

Rockets achieve November success

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Rockets finished every month was November. The Rockets have had terrific starts in the first four years they have begun the season with coach Rudy Tomjanovich as coach, piling up a collective 41-6 mark during the month. This season is no exception. Houston and the Chicago Bulls entered this month as the only unbeaten teams in the NBA, each 6-0, with the new-look Rockets gaining four of those victories on the road. "This is a different team from the others and we are building character," says Hakeem Olajuwon, who is second only to the Bulls' Michael Jordan in scoring at 28.7 points per game, including a season-high 38 in a victory Tuesday night over Utah. Different team — the biggest difference is the 4-for-1 offseason trade that brought Charles Barkley from Phoenix — but same November results. In 1993, Tomjanovich's first full season behind the bench, Houston started the year 15-0. In 1994, the team was 9-0, then 6-0 last year. "I'm a Sagittarius," Tomjanovich, whose birthday is Nov. 24, jokes when asked to explain the November success. "This team has a lot of guys who can do a

lot of things," the Rockets' Clyde Drexler notes. "That's what makes us so dangerous. We don't have a weakness." Olajuwon anchors the scoring. Drexler is third in the league in steals and Houston overall is tops in that category, averaging 12 a game. Barkley leads the NBA in rebounds, nearly 20 a game. Throw in some key role players — newly acquired Kevin Willis spelling Olajuwon, re-acquired Matt Bullard hitting a clutch 3-point shot, and rookie point guard Matt Maloney filling in for injured Brent Price — and you've got the makings of the Midwest Division leader. "This team is proving its goal is very clear — we just want to win," Olajuwon says. "Everybody is willing to take their role. I like the chemistry we have." Keeping the record unblemished gets more difficult with another team with a new look, the Los Angeles Lakers, coming to town Tuesday, setting up a meeting of the league's top centers: Olajuwon and Shaquille O'Neal, the Orlando free agent who took the big bucks offered by the Lakers. The O'Neal-led Lakers are 4-2 and lead the Pacific Division. "They made a major change with Shaq in the

middle," Tomjanovich said. "I expect them to be one of the powers in the West. They have great young personnel. They are explosive and now they have a power game inside with Shaq." Olajuwon, however, may not be at full strength and may not even play at all. Drexler's sore knees kept him out of practice Monday as well. "It's a day-to-day deal," Drexler said. "Hopefully this will pass." Of more concern was Olajuwon, who woke up Sunday with a pain in his left side, the aftermath of an elbow from Utah's John Stockton during Saturday's game. X-rays showed no fractures but Olajuwon missed practice Monday as the Rockets made their first appearance at their new training center in West Houston. "I don't know," he said, pointing to his sore ribs. "I just can't turn. It's one of those games where I have to be able to move. Right now I can't even move." "I'm always concerned," Tomjanovich said of Olajuwon's health. "That's my job. I'm not going to jump the gun. I just hope for the best. If not, we'll deal with it the best we can." "If he can't play, the other guys are just going to have to step up and play," Barkley said. "I have great confidence in everybody."

Cowboys continue to survive

IRVING (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys die hard. Just when it appears they have fallen too far behind in defense of their Super Bowl crown and NFC West title, the Cowboys made the playoffs to ensure survival. Dallas improved its record to 6-4 Friday after a 1-3 start with a 20-17 overtime win in San Francisco thanks to Chris Boniol's 29-yard field goal. The Cowboys trail Philadelphia and Washington, both weekend losers, by only a game. "I would have been skewered if I lost that one," quarterback Troy Aikman said. Philadelphia beat Dallas last week on an Aikman interception at backfield into a 104-yard interception and lateral touchdown. Aikman made another late interception against the 49ers, but got a second-chance. Linebacker Fred Strickland's interception of Elvis Grbac on the next play set Aikman up for his game-winning touchdown pass to tight end Eric Bjornson. Then the Cowboys won in overtime with Barry Switzer hug, he is averaging Aikman until his quarters and 10

back produced a big smile. Switzer got some of Aikman's eyeball on his face and shirt. "The win meant a lot to both of us," Switzer said. "We had lost to them the last three times. A coach and a quarterback have a lot in common." "We had to win this game," said guard Nate Newton. "Lose this one and drop back to .500 and it might have been all over." Particularly with the vastly improved Green Bay Packers coming to town next Monday night. "We've got the playoffs in our sights now," Newton said. "And I don't care where we have to play it, frozen tundra of Lambeau Field or 3-Com Park again, I don't care. We just have to keep winning." The win proved costly for the Cowboys. Free safety Brock Marion broke a shoulder blade and could miss several weeks. "I had one of those things once and it was two weeks before I could even raise my arm," Switzer said. Safety Bill Bates and backup center Clay Shiver sustained concussions but both are expected to play against the Packers.

Oilers end losing skid with trickery

HOUSTON (AP) — On Sunday, the Houston Oilers fooled the New Orleans Saints. On Monday, they enjoyed it. The Oilers decided after losing two straight games, they needed to add more deceit to their offense. Little-used running back Ronnie Harmon and 300-pound backup guard Erik Norgard fit neatly into their plans. Harmon had seven catches for 108 yards and a touchdown and rushed 47 more yards and Norgard lined up as a tight end and caught the Saints by surprise for a one-yard touchdown in a 31-14 victory. "It was a big game for us after what's happened the last two weeks and Ronnie Harmon came in and played his career best game for us," Oilers coach Jeff Fisher said Monday. Riding a two-game losing streak, the Oilers realized last week their offense had become too predictable. So they put Harmon on the field in a two-back offense and he broke open the game early. "We did things slightly different to get the ball in Ronnie Har-

mon's hands," Fisher said. "Basically our No. 1 ball carrier (Eddie George) became our blocker." Harmon refuses to talk to reporters but his teammates had plenty of praise for the former San Diego Chargers running back who was signed by the Oilers as a free agent this year. "He can hurt you in so many ways," George said. "When I first met him, I was so impressed. He can block, catch and run. And that opens up everything not just for myself but the passing game in general." The Oilers changed their tendency of passing when Harmon was in the game. He had five carries for 47 yards and that loosened the Saints' defense and made him more successful as a receiver. "There's no question he's the best third-down back in the league," defensive back Darryll Lewis said. In the first nine games of the season, Harmon had 19 catches for 167 yards and 53 yards on 13 rushes.



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Marquise Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.21	K	SI3	\$4150 ⁰⁰
1.03	G	IF	5900 ⁰⁰
.94	K	SI1	2915 ⁰⁰
.88	H/I	SI3	2772 ⁰⁰
.83	H	SI1	3465 ⁰⁰
.73	G	SI3	2365 ⁰⁰ LAB CERT.
.71	H	VS2	3410 ⁰⁰ LAB CERT.
.63	H	SI2	2200 ⁰⁰
.49	F	SI1	1736 ⁰⁰
.49	J	SI2	1155 ⁰⁰
.44	F	SI1/VS2	1250 ⁰⁰
.31	I	SI1	475 ⁰⁰

Pear Shape

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.02	J	SI1	\$3575 ⁰⁰
.92	K	VS2	2550 ⁰⁰
.79	K	SI1	1850 ⁰⁰
.49	H	SI1	1375 ⁰⁰

Princess

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.93	H	VS2	\$3520 ⁰⁰
.92	H	VVS2	3850 ⁰⁰
.65	H	SI2	1340 ⁰⁰
.52	G	VS1	1638 ⁰⁰ EGI CERT.
.51	H	SI2	1050 ⁰⁰

Round Diamond

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.39	I	SI3	\$4970 ⁰⁰
1.11	H	SI1	5822 ⁰⁰ EGL CERT.
.95	I	I1	2500 ⁰⁰
.93	J	SI2	3070 ⁰⁰
.91	J	SI2	3250 ⁰⁰
.84	J/K	VS1	2520 ⁰⁰
.71	H	VVS2	2985 ⁰⁰ LAB CERT.
.71	H	SI1	2420 ⁰⁰
.52	H	VVS2	2200 ⁰⁰
.34	G	VVS2	895 ⁰⁰ LAB CERT.
.33	H	VVS2	790 ⁰⁰ LAB CERT.
.31	H	VVS2	745 ⁰⁰ LAB CERT.

Radiant

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.77	I	SI2	\$1905 ⁰⁰

Emerald Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
2.12	K/L	VS1	\$7900 ⁰⁰
.93	G	SI3	2150 ⁰⁰
.88	G	SI2	1925 ⁰⁰
.83	H	SI3	1750 ⁰⁰
.74	H	SI3	1650 ⁰⁰
.71	H	SI2	1850 ⁰⁰

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