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Bulls Sweep Magic - The Osceola Bucs?

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It is quite amazing that you can leave town for ten days and in such a short time nearly everything has changed in sportsworld Orlando.

Coming back into town on Sunday it was the Orlando-Utah matchup that occupied the O-rena. The only problem is that the floor of the building was covered with ice, and the IHL playoffs had replaced those of the NBA. Shaq, Dennis, Nick and Horace were gone, and the only Penny out there was the one that was thrown onto the ice with all those sunglasses.

Out on the road while the Bulls dismantled the Magic I was able to see only bits and pieces of games, but it was obvious that the sweep resembled a mismatch at times. It was also obvious that the medical reports were as important as the game plan. Without Grant and Shaw, with a crippled Koncack and a hamstrung Penny, and with Nick in civies, this was not the same team that won 60 games in the regular season.

But make no mistake about it the Orlando Magic even at full strength were no match for the Chicago Bulls. This was a team that won over seventy games this season with the best all-around player, the best rebounder, and an all-star small forward. Jordan, Rodman and Pippen complemented by an exceptional group of role players, and coached by the master of Zen and the Art of Basketball, the Chicago Bulls are arguably the best team in NBA history. What they did to Seattle on Wednesday should remind Magic fans that their team was beaten by very the best in the NBA.

As for the Magic they do have problems. Shaq can't make a free throw to save his soul. Dennis and Nick can't shoot with anyone playing defense against them. There is no bench, an area in which Brian Hill has failed as a coach. The defense against the Bulls was at times non-existent and the Magic looked like the Matadors with defenders waving as the Bulls charged to the hoop.

While out on the road people repeatedly asked me who was going to be the next Magic coach. Clearly in the national media Brian Hill is down the drain. This of course is largely the creation of NBC and the illusions perpetrated by the self-important Jim Grey. I read a report in the Atlanta paper on Sunday that John Gabriel was trying to figure out which player to trade, Dennis

or Nick. And nearly everyone assumes that Shaq has already left for L.A.

It is time for cooler heads to prevail. Losing to the Chicago Bulls in four straight with a pack of injuries is no reason to push the panic button. John Gabriel does not need to back up the truck. Brian Hill does not need to be sent down the slide to New Jersey. What this team needs is some minor adjustments in both personnel and coaching philosophy, no more, and more importantly, no less.

Finally if the Magic don't sign Horace Grant it will create further problems. If they don't sign Shaq they can pack up the franchise. Instead of a need for a bigger arena or slim-fast seating, they will be looking for a permanent sign to place in front of the O-rena reading simply "Game Tonight: Plenty of Good Seats Still Available."

I left town amidst much anticipation and false expectations over the series with the Bulls, only to return to find everything in disarray leaving me to wonder if I had taken a wrong turn somewhere in Georgia.

If that wasn't enough I then read that the Tampa Bay Bucs are again near to cutting a deal with Osceola County. Why would anyone want to front tax dollars to lure this team to Central Florida? Wouldn't it be a better investment to pay them to stay in Tampa? At the same time Orlando authorities are looking for \$124M to renovate the Citrus Bowl, which seems to be eternally in renovation. The object is to get an NFL franchise. Where were these people when Jacksonville was given the expansion franchise and when the Bucs were looking desperately for a new home in the spring?

Another story indicates that the Orlando Cubs are about to be sold to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and this we are told could lead Norton Herrick to sue the City of Orlando. This is the same Norton Herrick who the city gave the exclusive rights to bring a major league baseball team to Orlando. The vague legal logic seems to be that the sale of the Cubs to the Devil Rays will essentially give the Devil Rays territorial rights in Orlando and therefore veto power to prevent a major league team from coming here.

The City is responsible for Herrick's theoretical financial loss preventing him from bringing a team here that he doesn't have, because the City of Orlando could veto any sale of the Cubs to

the Devil Rays by virtue of the City's control over Tinker-to Evers-to Chance Field. Herrick will therefore be prevented from doing something he can't do anyway, and will suffer a great financial loss.

I am not making any of this up.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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