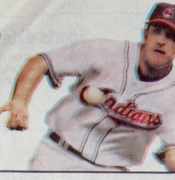


INDIANS: Casey Blake (right) has altered his mind-set in order to return to his 2004 hitting form, only on Ohio.com.



# Sports

That's Racin' Casey Mears excels with new team and new attitude, heading to California.

The Beacon Journal Thursday February 23, 2006



www.ohio.com/sports

## 2006 WINTER GAMES

United States goalie Rick DiPietro watches as Finland's Olli Jokinen scores in the second period of Finland's 4-3 win in the men's hockey quarter-finals on Wednesday.



CHRISTOPHE ENA/Associated Press

## Miracle? Try debacle

Age, pettiness leave Team USA in heap after embarrassing performance

TORINO, ITALY: Team USA ran out of time, excuses and former Soviet breakout republics.

That's how a disappointing Olympic tournament and an era for USA Hockey came to a close Wednesday night with a 4-3 loss to Finland in the quarterfinals.

The oldest team at the Winter Games could not continue because the Azerbaijanis and Uzbekistans of the hockey world did not qualify for the Olympics.



TOM REED

The fact Team USA's only tournament points were earned against Latvia and Kazakhstan, however, didn't bother forward Mike Modano as much as the idea that players' families had to make their own travel arrangements to Torino.

"That's something that should be taken care of (by USA Hockey), so we don't have to worry about it," said Modano, who was benched in the third period. "We can focus on hockey and get ourselves

### ROLL 'EM!

The National Cinema Museum provides Torino visitors with a break from the Winter Games. Page A1.

### Ohio.com

Track today's events online.

So travel itineraries made weeks ago, not aging stars and sporty goateeing were the culprits in a 1-4-1 tournament record?

So travel itineraries made weeks ago, not aging stars and sporty goateeing were the culprits in a 1-4-1 tournament record?

Please see Reed, C5

## Cavaliers caught off guard by Sixers

Philadelphia's tempo too fast for Cavs, who fail to defend in defeat

PHILADELPHIA: Mike Brown thinks this type of game, and for good reason.

"It won't win in the playoffs, and it won't even get you to the playoffs," said the Cavaliers coach after his team lost 116-107 to the Philadelphia 76ers on Wednesday night.

The problem wasn't so much the verdict, as the tempo. Philadelphia ran and shot and scored.

The Cavs ran and shot and lost.

Brown shook his head as he thought of the 76ers scoring 116 points, the highest game total allowed by the Cavs this season. And how they shot a stunning 53 percent, often on layups, dunks and open jumpers. And how the Cavs got behind early and stayed behind, never catching up.

"I hate this kind of basketball," he said. "It's a playground game."

What hurt the coach most was defense — there was none.

And patience — not much of that either.

When you play the Sixers, you expect Allen Iverson to score — which did, as in 29 points. But that's actually four below his average.

Please see Cavaliers, C3

## CAVS SNAPSHOTS

76ers 116, Cavaliers 107

Key stat: 76ers scored 116 points, the second most defensive effort by the Cavs this season.

Key moment: With 1:29 left, Andre Iguodala grabbed a long offensive rebound, then assisted on Allen Iverson's jumper.

Photo's three stars: 1. Andre Iguodala, 76ers, 25 points, six rebounds, strong defense on LeBron James.

2. LeBron James, Cavs, 33 points, six rebounds, five assists.

3. Riley Odoms, 76ers, 29 points, 12 assists.

Next: Wizards at Cavaliers

Time: 7 p.m. Friday, FSN



Trainer Tim Robertson (left) supervises as former Ohio State star Donte Whitner works out at the Euclid Sports Plant. Whitner is preparing for the NFL Combine.

## Pumping up draft Statu\$

Premier athletes endure grueling workouts at Euclid Sports Plant

By Maria Ridenour

Beacon Journal sportswriter

EUCLID: Barry Cofield calls it "the gas chamber."

The defensive lineman from Northwestern University and Cleveland Heights High School was referring to the cubicle at the Euclid Sports Plant that simulates altitudes up to 11,500 feet. An NFL Draft prospect, the 35-

year Cofield tested himself on the treadmill and bicycle in the same type of enclosure used by Lance Armstrong and lived to tell about it.

"It's terrible when you're in there, but you get great when you come out," Cofield said. "You feel like you accomplished something."

The "gas chamber" is one of the few

high-tech gadgets at the Sports Plant, the hard-core training facility in the back of an old warehouse and distribution center on Euclid Avenue. There are no signs on the street indicating it is the workout home of current and future pro athletes.

More than one visitor has stopped at the Euclid Police Department next door for directions.

For six weeks, founders Eric Lichter and Tim Robertson of Speed Strength Systems Inc. have put 25 draft hopefuls through rigorous workouts in preparation for the 2006 NFL Combine, a player evaluation camp that opened Wednesday and runs through Feb. 28 in Indianapolis.

Please see Workout, C6

## Zips get back on road, land in second in MAC East

Beacon Journal staff report.

The University of Akron basketball team is now tied for second place in the East Division of the Mid-American Conference.

Miami 63

Akron 60

The Zips (19-7, 12-3) fell a game behind Kent (19-7, 12-3) Wednesday night by losing to the RedHawks 63-60 before a crowd of 3,673 at Millett Hall in Oxford.

UA, which lost its second game in a row, led 48-44 with 6:26 remaining on a tip by Romeo Travis.

Miami, which won its seventh game in a row, then went on a 12-4 run.

The Zips got back to 57-56, but Williams Hatcher of Miami hit a 3-pointer with 54 seconds left to make it 60-56. UA got it to 61-56 with 13 seconds left on

a basket by Cedric Middleton, but Nate Peavy scored quickly before the Zips could foul to run it to 63-60.

A late 3-pointer by Dru Joyce missed to end the Zips' chance to tie the score.

Travis led UA with 13 points. Rob Preston added 12, and Joyce had 11.

Tim Pollitz had 16 and Josh Hausfeld 15 for the RedHawks. UA, which trailed 52-29 at the half, shot 44.4 percent (24-of-54) from the floor, including 31.6 percent (6-of-19) on 3-pointers.

Miami shot 52.2 percent (24-of-46) from the floor, making 53.3 percent (8-of-15) behind the arc. Hausfeld was 5-of-8 on 3-pointers for all of his points.

UA led in rebounds 29-26, with Travis leading the way with seven.

The Zips play host to Ohio on Saturday afternoon.

Barberton girls coach Pam Davis meets with her team during a timeout Wednesday during the tournament game at Ellet. The Magics advanced with a 62-35 victory over Marietta.



KEN LIVEN/Beacon Journal

## Controversy doesn't keep Barberton from victory

By Stephanie Storm

Beacon Journal sportswriter

Barberton's seemingly annual run through the postseason began Wednesday with a 62-35 victory over first-round opponent Marietta in the girls Division I sectional/tournament at Ellet.

But the Magics' win came amid controversy.

For the second consecutive game, starting point guard Andola Dortch and reserve forward Scharlawn Hubbard — both

Please see Magics, C6

## Wedge commits to strong beginning

Manager to take different spring-training approach

By Sheldon Ocker

Beacon Journal sportswriter

WINTER HAVEN, FLA.: The pattern is clear. The season starts, and the Indians lose.

For the past three years, the Tribe has stumbled badly out of the gate. In 2005, the record was 12-18; the previous season 18-26; in 2003, it was 9-24.

"Trying to play catch-up obviously isn't the preferred method of competing for a playoff berth. Consequently, manager Eric Wedge is bent on winning from the outset. But how?"

"I'm confident that we'll get off to a better start," he said Wednesday. "I think the problem has been all the firsts we've had to get through. But I look at the evaluation of this team and think there's good reason for us to get off to a better start."

Please see Indians, C6

