



Braves Coach Still
Hopes For Success

Season

McAdoo
McAdoo
To Be Named
Coach Today

1972-1973

Coach Today

Freedom

There's A Doctor In The House



Jack Ramsay arrived on the scene in Buffalo following the 1971-72 season, replacing Johnny McCarthy. Shown here in his debut season, "Dr. Jack", intently coaches from the bench while Braves' play by play announcer Van Miller (right) makes the call. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

PREVIOUS PAGE: First year Buffalo Coach Jack Ramsay (L) raises his arms in celebration as the Braves' play by play announcer Van Miller (R) follows suit. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

Few sports stars, even those who are All-Stars and win championships, are known by their first name or a nickname. But such is the case with Dr. Jack Ramsay. He went on to coach Portland to an NBA title and later gained more notoriety as the radio analyst for ESPN. But to hear Doctor Jack tell it, so much of his success began when he was brought in as the third coach in as many seasons for the Buffalo Braves.

Soon after the team finished its second season, John McCarthy was dismissed as coach. While team owner Paul Snyder had said he was looking for disciplinarian, even a dictator, as his new coach, he ended up selecting a cerebral student of the game, who had a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. After growing up in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, Ramsay built his coaching foundation in Philadelphia. After four years as a student at St. Joseph's, he returned to his alma mater and guided the Hawks to their first Big 5 championship in 1955-56. In 11 seasons at St. Joe's, his teams went 234-72.

In 1966, Ramsay moved to the professional ranks as the general manager for the NBA champion Philadelphia 76ers. Still, his heart was in teaching and soon enough he was back on the sidelines, coaching the lowly 76ers. But the glory days in the City of Brotherly Love had faded for now. The team won only nine games in Ramsay's last year there and soon Doctor Jack was looking for a job.

In his biography at the NBA Hall of Fame, Ramsay is described as a "quiet leader," "a teacher" and "a true basketball aficionado." He was also savvy enough to realize that he had entered into a situation in Buffalo with an owner who demanded success and was always prepared to give his two-cents worth. So, before Ramsay signed his contract, he made Snyder pledge that he wouldn't enter the Braves' locker room after a game. That it would be the coach's domain. Ramsay was able to make that arrangement stick until close to the end of his tenure in Buffalo.

"Before I signed a contract, I said to (Snyder), 'I want to run the team.' Ramsay recalled. "If you don't find that to your liking, then get somebody else. While I'm the coach, I need to run the team. I can't have you coming in the locker room. Snyder said. "Oh, that's good. I think that's terrific.' For my first three years in Buffalo, he abided by that."

Unfortunately, Ramsay's tenure in Buffalo extended to four seasons.



A young Bibbit McAdoo looks cross court before passing in an Auld game played in his rookie year. McAdoo and Randy Smith waited for their chance to contribute early in the 1972-73 season before earning starting roles by season's end. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



phil ranallo WHAT'S NEW HARRY?

June 13, 1972

AT 11:35 MONDAY MORNING, THE Buffalo Braves rookies — 18 young men with pro basketball aspirations, including Bob McAdoo, Paul Snyder's most important recent investment — completed their initial workout at the club's rookie camp, at Erie Community College. Nothing untoward occurred at the unveiling of the rookies.

At the session's conclusion, for example, Jack Ramsay, the scholarly gentleman who 10 weeks ago was named head coach of the Braves, was still head coach of the Braves, proof that Paul Snyder must be slipping.

The players, after their initial drill on the rather crisp day for mid-June were transported by car to the club's headquarters the Charter House.

A few minutes later, as several of the players lounged in the facility lobby, waiting for lunch to be served, Jack Ramsay arrived.

The coach went directly to his room. Then, a twinkling or two later, Ramsay reappeared, outside in his swimming trunks. Several of the players spotted their coach through the lobby's plate-glass windows and their mouths went agape.

Ramsay walked briskly to the outdoor and unheated pool, dived into the chilly water and nonchalantly swam 12 laps.



Chuck Healy (left) interviews newly introduced Buffalo Braves coach Jack Ramsay in 1972. Healy worked for years with WBEN-TV Channel 4 in Buffalo after a professional boxing career. He also hosting bowling shows, and wrestling telecasts from Memorial Auditorium.

Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

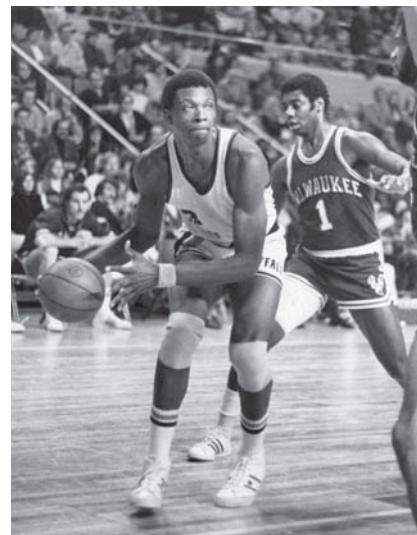
At his initial press conference as the Braves' head coach, Ramsay said the team had plenty of potential. Yet in the next breath, he added how important team defense was.

"The teams that play good defense are the teams that win championships," he said. "Defense is the guts of the game, and good defense promotes a lot of your offense on steals or making your opponent take bad shots."

Ramsay had high hopes for 6-foot-11 center Elmore Smith. Smith had made the NBA's rookie team, but he had lost out to Portland's Sidney Wicks for rookie of the year honors. The Braves' other Smith, Randy, didn't garner any votes.

In the beginning of his Braves tenure, Ramsay envisioned Elmore Smith as his defensive foundation. "He can be a great shot-blocker and we'll want him to jam up the inside lanes. He'll get his point naturally, but it is on defense where he can become effective."

For his part, Smith was happy to see Ramsay arrive. "Last season I didn't know if I was a forward, guard or center," the "Big E" told *Sports Illustrated*. "We've got a system now."



Buffalo's new coach Jack Ramsay looked to Elmore Smith as the inside force to build his future team around. As the season evolved Ramsay turned his attention more towards the athleticism and scoring ability of Bob McAdoo. Here Elmore Smith drives against Oscar Robertson of the Milwaukee Bucks. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

Publicly, Ramsay played up about the team's promise. Privately, though, he told Snyder and Donovan that the team couldn't contend with its current core of players. The owner and general manager and soon got busy. Unlike other owners, Snyder took an active part in signing players, and his pursuit of University of North Carolina star Bob McAdoo turned into something out of a spy novel.

McAdoo had reportedly signed a contract with the Virginia Squires, which had made him the No. 1 pick in the ABA draft. That news apparently scared off the Portland Trail Blazers, which had the top choice in the NBA draft. Although McAdoo visited Portland, the Trail Blazers decided to draft 6-foot-11 center LaRue Martin out of Loyola University in Chicago. Many still consider Martin the worst first pick ever in professional basketball.

There were conflicting signs if McAdoo had indeed signed with the Squires, and Snyder decided to aggressively pursue the former Tar Heel star. Negotiations between the Braves and McAdoo's agents began in secret at the Charter House Motor Hotel in Buffalo. But almost as soon as talks

It was a lonely swim. Ramsay had the pool all to himself since polar bears are not allowed on the premises.

The Braves' new basketball boss, — the man who spent the previous 10 years in Philadelphia — is a tough cookie.

He is also quite a taskmaster as evidenced by the regimen with which he welcomed the rookies to the NBA Monday morning.

A FEW WEEKS AGO, Ramsay sent a letter to each of the Braves' rookies that contained, among other things, a suggestion that they report in very good physical condition because we are going to work extremely hard, right from the outset.

Monday morning, the rookies learned that Ramsay, in the letter, had given it to them straight.

The two-hour session started outdoors with a one-mile run around the Erie Community track. That was followed by four 60-yard sprints.

Then Ramsay escorted his athletes into the gym, where he immediately sent them through driving-layup and jump-shooting drills.

A player who blew a layup or made a bad pass, or missed an uncontested jump shot from the foul line, had to do one lap around the gym.

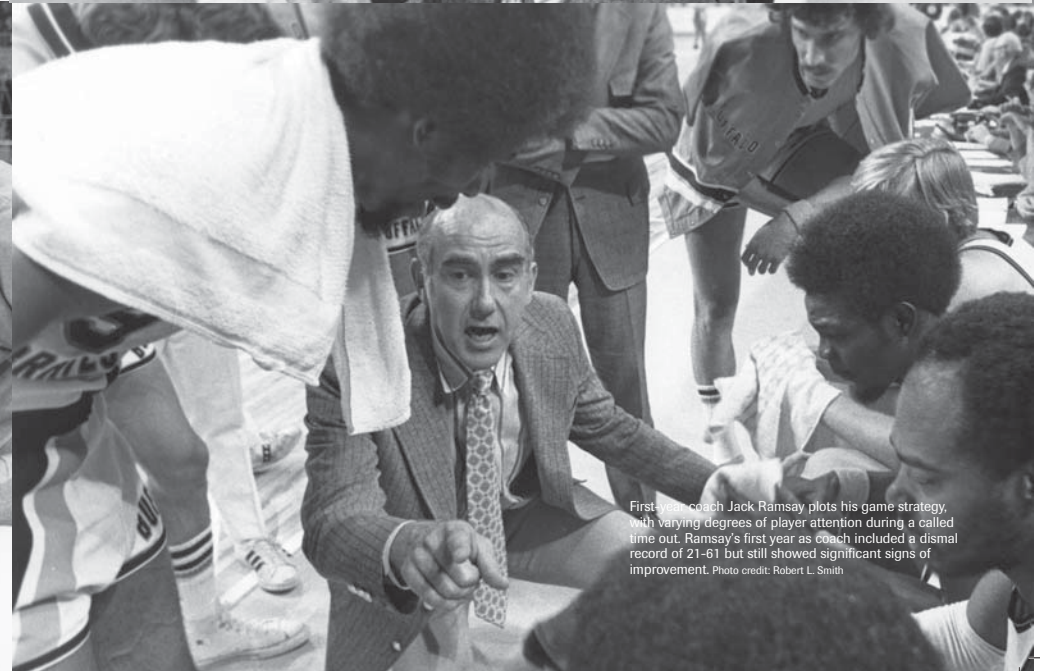
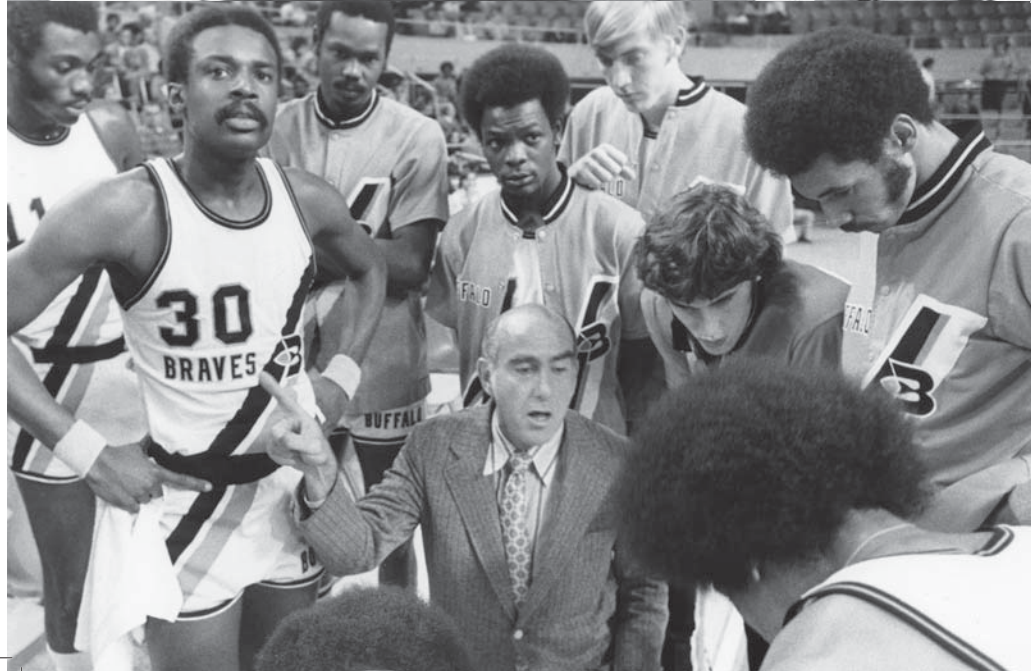
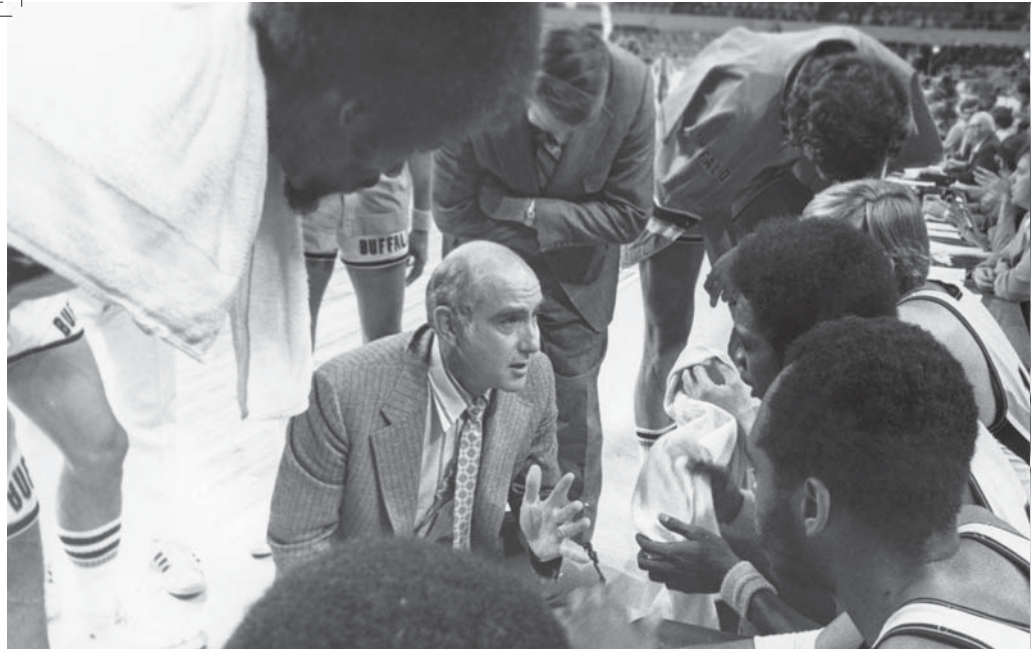
WHEW! SAID PAUL HOFFMAN, THE St. Bonaventure guard, when asked what he thought of his introduction to Jack Ramsay and the NBA.

But it was interesting.

Then Hoffman grinned.

There weren't too many words in the dressing room when it was over, he said, just an awful lot of very heavy breathing.

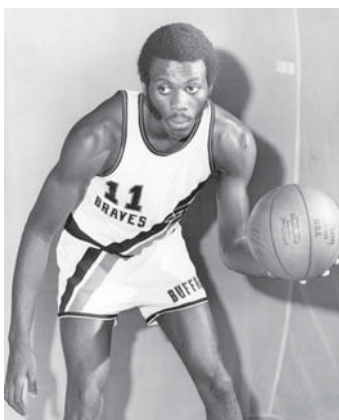




First-year coach Jack Ramsay plots his game strategy, with varying degrees of player attention during a called time out. Ramsay's first year as coach included a dismal record of 21-61 but still showed significant signs of improvement. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



Elmore Smith the Braves leading scorer for the '72-73 season, looks to make a move against Clifford Ray of the Chicago Bulls. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



The tenacity of Buffalo general manager Eddie Donovan and team owner Paul Snyder paid off handsomely when the Braves signed the immensely talented Bob McAdoo out of North Carolina. Passed over by Portland with the first overall pick, the choice of McAdoo would significantly shape the history of the Braves franchise. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

began, *The Courier-Express'* Jim Baker was tipped off that McAdoo was in town and negotiations were under way. Baker called the hotel and the desk clerk told him that neither McAdoo nor any of his agents were registered at the hotel. But then she said, "You don't mean the Paul Snyder party, do you?"

"Why, yes, indeed," Baker answered.

"They're all in Room 304, shall I ring?" the clerk offered.

"No, don't bother," Baker replied and he hurried over to the hotel.

Outside the Charter House, he saw that the lights were on in 304 and he hurried upstairs with photographer Ron Schifferle in tow. There they found Do Not Disturb signs hanging from the doorknobs for Rooms 304 and 305. Baker knocked, but nobody answered. Baker headed outside and saw that the lights in Room 304 had gone out. Soon afterward McAdoo was spotted leaving the lobby in a hurry.

"They were in Room 304," the desk clerk said, "but they might not be there now."

Baker continued to case the joint, making several laps of the hotel. Back inside he saw Braves GM Donovan on a phone in the lobby. He waited until Donovan finished the call and then confronted him upstairs outside Room 304.

"McAdoo?" Donovan replied. "I don't know anything about him. I'm just here having dinner with Paul and Arnold (Gardner, team attorney). They're in that room."

But then the door to Room 304 opened and there, eating dinner with Snyder was McAdoo. Donovan didn't say another word. He went back inside and the door to Room 304 closed behind him.

Days later, McAdoo signed a three-year contract with a base salary of \$1 million with Buffalo. But he had indeed signed a contract with the ABA Squires earlier, so Snyder filed in U.S. District Court on McAdoo's behalf. According to the Braves' suit, the Squires' McAdoo contract should be set aside on the grounds that McAdoo (then just 20 years old) was technically a minor at the time of that signing. Eventually, the Braves bought out McAdoo's ABA contract for \$200,000 and Snyder reportedly destroyed the original Squires contract himself. McAdoo was in Buffalo to stay. The case never went to court.

"I ended up in Buffalo because the NBA was where I wanted to play," McAdoo said years later. "That's why the Virginia Squires and the ABA never were front and center. At first, I thought I was going to Portland as the first pick. But they didn't want to pay the money they had paid out for Sidney Wicks and Geoff Petrie, their first-round picks the previous years. So, we told them that it wasn't going to work out. They went with LaRue Martin and I decided to sit tight and see what Buffalo did with the second pick. In the end, it all worked out. I was in the league where I wanted to be."

From his first practice with the Braves, McAdoo was certain that he should be in the starting lineup. Yet Buffalo already had Elmore Smith at center and All-Pro Bob Kauffman and often Randy Smith on the front line. That left McAdoo playing a lot of small forward, chasing such smaller players as John Havlicek, Bill Bradley and Lou Hudson. "Sometimes," he later told *Sports Illustrated*, "I wasn't even in it."

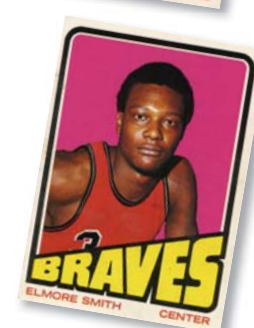
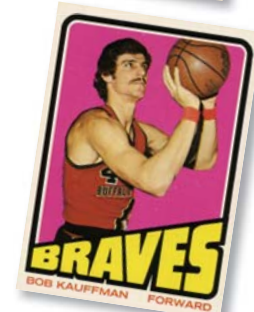
Publicly, Ramsay didn't want to push his young star into a starting role. "Bob gives us a potentially very strong front line," he said at the time, "and a lot of flexibility and depth, which it lacked until his signing."

But McAdoo was a young man in a hurry. Teammates remember him as having a chip on his shoulder about what he could do and how soon he could do it in the NBA.

"I'm really 6-foot-9 3/4," he said when asked if he was too small to play center at his listed 6-foot-9. "I played center at North Carolina, but it was an offense with really three forwards and two guards."

Left unsaid was that McAdoo wouldn't mind having Ramsay go to such an offensive scheme with the Braves. But Ramsay had bigger problems as Buffalo began its third season in the NBA. "We were not a good defensive team," Ramsay remembered. "We did not rebound well, either. We could get out and run the ball and there was some speed on that team."

Guard Walt Hazzard, a. k. a. Mahdi Abdul Rahman, was the floor leader, but there were questions about his stamina. During the offseason, Abdul Rahman had participated in a distance-running program at UCLA. The same program had previously paid big dividends for Laker guard Gail Goodrich. The Braves' training camp was certainly for the fit, with Ramsay setting the example, often taking dips in the hotel pool.



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Bob McAdoo (L) took charge of the Braves' front line, earning the selection as NBA Rookie of the Year. Here McAdoo goes to the basket as Mike Newlin of the Houston Rockets follows the play. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



Jack Ramsay prowls the court sideline, during a heated moment in a game played in Buffalo during the 1972-73 season. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



Elmore Smith was counted on by first year coach Jack Ramsay to provide defense and muscle under the basket. Here "Big E" shows his outside range against the master of the hook shot himself, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, in a game at Buffalo's Memorial Auditorium. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

Also, at training camp, Rudy Martzke was hired as the club's public relations director. Martzke, who would later become the influential television columnist for *USA Today*, already had a job lined up at a dog track in Florida. His wife wanted the family to stay in warmer locales and forget about winters up north. But there was something about the personalities assembling in Buffalo – Ramsay, Donovan, McAdoo, even team owner Snyder – that made the Braves' job appealing. Despite his wife's protestations, Martzke headed to Buffalo to check out the team's opening.

"It was at Jack's first rookie camp and a bunch of us were back at the hotel bar afterward," Martzke said. "Eddie Donovan started to swap stories with the newspaper guys and I backed off. I didn't know where I stood in this equation and Eddie said, 'It's OK, Rudy. You've got the job.'"

"Well, I didn't tell my wife for a few days. She had made me promise her that I wouldn't take this job up in Buffalo because of the winters. I didn't have the heart to tell her over the phone. So, I waited until I got back home.



Journeyman center Cornell Warner (35) blocks a Boston Celtics shot as Freddy Hilton (32), Randy Smith, and Bill Hewitt of the Braves look on during a game played in Boston Gardens in late 1972. Warner was drafted by the Buffalo Braves in the 2nd round of the 1970 NBA draft and played a strong backup role during the Braves' first two seasons, before being traded to Cleveland.
Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



Buffalo's Bob Kauffman drives past Boston's Paul Silas, with the Braves' Randy Smith positioned in the background. Kauffman continued his role as the team's workhorse contributor, making the NBA All-Star team for the third straight year. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



1972-73 Buffalo Braves
Back row; Coach Jack Ramsay, Howard "Butch" Komives, Harold Fox, Dick Garrett, Bill Hewitt, Fred Hilton, Bob MacKinnon (Asst. Coach), Ray Melchiorre (Trainer) Seated; John Hummer, Elmore Smith, Bob Kauffman, Bob McAdoo, Randy Smith
Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

"We moved as a family to Buffalo on the Fourth of July. We had two young sons and the baby got pneumonia that first weekend. It was like 55 degrees out and we just froze."

Despite the new faces and the accent on fitness, the team appeared only marginally better than the previous two years. The backcourt was struggling as Hazzard, despite the off-season running, was indeed past his prime. Donovan picked up Dave Wohl off waivers from Portland and traded a draft choice to Detroit for Howard Komives. But it soon became apparent that a more radical plan was needed. Donovan suggested that Randy Smith be returned to the backcourt, freeing up more playing time for McAdoo. Ramsay replied he'd think about it.

Any playoff aspirations pretty much disappeared in two lop-sided games in October. On Oct. 20, the Celtics opened up a huge lead on the Braves. Both teams began to play their bench-warmers and the Braves improbably scored 58 points in a 12-minute span, setting an NBA record. Randy

Smith had 23 points in that fourth quarter to set a franchise record. Although the Braves still lost, Ramsay started to seriously consider Donovan's suggestion of more playing time for Smith and McAdoo.

The next night, Buffalo scored a record-low 63 points against Milwaukee. In the 91-63 defeat to the Bucks, Buffalo hit the fewest field goals in its young history (25) and shot only 27.5 percent from the floor. The poor shooting outing came even though the Bucks were missing MVP center Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who was at home with the flu.

Soon afterward the Braves' entire starting five was on the bench by the second quarter in a 107-86 defeat to the New York Knicks. Doctor Jack fined his players \$100 each for lackadaisical play after a loss to the Washington Bullets. Nineteen games into the new season, the Braves had won all of three games.

"My first year in Buffalo, we weren't very good," Ramsay said. "But I'd left Philadelphia, which was in total



phil ranallo WHAT'S NEW HARRY?

February 15, 1973

YES, BRAVES FANS, IT'S TRUE that some of the Buffalo basketball club's games will be played in Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens next season. Paul Snyder, owner of the Braves, admitted as much Wednesday. Braves loyalists, however, need not be alarmed by reports that "a substantial number" of the club's games in 1973-74 will be hosted by Toronto.

"A substantial number" is a gross exaggeration.

Also there need be no fear that Buffalo will be running the risk of losing the franchise to the Canadian city...if some games are played in Toronto and develop into healthy financial draws.

Take Paul Snyder's word for it.

"The Braves will stay in Buffalo forever," Snyder vowed, "...at least as long as I own them—and I have never entertained any ideas of selling them."

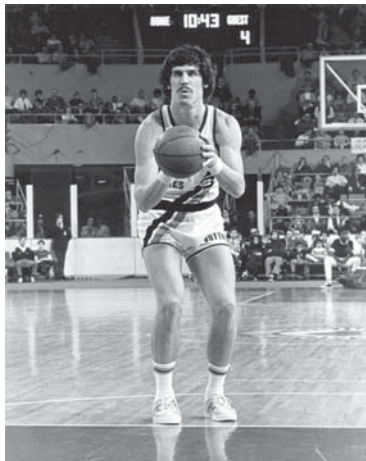
SNYDER SAID HIS PRIMARY reason for buying the Braves three years ago was not to make a lot of money. "If I can help Toronto get a franchise of its own and make a lot of money doing it, though, I'll do it, of course."

Snyder was alluding to the indemnification fee Toronto would have to pay him if it was granted a franchise of its own—since Toronto is regarded as Buffalo territory, according to NBA bylaws, due to its proximity.

The indemnification settlement has been estimated at \$1 million by a Toronto source, but Snyder labeled the estimate as "very conservative."

"But this thing about Buffalo shifting a lot of games to Toronto, or moving the franchise there, is baloney," the Braves' owner said. "It's not going to happen."

SNYDER, ON THE HOT SEAT due to the "Toronto Story," also made these revelations:



Bob Kauffman averaged 175 points, 11 rebounds and five assists per game during the Brave's 1972-73 season. For the Braves' first three seasons, Kauffman was the model of consistency, performing admirably through consecutive losing seasons and three coaching regimes. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

disarray, so I didn't mind too much. At least in Buffalo, there was some light at the end of the tunnel.

"We were a young team. Nobody expected miracles and we certainly didn't supply any. Not that season."

Still, amid the defeats, Ramsay saw occasional flashes of brilliance. Kauffman played in the All-Star Game. Down the stretch, McAdoo took a turn at center and scored 39 and 45 points on the road.

"McAdoo was sensational," Van Miller recalled. "He was so quick. He could really fill the net up. But McAdoo wasn't really a center. The only opposing center who really held his own against him, except when somebody like Wilt Chamberlain would get him low in the blocks, was Dave Cowens. But Cowens was with the Boston Celtics and that's the team the Braves couldn't seem to ever beat when it counted."

Randy Smith recalled, "McAdoo and I were the 11th and 12th man on the team as that season began. He was a rookie and I was in my second year. We'd sit there and watch those guys make all those mistakes and we'd be on the bench,



Braves' head coach Jack Ramsay reacts to the courtside action while conferring with assistant coach Bob MacKinnon (right). MacKinnon was hired by the Braves in 1972 as both assistant coach and head scout after a successful coaching and playing career at Canisius College. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

knowing we could do better than that. We had to be better than that.

"Slowly, the coaching staff began to see the same thing. First, coach Ramsay gave Mac a chance to start and he must have scored 30 points right off. So, I knew he wasn't coming back to the bench anymore. So, I knew I had to make the most of the opportunities I had to stay out there on the floor with him."

That became easier for Smith when Hazzard was placed on waivers before Thanksgiving. "Since we've had a lack of substantial success, I thought it would be better to go with our younger players," Ramsay explained to the local media.

Further helping Smith's cause was Fred Hilton's growing reputation as a streaky shooter and little else. When Ramsay was asked in early February why Hilton only played when Buffalo went to its three-guard offense, he replied, "I've got five guards on this team and I rank Hilton fifth among the five. ... The No. 1 quality for a guard is defense."

Hilton took issue with that statement: "I can play de-

...There is no chance that 15 games will be played in Toronto, as reported. Or even 10 games.

...There is a strong chance that a "small number" of games will be played in the Canadian city...if Snyder and Toronto parties "can work it out."

...Regardless of what happens in the current negotiations with the Toronto people, the Braves will play every team at least two times in Memorial Aud.

...He plans no increase in the ticket prices for Braves games.

SINCE THERE ARE 16 OTHER teams in the NBA, Snyder's declaration that the Braves will play every team at least twice in the Aud guarantees the Buffalo fans a minimum of 32 games.

It also guarantees that only games with Eastern Conference teams will be shifted, since Western Conference teams—Milwaukee, Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago and the rest—make only two visits a season to Buffalo.

"I think most of our season-ticket customers would prefer to buy a 32 or 24 game package, instead of a 41-game package," Snyder said.

"One of the biggest complaints we get from our season-ticket holders is that they have to buy a 41-game package and to see some of the unattractive teams three and four times."

THE BRAVES' OWNER SAID HE felt that reducing the number of games against some of the clubs—Philadelphia and Cleveland, for example—would help the fans, not hurt them.

"The reduction in the package from 41 to 32 games would cut the price of a top-priced season ticket from \$266.50 to \$208 and a bottom-priced ticket from \$102.50 to \$80.

"The concept of a 32 or 34-game schedule, if understood, would be preferred, in my opinion," Snyder said.

SNYDER EMPHASIZED THERE is nothing official about the shifting of a small number of games to Toronto. "If the fans and the writers think I'm wrong, I won't do it," he said. "I won't hurt the franchise."



phil ranallo
WHAT'S NEW HARRY?

March 12, 1973

JUST WHEN THE Buffalo Braves are beginning to feel some muscle, the season is disappearing. They felt muscles for the first time in quite a spell last Thursday against the Chicago Bulls – and they displayed some more sinew Saturday night against the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Braves, sports fans, are on a tear. They have won two games in a row...and a key man in both victories has been John Hummer – much to the dismay of his large army of detractors.

In the victory over Chicago, Hummer played well on both offense and defense – and grabbed the rebound that broke the back of the Chicago rally and put the Bulls out of business.

In the victory over Portland, Hummer did a commendable defensive job on Sidney Wicks, the Trail Blazer ace.

IN THE TWO GAMES, Hummer toiled a total of 51 minutes. He scored 14 points, going 7-for-12 from the field. He grabbed 14 rebounds and had 8 assists.

In each game, Bronx cheers twanged Hummer's eardrums – as usual – as he stripped off his sweat-suit and ambled on to the court.

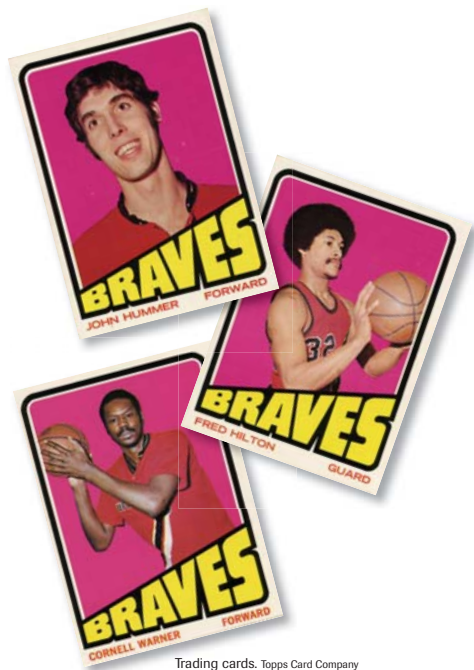
"I have to endure it two more games," Hummer said Saturday night. "I can make it."

In each game, Hummer did things that changed the boos to cheers, but the cheers did not enrapture him.

"I don't think much of a guy who'll slap you on the back one minute and turn on you the next," he said.

Coach Jack Ramsay, sipping a drink, was within earshot of Hummer's remark.

"SIDNEY WICKS WAS killing us," Ramsay said. "Hummer went in and contained him. John's play—



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fense. My coach at Grambling told me I'm the best defensive guard he ever coached." But that didn't cut it in the Braves' new world. At the end of the season, Hilton was waived by the team and out of the league soon afterward. Meanwhile, Randy Smith became a starter at guard.

"That Freddie Hilton was put on this Earth to shoot," Van Miller recalled. "In a game, he'd come across the time line and you could just tell that he was going to put up another jumper. You could tell by his body language, the way his eyes lit up, and sure enough most times that's exactly what he did – he shot."

While Doctor Jack was often portrayed as a quiet teacher of basketball, behind the scenes he was speaking his mind. Ramsay was often in Donovan's office, pushing again for more roster moves. "By the end of that first season, I told Eddie Donovan that we weren't going to make it with most of these guys," Ramsay said. "We had a slew of players who had some skill, but they weren't good enough to play in the NBA.



Drafted as a 20 year old in 1972, Bob McAdoo was quick to mature in the NBA limelight. Here McAdoo is shown with two young Braves' fans in a promotional shot for Dairyalea milk. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

So, I convinced Eddie that we should really revamp the team and keep Randy Smith, Bob McAdoo and Bob Kauffman."

Ironically, the big name missing from that list was the Braves' shot-blocking center – Elmore Smith. The guy Ramsay was ready to build the team around back in the preseason.

On paper, the Braves made no progress in their third season. They finished the 1972-73 season, with a 21-61 record. That was a game worse than either of their first two seasons. After starting the season 4-19, the Braves had ended the season by losing 11 in a row and 26 of their last 30 games. As a result, the team's average attendance fell to 7,847, which didn't make Snyder happy. Still, Ramsay saw reason for hope. Despite often playing out of position at small forward, McAdoo averaged 18 points and 9.1 rebounds a game and was named the NBA's rookie of the year.

Off the court, Snyder announced that the Braves would play nine games in Toronto next season. At the time, Snyder said his primary reason for buying the Braves was not

both on offense and defense—was the difference in this game.

"It would be nice if the people of Buffalo appreciated that."

But most people don't.

They choose to "appreciate" most of the Hummer blunders—such as the dunk shot he bounced off a Chicago player's feet on a 3-on-1 Buffalo fastbreak.

Or the times he has dribbled the ball off his feet and the ball was knocked out of bounds. Or the times he has snatched rebounds and had them bounce off his knees.

JOHN HUMMER WAS born to be abused, perhaps. He is not the most coordinated performer in the NBA. He is all arms and legs and elbows and knees.

Everything he does seems to require great effort.

So Hummer isn't perfect. He makes a lot of mistakes. But he also does many things right...and he has a few attributes.

He may be the most courageous Brave. He is always in traffic, always attempting to jam things up for the opposition.

When he sets a pick, his opponent usually knows he has been picked...by the elbow Hummer buries into the guy's midriff—inadvertently, of course.

TO ME, HUMMER IS the most interesting Brave. When John gets off the bench and goes into a game, things perk up—the customers stop dozing.

Hummer, the athlete who has taken more abuse from Buffalo sports fans than any pro football, hockey or basketball player, is a young man of true grit.

He takes the abuse, the best he can—and just keeps plugging.

Despite the boos, Hummer seems to be a fellow who's determined to keep doing things until he gets them right.

Hummer, the guy who keeps getting laughed at, may have the last laugh.

MORE THAN A COUPLE OF NBA clubs are interested in him, including the Milwaukee Bucks. I'd be delighted if John Hummer wound up a Buck—and came back to Memorial Auditorium one night and haunted the boo-birds.



After riding the bench in the early portion of the 1972-73 season, Bob McAdoo (11) finished in a prominent role, ending the year averaging 18 points a game, while earning honors as NBA Rookie of the Year. Here McAdoo drives to the basket in a game against the Houston Rockets.



Photo credit: Robert L. Smith



Paul Snyder purchased the Buffalo Braves in the fall of 1970 after the ownership that secured the NBA franchise fell short of cash. During the 1972-73 season, Snyder was patient with his new coach Jack Ramsay and supported ambitious moves that would bring competitive players to the Braves. Photo credit: Robert L. Smith

to make money. Still, if he could show that Toronto was a bona-fide basketball market, he and the Braves would eventually profit. Due to its proximity, Toronto was regarded as Buffalo territory, according to NBA bylaws. Snyder told the local press that an indemnification fee paid to the Braves for a Toronto franchise could easily start at \$1 million. While he envisioned the Braves now playing more games in Toronto, Snyder remained adamant that the team's primary home would remain the city of Buffalo.

"The Braves will stay in Buffalo forever," he said. "... at least as long as I own them - and I have never entertained any ideas of selling them."

BRAVES
CK GARRETT GUARD

When you put a great team in the floor,

you need a great sportscenter on the air!

Buffalo Braves are the NBA Team of the Future, an exciting lot of super-athletes, youngsters and proven stars. You'll hear the all-time MVP, Bob McAdoo, Elmore Smith, Dick Garrett, and another big name in the league - Bob McAdoo. Another big name in the league - Bob McAdoo. Another big name in the league - Bob McAdoo. Another big name in the league - Bob McAdoo.

WBEN Radio/930

Fred Hilton 22222 22222
John Hummer 22222 22222

Braves To Depend On Running

McADOO 11

Most Free Throws

Kauffman	700
Garrett	354
Davis	337
Hummer	293
May	277

Most Points

Kauffman	303
Garrett	1
May	1
Davis	1
El Smith	1

Most Field Goals

Kauffman	107-8
Garrett	107-8
May	107-8
Davis	107-8
El Smith	107-8

BRAVES
IKE DAVIS GUARD

BRAVES 18-GAME STATISTICS

Player	Games	Pts.	Avg.
Bob Kauffman	18	344	19.1
Elmore Smith	18	251	13.9
Dick Garrett	18	206	11.4
Randy Smith	18	197	10.9
Fred Hilton	16	164	10.3
Bob McAdoo	18	180	10.0
John Hummer	17	139	8.2
Butch Komives	18	135	7.5
Bill Hewitt	16	122	4.5
World Fox	16	24	3.4
BRAVES TOTALS	18	1788	99.1
Opponents	18	2006	111.4

Ramsay Studies Potential, Says Braves' Future Great

By BOB POWELL

more Smith making his biggest contributions. Elmore's poten- where it is operable and compatible with the personnel,

Season 3: 1972-1973 20