

In New NBA Season, The Stars Are Expected To Rise in the East

By SAM SCHECHNER

THE BALANCE of power may be shifting in professional basketball.

When **Manu Ginobili** and the defending champion **San Antonio Spurs** open up the NBA season on Tuesday, they will be looking in an unusual direction for some of their biggest rivals: east. While Western Conference teams won the majority of interconference matchups last season, Eastern Conference squads like the **Indiana Pacers** and **Cleveland Cavaliers** are looking much stronger this year. Meanwhile, out west, the Seattle Sonics have lost some talent, and the Phoenix Suns—the team with the most wins last season—will have to make do without star center **Amaré Stoudemire**, who will miss several months with a knee injury.

But a changing of rosters on top teams is only one of several twists basketball fans will encounter when they tune in this season. With overall viewership declining during the past few years and handwringing about players' thuggish antics, the NBA has taken a step to make the league appear more professional: Players must abide by a "business casual" dress code while engaged in league business. That means no



The Spurs' playmaker:
Manu Ginobili

chains worn outside shirts and no sunglasses indoors.

The Cavs are a team to watch. The 20-year-old phenom **LeBron James**, who ranked third in the NBA with 27.2 points per game last season, is maturing. And with the addition of efficient shooting from **Damon Jones** and **Larry Hughes**, it won't be a one-man show in Cleveland anymore. Similarly, the Indiana Pacers, hurting from ill-

nesses and suspensions last season, will see the return of small forward **Ron Artest**, one of the best all-around players in the game, who was suspended last November after he stormed the stands because a Detroit heckler threw a beer cup at him.

Two high-profile coaching changes may also provide some off-court entertainment. **Phil Jackson** has returned to the Los Angeles Lakers,
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where he won three of his nine titles, and may now have to contend with the bruised ego of **Kobe Bryant**, whom Mr. Jackson called "uncoachable" in a book last fall. Elsewhere, the New York Knicks poached coach **Larry Brown** from the Detroit Pistons. Mr. Brown is renowned for improving his teams quickly—and for leaving them with almost as much haste. (*The Spurs play the Denver Nuggets Tuesday, 8 p.m. EST, TNT*)

TV

Competing against a network lineup stacked with hits like "Lost" and "My Name Is Earl," a three-night PBS series on global health may face an uphill battle. But the public broadcaster thinks it has found a way to lure people who might not otherwise tune into such sobering fare: **Brad Pitt**.

"**RX for Survival-A Global Health Challenge**" presents six hours on the development of vaccines and the proliferation of new diseases—narrated entirely by the star of movies like "Mr. & Mrs. Smith."

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documentary footage from 20 countries with scripted dramatizations of scenes including the invention of the first vaccine and the discovery of Ebola in central Africa.

The final episode, "How Safe Are We?" focuses on the danger posed by more than 30 new diseases that have struck during the past 25 years. Because it was completed only weeks ago, it includes footage and information on the spread of avian flu and the recent progress toward the development of a vaccine to combat it.

The series also coincides with what is known in PBS circles as an "impact campaign"—a week of health coverage on National Public Radio, a companion book, and a special issue of Time magazine, which is also hosting a "summit" next



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All-star forward: the
 Cavs' LeBron James

week to discuss the global health crisis. PBS is planning other health programming in the next several weeks, as well, including a special episode of "NOW" on U.S. health policy and a special about the search for an AIDS vaccine narrated by **Richard Gere**. (*Tuesday through Thursday, 9 p.m. EST, PBS; check local listings.*)

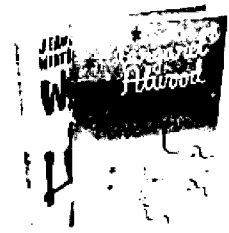
Books

Her face launched 1,000 ships. But **Helen of Troy** has a less-than-beautiful disposition in a new novel from **Margaret Atwood**.

In "**The Penelopiad**," Ms. Atwood retells the story of the Trojan War from the point of view of **Odysseus's** wife, **Penelope**—who describes Helen as a cruel, vain flirt and "poison on legs." The book is part of a new series called, "The Myths," in which noted authors such as Ms. Atwood, **A.S. Byatt** and **Ali Smith** reinterpret ancient legends and stories. The other novel in the first installment of the series is **Jeanette Winterson's** "Weight," which splits the tale of **Atlas** and **Heracles** into segments set in both ancient and modern times. For example, **Atlas** eventually befriends **Laika**, the Russian dog who went into space on **Sputnik**.

Another mythic (at least on the football field) character serves as the subject of a weighty biography: **Bill Belichick**, the head coach of the **New England Patriots**. In "**The Education of a Coach**," **Pulitzer Prize-winning** author **David Halberstam** explores the unusual genius of **Mr. Belichick**, who developed a novel defensive strategy that has won the Patriots three Super Bowls in four years and spread around the National Football League like a cult religion. The book explores lesser-known parts of **Mr. Belichick's** career, such as when he was an assistant coach in 1978 and developed many of his strategic insights by obsessively reviewing postgame film.

Last month two other football-coach biographies also hit stores: "The Last





Nirvana fans get a new best-of record culled from last year's boxed set, with extra goodies including a studio outtake and a rehearsal version of "Come as You Are."

Coach," by Allen Barra (who writes for the Journal), tells the story of University of Alabama head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant and "The Lion in Autumn," by Frank Fitzpatrick, frames the career of longtime Penn State head coach Joe Paterno within the fracas over his disappointing 2004 season.

Music

It may seem like a **Nirvana** boxed set comes out every year. One does.

A year ago, Geffen released a critically acclaimed four-disk boxed set of old Nirvana video and recordings culled from home demos and even a 1987 house party. Now they're releasing parts of it again: "**Sliver: The Best of The Box**" is a best-of record culled from that 2004 collection, crammed onto one CD with a list price of \$13.98. (The boxed set was listed at \$59.98.) There are some new additions: "Spank Thru," from a famed 1985 demo tape; a studio outtake called "Sappy"; and a rehearsal version of "Come as You Are" recorded before the band's major-label debut, "Nevermind."

Geffen is just one of many record labels squeezing repeat sales from die-hard fans. In a period of declining CD sales, many popular musicians, such as Mariah Carey and 50 Cent, are waiting only months—or just weeks—before re-releasing albums in slightly altered (or "remixed") versions, while including a few new tracks as sweeteners. In December, Beck plans to re-release a remix of March's "Guero" under the name "Guerolito."

Also out: "**Speak For Yourself**" is the first major-label album from English singer **Imogen Heap**, whose voice is often compared to Bjork's. Ms. Heap initially fi-

nanced the album on her own, but was signed once her single "Hide and Seek" was played on the season finale of "The O.C." in May, and raced up the charts on iTunes.

Movies

This fall, several new movies are offering a twist on the topic of terrorism: They are telling stories from the perspective of the terrorists themselves.

In the fictional "**Paradise Now**," two young Palestinian men are chosen to commit a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. After a final night spent with their families, who know nothing of the plan, they become separated and must decide independently whether to go through with their plot. Another fictional drama, "**The War Within**," released last month, portrays a well-educated terrorist who comes to New York on a suicide-bombing mission. And in December, Steven Spielberg's "Munich" will take a different approach: The film follows members of the secret Israeli squad assigned to assassinate the alleged perpetrators of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre.



"**Paradise Now**" follows the fates of two young would-be suicide bombers.