both cars was too extensive to go into repair now," crew chief Ron Dawes said Tuesday. "Buddy's could be repaired, but not in the time frame we have. Billy's car is not repairable."

Vukovich, who suffered a concussion in his crash late Monday, was hospitalized overnight and released Tuesday morning. The team was negotiating a purchase of another car for Vukovich, the 1988 Indy rookie of the year and grandson of a two-time winner.

"We have a backup for Buddy under construction, an '88 Lola-Cosworth," Dawes said. "We think we can still get them in this weekend. Billy for sure this weekend, and possibly Buddy. It's going to hurt Buddy worse because of his rookie status. Billy's got some more miles on the track, so we think Billy will be OK."

Lazier, the youngest driver entered in the May 27 race and son of former Indy driver Bob Lazier, has never started an Indy car race. He drove only one lap on Monday before his Lola was hit by the outside wall coming out of the fourth turn.

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The crew still wasn't sure Tuesday why the car went out of control.

"We haven't found anything (that might have broken)," Dawes said. "We gave all the parts to USAC, and they'll run tests to see if there was any mechanical failure; it could possibly have been a wind gust."

Vukovich, whose grandfather won the 500 in 1953-54 and was killed while leading the race, lost control coming out of the first turn just before the end of practice on Monday.

He did a half-spin into the wall and went 560 feet off the track into the second-turn infield speed trap.

"He just got up to speed and fast on cold tires," Dawes said. "We had started making gains on the chassis, and he just went a little too hard on cold tires."

Vukovich drove 35 laps on Monday and had just clocked his best lap of the week at 217.7 mph before the crash.

Veteran driver Jim Crawford, whose car was damaged in a crash on Sunday, expected to get his repaired racer back by Wednesday. In the meantime, he still has his backup car available.

# Oilers may have to get knee-deep in crude Houston threatens NFLPA with suit; Lathon contract key issue in claim

HOUSTON (AP) — Attorneys for the Houston Oilers have threatened to sue the NFL Players Association for alleged interference in contract negotiations with the club's No. 1 draft pick, KRIV-TV reported Tuesday.

Lamar Lathon was nearing a contract agreement with the Oilers last week when NFLPA executive director Gene Upshaw asked the linebacker and his agent, Tom Williams, to delay signing.

Upshaw said he wanted Lathon to get the best deal possible. Lathon has not yet signed his contract.

"All of your statements are clearly calculated to prevent or delay the execution of contracts and to persuade the player and his agent that the contract will not only hurt them but other players," Oilers attorney Steve Underwood said in a letter to Upshaw.

Underwood said the Oilers would sue both Upshaw and the NFLPA if his comments already had caused

damage to their efforts to sign Lathon.

"You are advised that if, in fact, other representatives of the NFL Players Association have also tortiously interfered, the suit will include courts of civil conspiracy," Underwood's letter said.

Upshaw declined comment and his attorney, Jim Quinn, denied any damage.

"We think the Oilers' claim has no merit," Quinn said. "There is a first

amendment, whether it's Gene Upshaw or Donald Duck, that allows you to speak their mind and the NFL and Oilers should recognize that."

Lathon already is working out at the Oilers' training facility and Williams says his client would be present Monday when the team's head start program begins.

Lathon was the 15th player chosen in the draft and reportedly is going to sign a five-year deal worth \$3 million.

# Dallas employs speed training specialist to quicken slow-pokes

IRVING (AP) — First he chose Alexander Wright and Stan Smagala in the NFL draft.

Now, if anyone still doubts his desire for speed, Dallas Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson has another weapon — Randy Smythe, a speed training specialist.

Among Smythe's other clients are the New York Jets, the U.S. Olympic volleyball team, fencing and basketball teams and several professional tennis players, including eighth-ranked Tim Mayotte.

Smythe began a two-day orientation Monday for his over-speed training concept the slowpoke Cowboys will employ this year.

"There is no coincidence I'm here and Johnson is here," said Smythe, president of The Speed City U.S.A., a Portland, Ore.-based company who began implementing his learn-to-run-faster theory in 1982.

"He wins with speed. That's the whole thing with Jimmy Johnson. He won with speed before at (University of) Miami and he will win with speed again. We're birds of a feather on this."

But on Monday, the Cowboys resembled harnessed birds. Smythe's training concept is based on resistance and uses waist harnesses and Flexicord, which can be anchored to the ground or between two players. Cowboys offensive linemen Nate

Newton and Jeff Zimmerman both nearly 360 pounds — were shot with the Flexicord stretched between them.

Smythe's theory to increase speed is similar to a baseball player putting a weighted object on his bat for extra swings. When it's removed, the baseball player will feel as if he's swinging the bat faster.

"Contrast training," Smythe said.

"If you could erase 20 errors in a guy's running form, he could knock three- or four-tenths off 40 (yard) time," Smythe said. "The emphasis here is on grace, beauty, not brute force. It's basic efficiency."

Smythe is not some quick trick to make a quick buck on the speed-footed Cowboys, whom Johnson last year were slower than his Miami teams.

Mike Woicik, the Cowboys' strength and conditioning coach who used the training technique while at Syracuse University, introduced Smythe's concept to Johnson.

"What we're trying to do is get guys over their normal top speed," Smythe said.

He said he has proof that the workout is used for a couple years, an athlete can reduce his time in the 40-yard dash from 5.0 to 4.6 to 4.38.

## Detroit clobbers Knicks 112-77

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) — The Detroit Pistons got 10 points from James Edwards to open the third quarter and the defending NBA champions rolled to a 112-77 victory over the New York Knicks, in the opener of their Eastern Conference playoff Tuesday night.

The 77 points matched the Pistons' best playoff defensive effort and also was the lowest total ever for the Knicks in the postseason.

Detroit held the Chicago Bulls to 77 points on May 15, 1989. New York had a previous playoff low of 79 against the Capital Bullets in 1974.

The Pistons outscored the Knicks 35-15 in the third quarter. Isiah Thomas led Detroit with 21 points and Edwards finished with 18.

Patrick Ewing scored 19 points for New York.

# Astros edge out Phillies 3-2 with Ramirez's tenth-inning double

HOUSTON (AP) — Rafael Ramirez doubled home the winning run in the 10th inning Tuesday night as the Houston Astros beat the Philadelphia Phillies 3-2.

Eric Yelding singled to right, stole second and scored when Ramirez hit a ball over the head of left fielder Randy Ready. The hit came off Dickie Noles (0-1), who was making his first appearance of the year.

Dave Smith (1-2) pitched the 10th inning for the victory.

The Phillies had plenty of chances to take the lead in the late innings, but always came up short.

Astros right fielder Glenn Wilson threw out Curt Ford at home plate to end the seventh inning, and reliever Danny Darwin came on with the bases loaded and one out in the eighth to strike out pinch-hitters Rod Booker and Dave Hollins.

In the top of the 10th, Ready appeared ready to score the go-ahead run but he missed home plate and was tagged out by catcher Craig Biggio.

After an appeal play at third base cost the Astros a run in the fourth inning, they took a 2-1 lead in the fifth on Ken Caminiti's RBI single.

Glenn Davis, who had reached base with two outs on third baseman Charlie Hayes' throwing error, scored from first base on Caminiti's hit. After a relay to home plate failed to get Davis, Caminiti was thrown out at second base to end the inning.

The Phillies tied it in the sixth with two outs. After Ricky Jordan doubled, John Kruk reached on shortstop Ramirez's throwing error. Kruk moved to second on a fielder's choice that forced Jordan at third

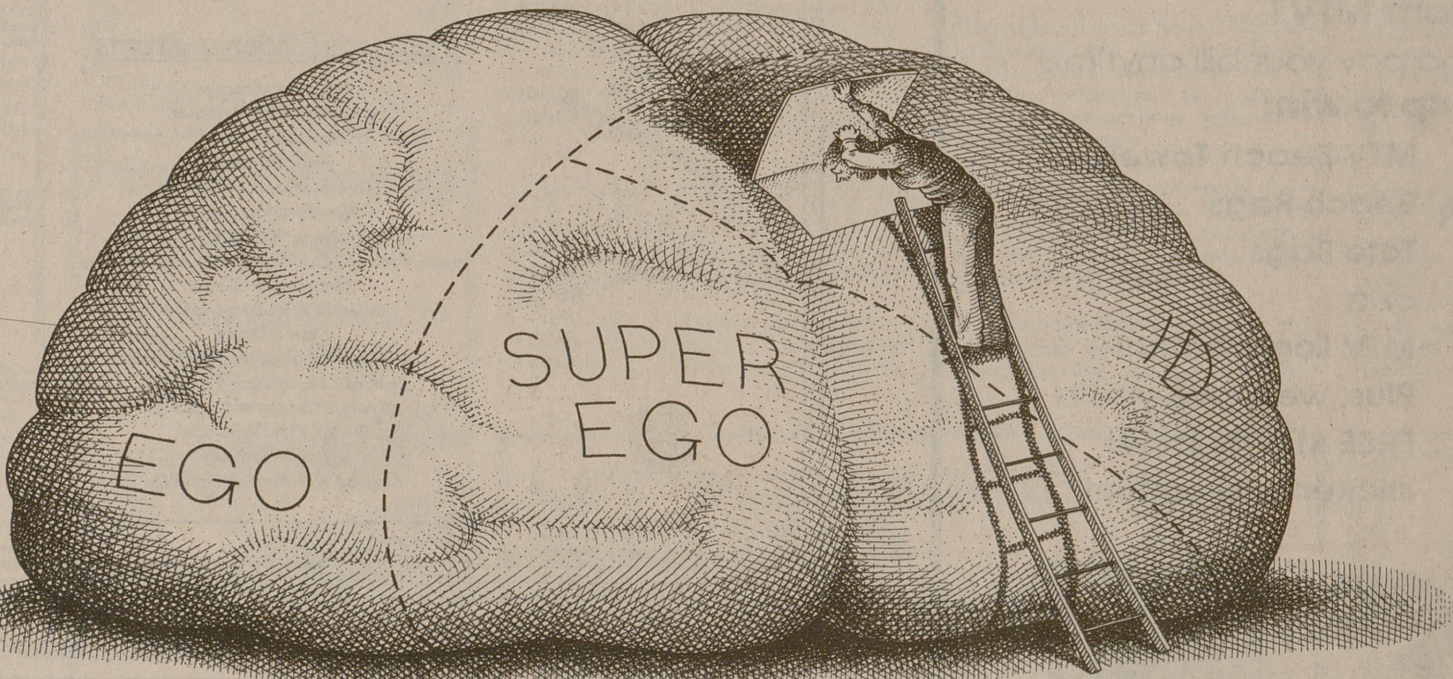
and scored on Darren Daulton's single.

After Lenny Dykstra and Tom Herr led off the game with singles off Bill Gullickson, Von Hayes hit a sacrifice fly to left to give the Phillies a 1-0 lead.

The Astros tied it in the fourth when Caminiti singled, went to third on Eric Anthony's double and scored on Wilson's infield hit.

Wilson went to second on Casey Candaele's infield hit and took third on a fielder's choice grounder by Gullickson. Yelding then hit an apparent sacrifice fly, scoring Wilson and giving the Astros a 2-1 lead.

But the play was ruled a double play following an appeal to third base umpire Bruce Froemming, who said Wilson left third base before Lenny Dykstra's catch in center field.



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