

Olajuwon, Drexler to start for All-Stars

The Pistons' Grant Hill received the most votes this year.

NEW YORK (AP) — Even though Michael Jordan is back and tearing through the NBA again, Grant Hill remains the fans' favorite in voting for the All-Star Game.



Jordan

In the closest balloting since 1977, the Detroit Pistons' forward drew the most votes of any player in All-Star fan balloting, edging Jordan by 16,582 votes.

Hill got 1,358,004 votes to 1,341,422 for Jordan. "I just hope that Michael isn't ticked off because I got more votes than him," Hill joked Thursday after the vote totals were announced.

The narrowest previous margin between top vote-getters was in 1977, when Denver's David Thompson and edged Philadelphia's Julius Erving by 8,530 votes.

Last year, when Jordan was still playing minor league baseball, Hill garnered the most votes of any player, even though

he was just a rookie. Jordan leads the league with a 31.2 scoring average while Hill averages 21.2 and has four triple-doubles this season.

"As long as I'm in the All-Star Game, that's the honor in itself," Hill said. "I'm not worried about how many votes I get or even starting, but just getting to the game itself."

Dallas' Jason Kidd, who shared last season's rookie of the year honors with Hill, was voted in as a Western Conference starter for the Feb. 11 game at San Antonio.

Hill and Jordan will be two of the starters on the Eastern Conference team, joined by Jordan's Chicago teammate Scottie Pippen at the other forward spot, Orlando's Shaquille O'Neal at center, and Anfernee Hardaway at point guard. The East team will be coached by the Bulls' Phil Jackson.

For the West, it will be Kidd at the point, Seattle's Shawn Kemp and Phoenix's Charles Barkley at forward, and Houston's Hakeem Olajuwon at center and Clyde Drexler at shooting guard.

Either George Karl of Seattle or Jerry Sloan of Utah will coach the West. The coach is determined by the conference's best record through Sunday's games.

Barkley was the leading vote-getter in the Western Conference, drawing 1,268,195, 27,866 more than Olajuwon.

Injury-plagued Bullets blast struggling Rockets

Hakeem Olajuwon passed the 21,000 barrier in the loss.

LANDOVER, Md. (AP) — The injury-depleted Washington Bullets got the most out of their nine players in uniform Thursday night, placing seven in double figures in an improbable 120-85 rout of the Houston Rockets.

The Bullets, playing without injured starters Chris Webber and Mark Price, made 15 of their first 19 shots and never trailed in handling the two-time defending world champions their most lopsided loss since a 38-point blowout in Portland last Feb. 6.

It was the most points scored against the Rockets this season.

Brent Price scored 19 of his 25 points in the first half and Calbert Cheaney finished with 20 points for the Bullets, who had lost two straight and five of six.

George Muresan had 17 points and 13 rebounds, while Tim Legler had 16 points and

Juwan Howard 14.

Hakeem Olajuwon eclipsed the 21,000-mark in career points, scoring 22 on 10-of-23 shooting, but it wasn't nearly enough to prevent the Rockets from suffering their fourth loss in five games. Olajuwon has 21,010 points since joining the NBA in 1984.

The Rockets shot a dismal 33 percent and were 3-for-18 from 3-point range.

Led by Price, the Bullets shot 62 percent in scoring a season-high 71 points in the first half. Washington led by 23 at halftime and 93-62 entering the final period.

The Rockets made only 21 of 56 shots in the opening three quarters. Washington, on the other hand, sank 10 of its 16 3-point shots during that span.

Cheaney had five points in an 11-0 run that made it 18-4, and Washington built its advantage to 30-12, leading 37-24 after the first quarter.

Houston fought back to 49-42, but Price scored six points in a 15-2 surge that put the Bullets up by 20.

Rhodes tabbed as top coach

PHOENIX (AP) — Ray Rhodes always thought he had what it takes to be a successful NFL coach. When he finally got the chance, the rookie coach proved his point by leading the Philadelphia Eagles into the playoffs.

On Thursday, Rhodes was honored as the NFL's Coach of the Year for rebuilding the Eagles and guiding them to a 10-6 record and a playoff victory over Detroit.

The 45-year-old Rhodes, a non-nonsense type who seldom smiles, managed a grin when he accepted the award.

"Believe me, this is probably the biggest honor I've ever gotten in my life," Rhodes said. "The magnitude of this award is something I'll always cherish."

"Sometimes you wonder if you'll ever get a chance to be a head coach. I know I did."

Rhodes became the Eagles coach last Feb. 2, when owner Jeffrey Lurie hired him to replace Rich Kotite.

After a seven-year playing career, Rhodes was a defensive backs coach for 10 years with San Francisco as the 49ers won Super Bowls in 1982, 1985, 1989 and 1990.

In 1992, he left the team to become Mike Holmgren's defensive coordinator at Green Bay for two seasons. Rhodes returned to the 49ers in 1994, helping them win another Super Bowl the following season.

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