

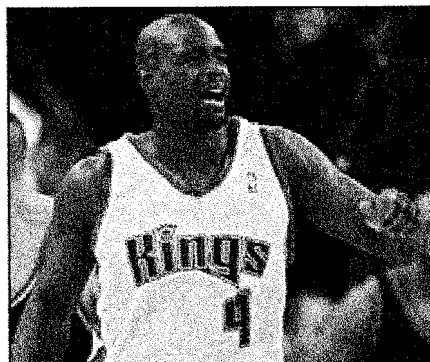
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C-Webb Is Feeling The Fun

Bob Souza - 20th January, 2005 3:30 PM



A gloomy and irritable Chris Webber? Look some more. At the moment, that guy is nowhere to be found.

While it's way too early to start behaving like giddy schoolgirls, there is a pleasant mood returning to fans in Sacramento – one where an occasional water-cooler smirk and snort is acceptable, and even encouraged. The reason: the main man is back, and he appears to actually be enjoying himself again. Having some fun.

Following last season's disappointments - where Webber's symbolic insinuating fingers pointed in the directions of Peja Stojakovic, who always seems to disappear in the playoffs, and Bobby Jackson, whose extended time away due to injury was questioned – there appeared to be a growing rift amongst the boys in the band.

Playing with pain and barking at criticism, Chris seemed to be on the verge of pulling a Peja - requesting a trade from the best NBA gig he has ever had: a running, winning, exciting team with him as a star in front of thunderous, sold-out crowds every night, and a chance at the championship. Yeah, that's a rough one. Almost inhumane.

Coming into camp this year, the 31-year-old Webber stated that he just wanted to "have fun", and certainly headed out with that purpose. In China, he clowned around by taking video of reporters during post-game conferences. What a riot. Just think what the lamp shade and tutu routine would have done.

However, there's no disputing this season's numbers, no matter how hard you try. Take a gander at these per-game averages if you will: 21.8 points; 9.8 rebounds; 45.9% field goal accuracy and 36 minutes on the floor. Tack on 5 assists for extra grinning and there's little doubt his renovated knee is fine. Just fine.

Then raise your brows further and try to keep from spewing your cup of joe on this one: 29.5 points and 13 boards over the last 4 games, with plenty of clutch play down the stretch. And, oh yeah – they were all victories. Hmm, shall we say... all-star caliber?

On January 12th, the Kings trailed surprising Phoenix by 8 games in the Pacific Division. A single week speeds by and they are unexpectedly just 3 ½ back – close enough to stretch for the saggy shorts of the staggering Suns.

The trade of Doug Christie for Cuttino Mobley seems to have wheezed a new mouthful of breath into the Kings, and maybe more specifically, Webber. How long it will last is anybody's guess. While Doug was one of Webber's closest friends on the team, Chris has come to understand the game's business nature, and look to the positive.

And to look for the fun.

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"Anybody on the inside that knows this team ... knows we have a fun, relaxed attitude, which if you are winning, it's cool," Webber told The Sacramento Bee last August.

Well, they're winning now, so perhaps the glee will stay. How much more merriment is around the bend for C-Webb and the Kings? We'll surely find out in the weeks and months ahead. Hang on to your butts. It could be quite a ride.



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