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## Sikma gives Bucks a big man to challenge for NBA championship

Analysis by Rob White  
Staff Reporter

For six years, the Milwaukee Bucks have had a stranglehold on the NBA's Central Division, but they haven't been able to knock off either Boston or Philadelphia for a trip to the NBA finals. Only a quality center kept them from realizing that goal.

Now the Bucks have that center after picking up Jack Sikma from Seattle. The only problem is that it may be too late due to the rise of the Atlanta Hawks.

League scoring champ Dominique Wilkins has developed a fairly potent outside game to match his arsenal of dunks and is clearly the Hawks' main man on offense. Kevin Willis has made the transition from college center to pro forward and is a coming star. Defensive monger Tree Rollins still mans the pivot for the Hawks with second year man Jon Koncak waiting in the wings. Atlanta also boasts a solid four-guard rotation of starters Glenn "Doc" Rivers and Randy Wittman, plus reserves Spud Webb and ex-Los Angeles Laker Mike McGee. Although this quartet is one of the best around, they do lack a proven outside scorer in the mold of a Byron Scott or Rolando Blackman.

The Bucks still have the quality necessary to earn their seventh straight division title, but a small frontcourt and injuries in the backcourt could cause problems.

Terry Cummings and Paul Pressey are excellent forwards, but each would be more suited to playing down one position ) Cummings at small rather than power forward and Pressey at one of the guard spots rather than small forward. At 6-9 and 6-5, their lack of height has caused matchup problems defensively against teams like Boston and now Atlanta. There has been talk of playing Sikma at power forward and

using Randy Breuer at center, but Sikma, although better on the corner, is clearly this squad's best center and is needed in the middle for rebounding purposes.

All-star guard Sidney Moncrief may still be suffering from the heel injuries that slowed him last year, and that may force the Bucks to move Pressey to the backcourt after all. He is their "point" forward on offense. Shooters Ricky Pierce and Craig Hodges are quality guards on hand for the Bucks, and first-round draft choice Scott Skiles will be their only true point guard, once he returns from back problems.

For the past three seasons it appeared the Detroit Pistons would be the team to eventually dethrone the Bucks, but now the Pistons have undergone a major overhaul and will probably settle for another 45-win season.

Kelly Tripucka and Kent Benson were sent to Utah in exchange for Adrian Dantley during the off-season, and that provides Detroit with a dilemma. Dantley has never been a team player and may not fit in too well on a team that has other scorers as capable as he is. Sidney Green has come over from the Chicago Bulls and combines with John Salley (their first-round draft pick) at the power forward slot. Bill Laimbeer is the Pistons' gruff but lovable center, hammering away at opponents on defense and then nailing his 15-20 foot jumper on offense.

Laimbeer's offense helps the penetration game of Isiah Thomas, the game's best pure point guard. Second-year man Joe Dumars and supersub Vinnie Johnson give the Pistons plenty of scoring punch at guard, but neither of them is 6-2, which will cause a lot of defensive problems. Rookie forward Dennis Rodman (a second-round choice from Southeast Oklahoma State) may be the biggest surprise of the year.

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