

PRO BASKETBALL N.B.A. PLAYOFFS

Riley's Presence Is Still Felt, if No Longer Heard

MIAMI — We still get an occasional glimpse of the competitive fire, as when LeBron James was knocked down from behind Saturday by Tyson Chandler and Pat Riley leapt out of his seat across the court from the home-team bench.

HARVEY ARATON

ON PRO BASKETBALL

We still feel his presence in the hallways of American Airlines Arena and measure his influence in the phraseology of his coaches and players.

But we cannot hear Riley anymore. We do not breathlessly await his next motivational mantra. Once he was a grand N.B.A. philosopher. Now Riley has transitioned into a spiritual Buddha, lurking but elusive in his commanding role as the president of the Miami Heat.

"Very few guys in the N.B.A. have a presence about them," said Shane Battier, the reserve forward. "Pat Riley has a presence. He is a living legend. He knows of what he speaks."

Except to the world outside his immediate basketball family, Riley has gone professionally silent, to the point where he might still pass as an employee of a certain uptight organization he used to work for in New York. Riley has not once discussed the state of the Heat with reporters this season. Anyone who makes a request might as well be asking for an audience with the Wizard of Oz.

He remains a striking figure, a dap-

per charmer, quick as ever with acknowledgment and wit. When the Heat last played at Madison Square Garden, a reporter who covered Riley when he was the hired savior of that storied building all but collided with him while navigating the remodeled corridors.

"Are you still here?" Riley said, offering a hand.

Before the reporter could reply — much less prime his recorder — Riley had turned the corner and disappeared.

'He is almost mythical nowadays,' Battier says of the Heat's president.

"He is almost mythical nowadays," Battier said, laughing.

What is Riley — who gave us such canny axioms as "Winning and Misery" and "No Rebounds, No Rings" — attempting to prove?

"You probably have to ask him," Erik Spoelstra, who has been the Heat's coach since 2008 and has worked for Riley for 17 years, said after the Heat finished preparations Sunday for Game 2 of their playoff series with the Knicks on Monday night.

"I'd like to, but I can't," the reporter said.

Spoelstra grinned and said: "Which I like."

Which is also the point stretched to the extreme, in the classic Riley tradition since his rise to prominence as the four-time championship coach of the Los Angeles Lakers.

"You've got to let the head coach be a head coach," Dwyane Wade said. "The players have to see that as well. Every now and then, you'll see him around, or he'll call you up to that nice office. But for the most part, he stays back, stays out of it when it comes to the players, and he's been doing that for a couple of years."

Does Riley still smart from the news media beating he took for uprooting Stan Van Gundy as the Heat coach — reportedly at Shaquille O'Neal's behest — before leading the team to the title in 2006? One could make the retrospective case that the ends justified the means. But Old Man Riles, 67, has the second-longest chief executive tenure in the N.B.A. (behind Sacramento's Geoff Petrie) and has said that he believes the coaching grind is for younger men.

For everyone's sake, it is better for him to break new ground with his motivational methods — like the time last season when he summoned Spoelstra to his office after the slumping Heat lost to Chicago. That set off an alarm for Spoelstra because their postgame conversations usually took place in the team's family room.



LYNNE SLADKY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pat Riley before Saturday's first-round playoff opener in Miami against the Knicks, his former team.

"I walked in there, and there was a bottle of wine and two glasses," Spoelstra said. "He said, 'Come in here and share this with me.' And the first 20 to 30 minutes, we just sipped the wine and didn't say one word. That's what I really needed at the time. He just has a feel."

Given his nine years with Riley, Wade said he has heard all the stories — "a few of them two or three times." His favorites are those from Los Angeles, about how a team blessed with Hall of

Fame talents — not unlike the Heat — galvanized for greatness.

"He always lets us know that Magic made it work as the leader of that team," Wade said. "I think at the time, he thought he made it work. I think it shows Coach's growth."

They still address him as "Coach," Spoelstra, Wade and Udonis Haslem, the other holdover from the 2006 title team.

"You always feel his presence," Haslem said. "Coach Spo has tweaked the strategy, put his stamp on it, but make no mistake about it: the majority of our system, especially defensively, all comes from Coach Riley."

Riley wields the power in Miami that the Knicks wouldn't grant him, leading to his much-decried resignation-by-fax in 1995. Tabloid New York called him Pat the Rat and delighted in the Heat's losing three of four playoff showdowns with the Knicks from 1997 to 2000.

But the Knicks haven't won a playoff game since 2001, while Riley as a player, coach and executive has been involved in some kind of college or pro championship game or series in every decade since the '60s.

When he made his recruiting pitch to James in the summer of 2010 — competing against the Knicks, among others — Riley brought his championship rings in a cloth bag and dropped them on the table. After that, as the legend goes, he didn't really have to say much of anything.

Anthony Holds Key To All Hope For Knicks

By HOWARD BECK

MIAMI — To save the Knicks' postseason, all Carmelo Anthony needs to do is score like himself, pass like Jeremy Lin, defend like Iman Shumpert and protect the rim like Tyson Chandler.

If he acquires mystic healing powers by Monday night, that could help, too.

The Knicks are so banged up, bruised and depleted that their series-opening loss to the Miami Heat seemed almost inconsequential by comparison. To wit:

¶ Iman Shumpert, the Knicks' starting shooting guard, was lost for the playoffs — and the next six to eight months — after tearing knee ligaments in Saturday's 100-67 defeat.

¶ Tyson Chandler, their starting center, has been weakened by a virus and did not attend Sunday's practice.

¶ Baron Davis, their starting point guard, is coping with a tight back and also did not work out on Sunday.

The status of Chandler and Davis for Game 2 will be hazy right until tip-off Monday, leaving the Knicks once again pondering their options and their star-crossed existence. Their only sure thing now is Anthony, and he struggled to score 11 points in Game 1.

"We're going to have to do it all," Anthony said Sunday. "Everybody is going to have to do a little bit more, a lot more, due to the lack of players we're going to have out there."

Even in this tortuous, twisting season, the Knicks have never been this debilitated or this demoralized.

The 33-point loss was their worst (regular season or playoff) in two years, and their most lopsided playoff defeat in 21 years,



MARC SEROTA/GETTY IMAGES

The depleted Knicks need Carmelo Anthony to lead them in scoring and also to slow the Miami Heat's LeBron James, who scored 32 points in Game 1.

since a 126-85 rout by the Chicago Bulls in 1991. It was their third-greatest margin of defeat since 1985.

As if to twist the knife a bit, the Heat's public-relations staff included in its postgame notes a long list of bullet points highlighting the Knicks' failures. Among the more stinging statistics: the Knicks' scoring output (67 points) was their lowest since Game 2 of the 1999 finals, their 11-game playoff losing streak is tied for the second longest in history, and their 27 turnovers tied a franchise postseason record.

Also in the notes: Anthony has shot less than 50 percent from the field in seven straight playoff games, and worse than 30 percent in four of his last seven; Amar'e Stoudemire has failed to

break 29 percent in each of his last four postseason games.

One can only imagine the creative research Miami's staff will indulge if the Heat take a 2-0 lead in the series.

"You've got to play a perfect game here to beat this team," Coach Mike Woodson said. "They're good for a reason — they've got three All-Stars, guys that are battle-tested. They were in the finals last year."

The Knicks, as a unit, are neither battle-tested nor particularly sound at the moment. And Woodson, who has been widely celebrated for leading the Knicks to an 18-6 record to finish the season, now has his greatest challenge.

Woodson said he had not decided whom to start in Shum-

per's place, although Landry Fields seems like the logical choice. J. R. Smith would be the other candidate, but Woodson prefers to use him off the bench.

If Davis is limited, Mike Bibby will assume a greater role. Toney Douglas, who has hardly played this season, will probably join the backcourt rotation.

There are still huge concerns in the frontcourt, too. After Chandler and Stoudemire, the Knicks' only proven big man is Jared Jeffries, who is limited to 15 minutes a game because of knee soreness. After Jeffries, the Knicks are down to two rookies (Josh Harrellson and Jerome Jordan) and the veteran Dan Gauric (who Woodson has said is out of shape).

The Knicks faced a talent def-

icit in this series even before they lost Shumpert, their best perimeter defender. He was their first primary defender against Dwyane Wade and their next best option against LeBron James, after Anthony.

Now Anthony not only must lead the Knicks in scoring, but he must also find a way to slow James (32 points in Game 1) and, possibly, orchestrate the offense. Anthony has never been known as a big-time playmaker or distributor, and he struggled when Coach Mike D'Antoni deployed him as a point-forward early in the season.

But with Davis potentially limited, Bibby ineffective and Shumpert and Jeremy Lin out, the Knicks need someone to spark the offense and find open shoot-

ers. Anthony is their best, and only, hope.

"I got to do what I got to do at this point," Anthony said.

A year ago, the Knicks were swept by the Boston Celtics after losing Chauncey Billups and Stoudemire early in the first round. Anthony responded with a 42-point explosion in Game 2, but the Knicks still lost that night and were routed in the final two games.

This series is already presenting an eerie parallel. All hopes once again ride with Anthony, along with the pressure of ending an 11-year playoff losing streak that began long before he arrived.

"I try not to play with pressure," he said. "I go out there, I play ball."

Bulls Stay Positive After Losing Rose

By BEN STRAUSS

DEERFIELD, Ill. — A day after Derrick Rose crumpled to the floor with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee, the Chicago Bulls were still dealing with the aftershocks of the news that they would have to continue their postseason without Rose, their star point guard and the league's reigning most valuable player.

"It's unreal," Bulls guard John Lucas III said.

Rose went down with 1 minute 22 seconds left in the fourth quarter, when he drove to the basket, planted his left foot and his knee buckled. The Bulls led by 12 on their way to a 103-91 victory against the Philadelphia 76ers in Game 1 of a first-round Eastern Conference playoff series.

Rose, whose absence in the postseason is a blow to the Bulls' bid for their first N.B.A. title since 1998, will also probably miss at least the beginning of next season.

Rose, 23, will wait for the swelling in his knee to go down before he has surgery. The Bulls were not ready to put a timetable on his return, but they do expect Rose to be back at full strength — eventually.

'It's not a death sentence for our team,' a coach says.

"No doubt at all in my mind, I expect him to come back fully recovered and be better than ever," Bulls Coach Tom Thibodeau said. "It's not a death sentence. It's not a death sentence for him, it's not a death sentence for our team."

Bulls General Manager Gar Forman said the recovery of other players from serious knee injuries made him confident that Rose could return to the player he was. Chris Paul, another explosive, scoring point guard, tore the meniscus in his knee in 2010 when he was with the New Orleans Hornets. This season, as a member of the Los Angeles Clippers, Paul was an All-Star. Tony Allen, then of the Boston Celtics, tore his A.C.L. in 2007 and was back on the court nine months later.

Thibodeau said he had no regrets about having Rose in the game so late with the Bulls ahead by double digits.

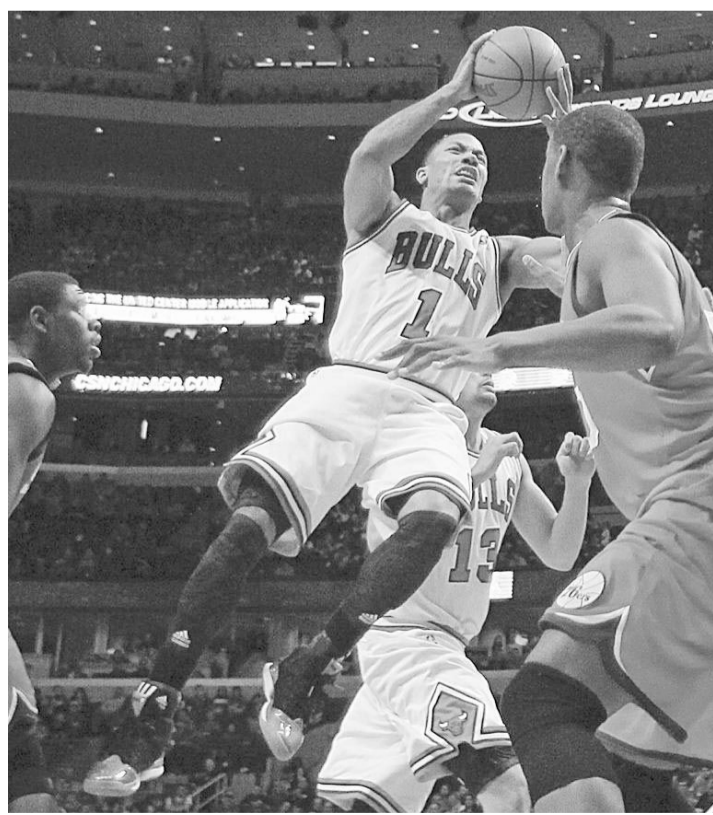
"You make those decisions based on what's going on in the game," Thibodeau said. "Looking back, I don't think there was a problem."

Rose, a Chicago native, was the first overall pick by the Bulls in 2008 and excelled instantly. He was named the rookie of the year and has led the Bulls to four consecutive playoff appearances, including the top seed in the Eastern Conference the past two seasons. In December, he signed a five-year, \$94.8 million contract extension.

Saturday's injury was the latest for Rose, who missed 27 games in the truncated 66-game schedule with numerous setbacks, including turf toe, back spasms, a sprained ankle and a pulled groin muscle.

After the team rested Rose in the regular-season finale and took a cautious approach down the stretch, Forman believed that Rose was ready for the playoffs. Through three-plus quarters Saturday, Rose proved Forman right, scoring 23 points to go with 9 rebounds and 9 assists.

"Obviously, he had to battle through a lot of injuries this year, but we felt he was back right about at 100 percent," Forman



JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY IMAGES

said. "You could see some of the explosiveness and pop coming back into his game."

Several Bulls players and team personnel visited Rose in the hospital Saturday night.

"When I heard the news, I stopped what I was doing, I wanted to be there with the family," Lucas said. "That's my friend more than anything. He's like my little brother, so I just wanted to

The All-Star guard Derrick Rose tore an anterior cruciate ligament Saturday and will miss the rest of the playoffs.

make sure he was O.K."

Game 2 is Tuesday night in Chicago, where the Bulls will turn to C. J. Watson and Lucas at point guard. Watson and Lucas helped the Bulls to an 18-9 record without Rose during the regular season.

The Bulls will also rely on a deep bench and a hard-nosed defense that allowed a league-low 88.2 points a game. "Our best player is out," Joakim Noah said. "Our margin for error is a lot smaller. Can you replace a guy like Derrick? No, but it's on us to step up as much as possible."

Thibodeau, the N.B.A.'s coach of the year in 2010-11 and a contender for the award this season, said: "Our defense, our rebounding, the low turnovers, that won't change. We do feel we have more than enough to win."

Rose, too, still has faith in the Bulls. After the initial shock of losing Rose, Lucas said it was Rose who put the focus back on basketball.

"Derrick said: 'I'm good. Y'all just go out there and take care of business and bring that ring home,'" Lucas said.