

LAZY DAYS: Orlando Magic centre Shaquille O'Neal is resting comfortably these days, knowing that he'll be back from broken thumb earlier than expected.

Grizzlies fans deliver message to talent-rich but lazy Canucks

VANCOUVER — The man in the red suit comes but once a year and Vancouverites are working themselves into an early frenzy over his impending arrival. Speaking, of course, of Michael Jordan, who hits town Nov. 30 when the Chicago Bulls make their only visit to the Grizzlies' home court.

Tickets for the game sold out in less than a minute when they went on sale Oct. 28 (Orlando Magic tickets took five minutes to sell out). On Nov. 16, when 2,000 corporate sponsor's tickets went on sale for the Bulls game, thousands of fans slept on the sidewalks overnight and mobbed cosmetics counters throughout the city in the morning.

"We opened at 10 o'clock," said a dazed cosmetics clerk at one Shoppers Drug Mart. "The tickets were gone at about 30 seconds past 10."

The Bulls game will be the

West Coast Story

PAMELA SWANIGAN



third sellout so far this season for the Griz, who have been consistently pulling bigger crowds and getting better press than the Vancouver Canucks.

The moral of the story: Vancouver sports fans don't mind losers, but they can't stand slackers. Perception is growing of the Canucks as talent-rich and diligence-poor and of the Griz as doomed but determined.

The sellout of the Grizzlies' regular-season home opener was expected, but the sellout for the Nov. 17 game versus the

L.A. Lakers surprised Grizzlies personnel, who had projected closer to 16,000 people than the capacity crowd of 19,192. Communications head Tom Mayenknecht attributed the strong attendance to "positive word of mouth" about the Grizzlies' dramatic come-from-behind runs and close home games.

The Lakers dealt the Grizzlies their worst home defeat to date, winning by 18 points. Faint boos could be heard near the end of the game. Point guard Greg Anthony put the blame squarely on the team's shoulders, saying: "We just kinda died out there. We looked real lethargic. You can't allow that type of attitude to creep in."

On the other hand, big crowds aren't everything. After the loss to the Lakers, Anthony was heard to utter words that have perhaps never left the mouth of any professional athlete outside the Ottawa Senators: "I wish we had the Canucks' record right now." To the abysmal, even the bad look good.

The Grizzlies' 10-day November road trip could be considered a Tour of Things to Come (But Not Any Time Soon): It includes the four most recent expansion teams, with the exception of the Toronto Raptors — Miami, Orlando, Charlotte and Minnesota — as well as New York.

The trip is not likely to improve the Grizzlies' record, but the swing through the south may improve the tempers of those starting to learn the reality of a Lotusland winter.

"The weather (in Vancouver) is lovely — nice and wet," deadpanned Byron Scott just before the team hit the road.

Added forward Antonio Harvey, "It rains every (deleted) day. And you can quote me on that."

was a Canadian record 33,306, and the crowd O'Neal and have played in front for a March '95 in Antonio.

STAY FRESH: Sure, have turned some the NBA. Player-caster Bill Walton, lacking for an opinion those applauding a touch on the heavy workload signed to roolde Stoudamire.

"They're playing and very competit told The Star this a tribute to Isaiah the talent he's ass. He took a lot of Stoudamire pick, player.

"But as the loss expect to see Stou utes to come down have to have gu ready and fresh w gets good. You can burned out."

Stoudamire is minutes a night, the most of any r

VOICE OF IRON: Los ers broadcaster ought to be given to do games. Hear 30-year mark with game on Monday the Lakers stomped pers.

Hearn's conse streak was to h night. Worth not current Lakers, S and Fred Roberts born before Nov. night of Hearn's la he was stuck in cause of foul weat nouncing a coll game.

SECOND GUESSES: Y was going to happ nets have just trac Mourning, they're ble adjusting to th players, ex-players team management club president is having second th

Court dribbles . . .

"The way I look at it, we've got two little problems. One, we can't score. Two, we can't stop anybody from scoring. Other than that, we're not bad."
— Phoenix's Charles Barkley on what ails the 5-5 Suns.

"Gheorghe, the guy is smaller than me and you let him shoot it in your face?"

— Washington's 5-foot-8 coach Jim Lynam, berating 7-foot-7 Gheorghe Muresan after 5-10 Damon Stoudamire hit a jumper over Muresan during Toronto's win over the Bullets.

"PACK--MAN . . . STODAMIRE--BOY"

— Sign held up by Washington heckler Robin Ficker.

"Whether I play or not doesn't really matter or bother me. I realize that I'm atypical of the average player. But it's not my approach to worry about playing time."

— Denver's Elmore Spencer, who is getting \$1.2 million to sit on the bench on a slumping Nuggets team.

"There's an awful odor to us."

— Philadelphia coach John Lucas on his slumping (five losses in a row before last night) Sixers.