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November 21, 2007

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Pistons reflect after tough trip

Despite first-place Central spot, Prince stresses need to focus more on consistency.

The Detroit News

Tim Twentyman

AUBURN HILLS -- The Pistons are 6-4 and sit atop the Central Division standings -- not bad considering they've battled a multitude of injuries and have played just two games in the friendly confines of The Palace.

But the Pistons aren't giving themselves a first-rate progress report after 10 games.

"The only thing that is wrong with us is inconsistency," Tayshaun Prince said. "We are not concerned with the 6-4 record; that is not an issue. The inconsistency has been a problem. We play good one game and not so well in other games. We have a tough time when we hit droughts, and that is the thing that we have to eliminate."

Most of the chord of discontent stems from an exhausting 2-3 West Coast trip in which Detroit allowed all five opponents to score at least 100 points.

"If at the beginning of the year you would have said we were going to be 6-4 knowing what our schedule was, I probably would have said that's OK," coach Flip Saunders said. "We got a little bit greedy and we're not satisfied because of how we started (4-1)."

Circus comes to town

Isiah Thomas and the 2-8 Knicks bring the NBA's version of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus to The Palace tonight.

Between the Stephon Marbury soap opera, the entire team getting kicked out of practice Monday and Thomas already fielding questions about his job security, the Knicks seem to be the perfect opponent for a Pistons team looking to get back to their winning ways.

"When you have great chemistry you have that bond between players and coaches, and whenever there is an issue you hold it inside the locker room," Prince said when asked about the Knicks' public locker-room problems. "People just have to look at themselves inside the mirror

sometimes and really understand what you're going to bring and what has to be understood at all times, especially when things are going tough."

Helping hand

Richard Hamilton still remembers a time when he, his mother and sister needed the assistance of a soup kitchen in Coatesville, Penn., to retrieve the necessary fixings to put together a Thanksgiving dinner.

Hamilton helped make sure similar families in need around Detroit would have their Thanksgiving dinner by lending a hand to the Capuchin Services Center and Soup Kitchen in Detroit on Tuesday.

Hamilton, with assistance from Feed the Children and Honeysuckle White, donated 250 turkeys and more than 400 boxes of food and personal-care products to pre-selected families.

"I've been doing Thanksgiving events here in Detroit since I came here," Hamilton said. "There are a lot of people that need help and I believe this event will make the holiday better for those people in need."

Road warriors

Tonight's game was originally scheduled for Tuesday, but before the season the Pistons got the game switched to tonight because of their West Coast trip.

"Since Oct. 30th ...we've been home for three days," Saunders said. "We are probably the only team in the league that has gone three weeks without playing two games in a row at home."

Injury front

According to Saunders, Antonio McDyess looked good in practice and is expected to be in the starting lineup tonight. McDyess was sporting a protective sleeve on his strained left shoulder.

"He played pretty good today, so we might want to keep it on," Saunders said about the sleeve.

Rodney Stuckey was shooting around off to the side of practice, wearing a soft cast on his broken left wrist.

"I went to the doctor today and he said that I could start dribbling and catching the ball and stuff like that and that is my process right now," Stuckey said. "As far as playing, it's still a questionable thing. After the Cleveland game (Nov. 28) I see him again, and that's when they'll make the decision."

Knicks at Pistons

Tip-off: 8 tonight, The Palace, Auburn Hills

TV/radio: TV20/WDFN 1130

Outlook: New York's Stephon Marbury might be in the starting lineup tonight after leaving the team last week. He also might miss the game because of a death in the family ... The Knicks have lost six straight and the Isiah Thomas firing watch has begun in New York. ... Tonight is the first of four consecutive home games for the Pistons. ... Antonio McDyess is expected to be in the starting lineup after missing the last three games (strained left shoulder).

Pistons mascot Hooper helps Richard Hamilton distribute food for people in need at the Capuchin Kitchen in Detroit on Tuesday.

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