

Jordan reveals new apparel line

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Jordan plans to keep a fresh imprint on basketball after his playing days are over by overseeing a line of sneakers and apparel bearing his name for his longtime sponsor Nike Inc.

The Chicago Bulls superstar has already added millions of dollars to Nike's bottom line as well as his own bank account with sales over the past 13 years of his signature Air Jordan shoes and clothing.

But with the end of Jordan's career possibly only a few years away, the nation's biggest athletic shoe marketer has come up with a way for Jordan to keep his hand in the game and his image on the shoes worn on court.

Jordan will run a broadened Jordan brand of basketball shoes and clothing that will not only include the Air Jordan line but other models that will be designed especially for other pro players picked by Jordan.

"I have been involved in the design of everything I have worn from Nike since we began our relationship in 1984," Jordan said Tuesday. "The launch of the Jordan brand is simply an extension of that process."

The first Jordan brand collection

debuts in November, and Jordan said introductions will be timed for a Saturday so children won't miss school to get them. He said shoes in the Jordan line will be priced as low as \$90 to make them more affordable.

The most expensive shoe sold by the new Nike division will be the \$150 Air Jordan, which has a 3-D hologram on the heel and quilting on the sides.

Jordan told a news conference at New York's Niketown store, where some of his new fashions were modeled, that he expects to be heavily involved in designing the shoes and apparel. He said that will be an outlet for his creative ambitions and competitiveness.

In addition to Jordan, other players wearing the Jordan brand this season will include Eddie Jones of the Los Angeles Lakers, Vin Baker and Ray Allen of the Milwaukee Bucks, Michael Finley of the Dallas Mavericks and Derek Anderson of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

The Jordan brand will also be worn by teams at three colleges — Cincinnati, St. John's and North Carolina A&T.

The shoes and apparel ranging from sweatshirts and shorts to hats

will feature the Jumpman logo — a silhouette of Jordan stretched to the maximum as he drives to dunk a basketball through the hoop.

The financial terms of the deal with Jordan were not disclosed but people familiar with it said it includes royalty payments based on sales.

Jordan is already tops among athletes in endorsement fees.

The Sports Marketing Letter estimated his endorsement deals — ranging from Wheaties cereal,

Ballpark Franks and Gatorade to Hanes underwear, Rayovac batteries and Bijan fragrances — should generate \$40 million this year.

That includes an estimated \$17 million to \$18 million from Nike for the Air Jordan line alone, the newsletter's publisher Brian Murphy said.

Golfer Tiger Woods is second with about \$25 million in endorsement earnings lined up for this year, according to the newsletter.

Jordan's endorsement total is in

addition to the \$33 million he will make playing basketball for the Bulls this year. That makes him the highest-paid athlete in team sports as well.

Asked on NBC's "Today" show on Tuesday morning whether this season would be his last, Jordan said "I don't think so."

Jordan, who has led the Bulls to five NBA championships in the 1990s, said the most important thing right now is a sixth title.

"I think we are going to win again and go for seven," he said.

Nike is a heavyweight in the shoe business as well. It accounted for about 58 percent of the \$1.3 billion market for basketball shoes last year, according to Diane Daggatt, analyst for the securities firm Dain Bosworth in Seattle.

She said Nike hopes the broadened Jordan line would help it capture 90 percent of the basketball market by the year 2000.

"It's good positioning for Nike to feature Jordan separately," she said.

The Air Jordan line alone generates about \$250 million in shoe and apparel sales a year, Nike officials say.



Jordan

Lindros signs seven-year, \$60 million deal

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Eric Lindros has assumed the role of hockey's best player in many minds, and he may soon have his richest deal — reportedly a seven-year, \$60 million contract.

The Philadelphia Flyers, however, deny such an agreement is imminent.

"Unfortunately, the Flyers and Eric are not as close to agreement as the media has speculated," the team said today.

"Since Eric still has another season remaining under his current contract, we anticipate his full participation in training camp and during the season, and we hope that at some point in the future, we will be able to conclude a long-term extension."

Lindros is to earn \$4.2 million in the last year of his contract.

Sources told The Associated Press on Monday night that the 24-year-old captain had all but secured a new deal. What changed the situation

was not immediately clear.

Lindros is the cornerstone of a Flyers revival in which the team went from missing the playoffs for five straight years to the Stanley Cup finals last season.

Both Carl Lindros, the player's father-agent, and the Flyers' negotiating team of president Ed Snider and general manager Bob Clarke set the start of training camp as the deadline for a new deal, and seemingly hashed out all but the final details in a five-hour conference that ended Monday.

Now it appears that the negotiations hit a snag. One hangup — Lindros' desire for legal action against a Philadelphia radio station that reported he missed a game last season because of a hangover — apparently has been resolved.

Carl Lindros said he and the Flyers would take a common approach to the libel suit he wants to press against station WIP.

A new deal would be a handsome reward for a player many picked for greatness as an oversized teenager in Canada. His early stature as the game's next great player allowed him to dictate conditions of his employment.

First, Lindros forced the junior hockey team that had his rights to trade them to a city closer to his home. Then he forced the Quebec Nordiques, who made him the top pick in the 1990 draft, to trade him when he refused to play there.

The Nordiques traded Lindros to both the Flyers and the New York Rangers, touching off a dispute that ended when an arbitrator ruled in favor of Philadelphia.

The Flyers acquired the rights to Lindros for six players, two draft choices and \$15 million.

Winner of the Hart Trophy as the NHL's MVP in 1994-95, Lindros had 32 goals and 47 assists in 52 games last season and added 12 goals and 14 assists in 19 playoff games.

Sports Briefs

Bennett pleads guilty to sexual assault charge

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Atlanta Falcons line-backer Cornelius Bennett pleaded guilty to sexual misconduct Tuesday and could face up to a year in jail.

Bennett, formerly with the Buffalo Bills, will be sentenced Oct. 28. City judge Robert Russell Jr. released Bennett on his own recognizance on the condition he stay away from the victim, a Buffalo woman in her 20s.

Bennett made no comment as he left the courtroom. His attorneys, James Shaw and Joseph Shaw, said he pleaded guilty as charged because he wanted to "put this matter behind him" and get on with his professional and personal life. His wife is expecting a baby.

Erie County district attorney Frank Clark said

the victim was satisfied with the guilty plea. The charge stems from a meeting in the Hyatt Regency Buffalo May 18. The woman, whom Bennett has known for a long time, accompanied

Former Penguin Lemieux enters Hall of Fame

TORONTO (AP) — Mario Lemieux and Bryan Trottier, teammates on the Pittsburgh Penguins' Stanley Cup-winning teams in 1991 and 1992, were elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame on Tuesday.

Edmonton Oilers general manager was honored in the builder's category, with all three to be inducted Nov. 17.

Lemieux overcame Hodgkin's disease and a serious back injury during his extraordinary 12-year career. His election comes without the usual three-year wait. The Hall cited his "outstanding pre-eminence and skill" in waiving waiting period.

"I think it's fantastic," Montreal's Mark Recchi, a former linemate of Lemieux, said Tuesday. "If anybody, he deserves it. ... He made hockey in Pittsburgh."

The Hall has inducted eight other players without the normal waiting period: Bobby Orr, Gordie Howe, Jean Beliveau, Terry Sawchuk, Red Kelly, Ted Lind-

say, Maurice Richard and Dit Clapper.

Lemieux finished with 613 career goals and 1,494 points. He captured three Hart Trophies (league MVP), six Art Ross Trophies (top scorer) and two Conn Smythe Trophies (playoff MVP).

Trottier was brilliant in his own right. He won six Stanley Cups with the New York Islanders and Penguins during an 18-year career. He scored 524 goals and had 1,425 points in 1,279 regular season games. He won the Calder, Hart, Art Ross and Conn Smythe Trophies.

Sather, entering his 19th year as Edmonton's GM, built the Oilers into a powerhouse in the 1980s. With players such as Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier, Paul Coffey and Grant Fuhr, the Oilers won five Stanley Cups.

Also to be honored with Lemieux, Trottier and Sather will be Hockey News founder Ken McKenzie, who won the Elmer Ferguson Memorial Award, and longtime Philadelphia Flyers radio voice Gene Hart, the winner of the Foster Hewitt Memorial Award.

Thirteen nominees — including four players — were considered for this year's Hall of Fame inductions.



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