With NBA season approaching the All-Star break, fans treated to new elite teams as well as familiar faces

BY JIM MALONEY
CRUSADER STAFF

The NBA season is roughly at its halfway point, and the first half of the season has provided fans with many interesting stories to follow. Although the lockout in 1998/99 had many fans believing the league might never return, it appears to be slowly returning, thanks to the emergence of exciting superstars such as Vince Carter, Kobe Bryant, and David Robinson. Many believe Kidd is the first half MVP of the league, averaging 14.3 points, 7.2 rebounds, and 9.9 assists. Kidd's passing skills have improved the game of everybody around him. Van Horn is averaging 15.4 points and 7.2 rebounds and Kittles is posting 13.1 points per game. Second-year player Kenyon Martin leads the Nets in scoring at 19.4 PPG. This season has seen second-year player Tim Hardaway give the Mavericks a safe bet to go deep into the playoffs as long as their big two are healthy. The Midwest Division also features three teams that are among the league's elite. Dallas (33-14) currently leads the division behind established stars Dirk Nowitzki (24.1 PPG) and Michael Finley (19.4 PPG). This season has also seen Steve Nash develop into an offensive threat, not just as a passer but as a scorer. Nash currently averages 19.7 points and 7.9 assists and leads one of the best offenses in the game. Veterans Juwan Howard and Tim Hardaway give the Mavericks experience that is much-needed in the playoffs as long as their big two are healthy.

The Eastern Conference is once again superior this season. Some pleasant surprises, the West Conference has the majority of the power once again. Sacramento, Los Angeles, Dallas, Minnesota, and San Antonio are all legitimate contenders for an NBA title. The biggest thing to watch in the second half is which team can stay the healthiest in an attempt to make a run at the NBA title. Although the Lakers look to be the most dangerous right now, the Mavericks still deserve to be the favorites at this point. Once Shaq gets healthy and gets back into the swing of things, the Lakers should return to being the dominant team they have in the past two post-seasons.

The Eastern Conference has seen a changing of the guard of sorts this season. Perennial basement dwellers New Jersey (27-20) and Boston (27-20) are pacing the Atlantic Division.

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By Brendan Cohn
CRUSADER STAFF

Last weekend the Holy Cross men’s track and field team had a busy weekend competing at the Millrose Games Friday, Feb. 1 and the Valentine Classic in Boston Saturday, Feb. 2. The women’s team accompanied the men to Rhode Island Saturday. Both teams finished sixth overall.

In the main Action Friday at the Millrose games, HC entered two relay teams in the competition. In the 4 x 400, HC seniors Nick Bru- tacco and Jeff Scott teamed up with sophomores Dan Conti and Shawn David for a strong third place finish. One of the fastest in the heat of five. Their time of 3:35.11 was second overall.

The 4 x 800 group, consisting of seniors Ryan Karrigan and Pat Mahoney, and juniors Bill Kenney and Matt Karatkiewitz, placed sixth in a heat of seven with a time of 8:09.73. On Saturday, the University of Rhode Island Invitational Saturday, Feb. 2.

Performances of the day belonged to Conti, from Hubbard- stown, MA, finished fourth in the 55 meter hurdles accounting for four of HC’s 16 points. In the weight throw, Thibeault had a personal best and third place finish. The seniors from East Providence, RI, notched six team points.

In women’s action, Emily Hogan and Katie Thorton placed high in the 3000 meter run. Hogan, a senior from Maryland, won the event while Thornton, a freshman from Bur- bank, CA, placed third.

Lastly, the San Antonio Spurs are holding strong in the Midwest Divi- sion just two games out of first. Tim Duncan has been forced to carry even more of the load this season as the play of fellow big man David Robinson has fallen off somewhat. Despite his career aver- ages of 18.9 points and 5.3 rebounds earned him an all-star selection at the young age of 24. Add Joe Smith, Chauncey Billups, and Anthony Peeler to the mix and you have another very deep team that will be tough in the grueling NBA post-season.

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