

Classified Ads

Rockets: Van Gundy will be new head coach

By Juan A. Lozano
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Former New York Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy told the Houston Rockets Monday he wants to be their new head coach and is trying to work out a contract to seal the deal, Rockets general manager Carroll Dawson said.

"I was jumping up and down," Dawson said, describing his reaction after getting the telephone call from Van Gundy. "My wife thought I was crazy. You're looking at a happy guy."

The Rockets are looking at a four- to five-year agreement with Van Gundy, according to Houston television station KRIV.

Dawson wouldn't disclose possible terms of the contract but said the Rockets have been in touch with the Knicks and have agreed to some form of compensation for Van Gundy, who remains under contract with New York through July 31.

The former Knicks coach, who resigned abruptly last season and worked this season as a game analyst for TNT, had also been considering the coaching vacancy at the Washington Wizards.

"Jeff has been very successful. His defensive philosophy is very good. We decided he was the best fit for this team," Dawson said. "We're very excited about this. I think we got a very good coach. I think it is going to be a good marriage."

Contract talks were expected to be complete within the next few days, Dawson said.

Van Gundy, who spent five days in Houston last week touring team facilities and the city, and former NBA coach Mike Dunleavy emerged as the two finalists during the team's search for a successor to Rudy Tomjanovich.

Tomjanovich stepped down in May after 12 years as head coach, including a pair of NBA titles.

The Rockets also met with Paul Silas and Larry Brown. Last week, Silas was introduced as the Cleveland Cavaliers' coach. Brown became the Detroit Pistons' coach.

During his career with the Knicks, Van Gundy compiled a 248-172 record and led the team to the 1999 NBA Finals, where the Knicks lost to San Antonio.

Before he replaced Don Nelson as the Knicks coach in 1995-96 season, Van Gundy worked as an assistant in New York from 1989-1990. He was on Pat Riley's staff in the 1994 NBA Finals when the Rockets beat the Knicks in seven games to win their first of two consecutive NBA championships.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Jersey claims Stanley Cup with 3-0 win over Anaheim

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — The Stanley Cup feels right at home in New Jersey.

The Devils, riding the greatest home-ice advantage in NHL playoffs history and a goal from one of the unluckiest Game 7 stars ever, ended the Mighty Ducks' surreal season and won the Stanley Cup with a 3-0 victory Monday night.

Mike Rupp, who had never appeared in a playoff game until being called on in Game 4, scored the first goal and set up Jeff Friesen for the other two. Friesen scored five goals in the series, all at home.

The Devils swept all four games at home — all with the second period proving decisive — in the first finals since 1965 and only the third in which the home team won every game. The Ducks rallied from 2-0 and 3-2 deficits to force a Game 7 by winning all three games in Anaheim.

Never has the home-ice edge been more important to a Stanley Cup winner. The Devils outscored the Ducks 12-1 at home.

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