

# Nike basketball-shoe sales soar with red and black Air Jordans

Air Jordan sounds like a new airline and in one way it is. Air Jordan can't get you from New York to Los Angeles in three hours, but it can get you up and down a basketball court in a style.

Air Jordan is a new line of shoes and clothing Nike introduced April 1. For those of you who have been asleep for the last year or so, Jordan refers to Chicago Bulls' rookie sensation Michael Jordan.

Carolina. According to Nike public relations director Chris Van Dyke, the sales for the new line of shoes are "phenomenal."

"We expected to sell maybe 100,000 pairs of Air Jordans a year," Van Dyke said. "So far, after only a month on the market, we've had sales and orders of over 1 1/2 million pairs of shoes. It's really an industry-wide phenomenon."

Van Dyke said many were skeptical of a red and black basketball shoe. But, he said, the first month of the shoe sales has proved them wrong.

"We like to refer to Air Jordans as our Cabbage Patch dolls," Van Dyke said.

In a recent Chicago Sun-Times article on the "selling" of Jordan, his contract with Nike was estimated at more than \$700,000 a year. Jordan also reportedly has other endorsements that bring him another \$840,000 annually.

"What it basically comes down to is that Michael is a great kid with a lot of charisma and a lot of talent," Chicago Bulls' public relations director Tim Hallam said. "He's been brought up so well and that really shows in his personality. Michael is one of the nicest players I have ever been associated with."

"He's really the prototype athlete you would want to endorse your product," Van Dyke said. "Not only is he a great athlete, but also he's a great human being who really cares for people. He's so likable. We feel we got a great bargain when we signed Michael Jordan."

Jordan's impact of the shoe industry is obvious and so is his impact on the Chicago Bulls. The Bulls missed the playoffs in 1983-84. With Jordan they made the playoffs despite not having a quality center. Without Jordan in 1983-84, the Bulls drew about 6,300 people per game. With Jordan, the Bulls drew just under 12,000 per game, an 83 percent increase.

"We've had about six calls a day asking about the shoes since the ads ran during the NCAA basketball tournament," Olympic Village manager Holly Rathman said. "We'll get the shoes on July 1, which is the first day they'll be released in the Midwest."

Rathman said she thinks the \$64.95 price for the shoes might drive a lot of buyers away.

"They might see the shoes and come in," Rathman said. "But when they find out the cost it might turn a lot of them away."

## Bob Asmussen

The Air Jordan shoes come in several different colors, but the main combination is a bright red and black. The National Basketball Association saw the shoes on Jordan for a couple of games this season then banned them. The league rules state a team must wear shoes of approximately the same color. Few other Chicago players wear red and black high tops.

Air Jordans were test-marketed in six cities in April. The cities were New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles and Raleigh-Durham, North

# 'Baserunner' tabloid score with Lincoln softball players

By Lori Griffin  
Staff Reporter

It started as a way to hit the softball community and lure people into a liquor store. Now, one year later, The Baserunner has become a part of every Lincoln softball player's summer.

The Baserunner was the brainstorm of Mike Hughes, who owns Mike's O Street Drive-In.

"I decided that since I have never been a player but have always been a fan, this was a way that I could get involved with the sport," Hughes said. "I also was trying to think of a way to hit the softball community and let them know that my business was here."

The Baserunner was born when Hughes learned the Lincoln Journal-Star would no longer cover city recreation softball. Last year's Baserunner followed a program form and will be expanded to

regular tabloid size this year.

"In the future we are hoping to expand it and make it as a tabloid supplement to the Journal-Star or some other Lincoln newspaper," Hughes said. "After we get it to the point that we want it, we hope to have it inserted at least once a week. We think that it will benefit our paper as well as a paper like the Journal-Star."

The staff consists of high school and college journalists interested into going into journalism as a career.

It's an outlet for them to start learning," Hughes said. "It's an outlet for high school and college students to gain work experience, especially for those interested in sports journalism."

The Baserunner is distributed at 10 softball fields. The first issue will be available May 24.

"There are approximately 15,000 softball players in the city of Lincoln who received basically no coverage until we started," Hughes said. "Nobody covers anything to do with it. We can cover what the Journal-Star can't."

Hughes' co-sponsors for The Baserunner are Anheiser-Busch, Pepsi-Cola and Gerry's Sports Shop.

"We have a lot of other interested advertisers, but we hope to gain more than we have already," Hughes said. "It did wonders for my business and I hope that it can do wonders for the business of others, too."



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