

# As NBA season winds down, excitement lies in battle for home court advantage



## Out of Bounds Jason Snyder

Despite the 76ers holding the best record in the NBA this season, the East quickly falls from there. In the West, the teams of San Antonio, Utah, Sacramento, L.A. Lakers, Portland and Dallas all have better records than the East's #2 team of the Milwaukee Bucks.

You would have to look all the way down to the West's #12 team of the Clippers to finally find a record that is worse than the East's probable #8 seed for the playoffs, the Pacers.

However, there's a lot to be said for the fight for positioning in the playoffs. Excluding Philadelphia's league leading record of 48-16, and Indiana's sub-par 27-35 record that puts them at #8, the Eastern Conference has a uniquely close battle for postseason seeding. The teams fighting for #2 through #7 are

separated by only four games. Only three games separate the #1 through #6 teams in the west.

So with less than 20 games remaining for these teams, the tough question to answer deals not so much with who is in, but who will get higher seeds, and thus, home court advantage in the early rounds of the playoffs.

### Eastern Conference

#1 - Philadelphia 76ers - As if Allen Iverson wasn't enough to keep their bragging rights as the number one team in the NBA, the 76ers added Dikembe Mutumbo over the past couple of weeks, providing the only missing link to a championship. The 76ers will hold on to their #1 seed and will eventually hold on to the NBA Championship trophy as well.

#2 - New York Knicks - Their defense might not win them a championship in this case, but it will assure them home court advantage until the Eastern Conference Championship. Latrell Sprewell and

Allan Houston's defensive pressure and offensive explosiveness will get the Knicks to a seeding they are used to...#2.

#3 - Miami Heat - Despite missing one of the league's only remaining star centers, the Heat have maintained most of their competitive edge. And besides, Pat Riley is enough to keep them in contention for a title anyway.

#4 - Milwaukee Bucks - Ray Allen isn't enough to keep this team above the late-season experience of the Knicks and Heat. However, it is nice to see some new faces challenging the traditional powerhouses of the East.

#5 through #8 - Charlotte Hornets, Toronto Raptors, Orlando Magic and Boston Celtics.

### Western Conference

#1 - San Antonio Spurs - It's nice to see a somewhat veteran team on top of a conference priding itself on youth. Tim Duncan and David Robinson have quietly propelled their team to the #1 seed, and they should be able to keep it there.

#2 - Utah Jazz - More veterans means more success for the Jazz. The Mailman should be able to deliver a #2 seed and maybe a championship appearance if they continue at the pace they are at now.

#3 - L.A. Lakers - Phil Jackson will gather his troops and bring Shaq back to his old form. In the process, he will put Kobe back in his place. This could propel the Lakers back to Western Conference glory.

#4 - Portland Trailblazers - Despite the late slump, the Blazers will back up their payroll with some late season success. Look for Rasheed Wallace to step up his play even further and Scottie Pippen to lead like he did last season.

#5 through #8 - Sacramento Kings, Dallas Mavericks, Minnesota Timberwolves, Phoenix Suns.

I know it's March Madness right now, but I'm calling for a final four of the 76ers, Knicks, Spurs and Blazers. For real Final Four coverage, turn the page.

## Men's tennis begins season timidly

by Jeanine Noce  
assistant sports editor

The men's tennis team competed in two matches recently. They were dual matches held on February 17 at the Westwood Recreation Center. Behrend's team of eleven had their first match against Allegheny College, and later on that same day, against Mercyhurst.

Behrend played six singles matches in which they were all defeated by Allegheny. Three doubles matches were also played, entirely won by Allegheny. The final score of the match was Allegheny 9 and Behrend 2. The team's season record became 0-1.

In Behrend's match against Mercyhurst there were six singles matches played. Behrend's Ian Brendle competed against Dan Roser and defeated Roser with a score of 6-3 and 6-2. Bill Weisburg competed against Justin McIntyre and defeated McIntyre 6-2, 1-6, and 7-6. There were also three doubles matches played. All three of these doubles matches were won by Mercyhurst. The final score of the match was Mercyhurst 7 and Behrend 2. After this game, Behrend's record became 0-2.

Behrend will travel to Pitt-Greensburg on March 17 for their first AMCC clash.

## Got questions about the ARC?

Check out its website at:

[www.pserie.psu.edu/athletic/intramural/Arc.htm](http://www.pserie.psu.edu/athletic/intramural/Arc.htm)

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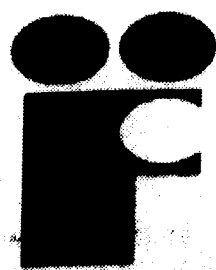
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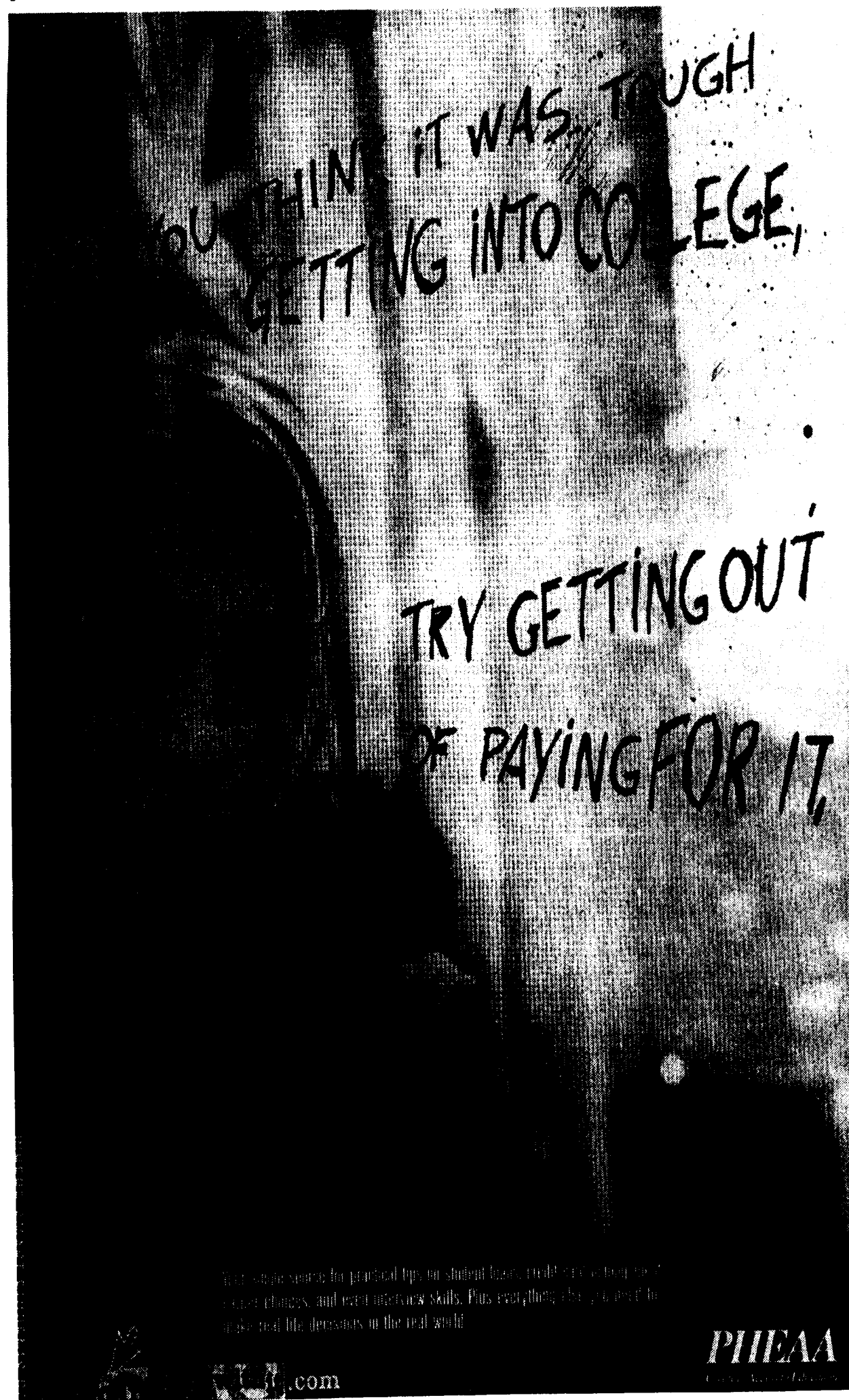
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