

2008

10 – 10 – 10 – 10 - Ten years of presence on the internet! – 10 – 10 – 10 – 10

Dear basketball pals,

On this Holiday Season, it is my pleasure to announce that *Bert's Basketball Web Site* has now successfully been online since December 1998. A 10-year presence on the internet which allowed Bert to correspond and write for major basketball media and websites. Regular writing for Eurobasket.com and also for [Full Court Press](http://FullCourtPress.com) as a hobbyist was among Bert's activities during the last few years.

Being a basketball correspondent -- one of the few non-American members of the *USBWA-US Basketball Writers Association* -- allows Bert to keep in touch with the sport and his basketball pals internationally.

From 1998 to 2008, Bert got the chance to meet or interview some great basketball characters like NBA star **Rudy Gay**, WNBA and Olympic Champion **Katie Smith**, young European top players like **Cenk Akyol** (Turkey) or **Aldo Curti** (France), coaches like **Niksa Bavcevic** from Croatia or **Veselin Matic** of Estonia... Through this 10-year period, Bert also covered several special events for different media: one Euroleague Women Final Four, several Harlem Globetrotters shows organized in Belgium, the yearly U18 World Tournament of Douai, Belgian Lions' European Championship qualifying campaigns, Belgian league games, etc.

Contacts with managers, agents, coaches and players were always enriching experiences. Games in which great players of all generations like **Carmelo Anthony**, **Kevin Durant**, **Omre Casspi**, **Tony Parker**, **Ronny Turiaf**, **Hidayet Turkoglu**, **Axel Hervelle**, **Nicolas Batum**, **Todor Stoykov**, **Martynas Gecevicius**, **Eric Struelens**, **Richard Dacoury**, **Antoine Rigaudeau**, **David Rivers** (among the male players) or **Maria Stepanova**, **Amaya Valdemoro**, **Ann Wauters**, **Ilona Korstine**, **Becky Brunson**, **Nicole Ohlde**, **Edwige Lawson**, **Sheryl Swoopes**, **Margo Dydek**, **Ticha Penicheiro** (among the female players) were involved have always been a pleasure to attend and write about. It will go on in 2009 and even afterwards.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year 2009!

Bertrand 'Bert' Larsimont

Bert went to a basketball game on September 6th, 2008: Belgium vs Turkey in Group C of the Eurobasket 2009 Qualifying Round.

The *Belgian Lions* lost their second duel of the EuroBasket 2009 Qualifying Round (Group C) campaign on September 6th. In front of a very sparse crowd at the Spiroudome (attendance of 1000), Turkey's national team was too strong: 63-78. Turkish fans were well present and supported their team with much enthusiasm through the whole game. On the opposite, where were the Belgian fans who supported their roaring *Lions* last year? Only a few of them went to the Spiroudome to cheer on their favourite players.

In the first five minutes of the game, only 4 points were scored: 2-2. The men of Coach **Eddy Casteels** remained close: 13-15 after ten minutes. **Axel Hervelle**, not playing for Belgium due to injury but present and sitting on the bench, supported his mates who were doing well in the first half against Coach **Bogdan Tanjevic**'s strong Turkish team.

At the end of the second quarter, NBA star **Hidayet Türkoglu** and **Ender Arslan** made the difference from long range for Turkey (28-36). **Sam Van Rossom** put the *Lions* back on the right track after half-time. The *Lions* were even in front (43-42) during the third quarter but the Turks, mainly thanks to **Ilyasova** of Barcelona and **Arslan** of Efes Pilsen reacted well and finished with a large lead.

In the other game of Day 2 in Group C, France was beaten by Ukraine 78-77. The *Belgian Lions* will face Ukraine next Wednesday at 20:00 in Charleroi (free entrance).

Belgium vs. Turkey 63-78

Quarter by quarter score evolution: 13-15, 28-36, 49-54 and 63-78.

Belgium: **Beghin** 19; **Van Rossom** 11; **Driesen** 9; **Bosco** 5; **Moors** 5; **Bellin** 4; **Van der Jonckheyd** 3; **Lauwers** 3; **Oveneke** 3; **Tabu** 1.

Turkey: **Türkoglu** 12; **Ilyasova** 21; **Arslan** 20; **Atsür** 3; **Kaya** 2; **Tunçeri** 2; **Savas** 5; **Gönlüm** 10; **Hersek** 3.

Bert went to a basketball game in May 2008: CEP Fleurus vs Sint-Jan Antwerp in Belgian Division II Play Off Finals (first leg).

Nice crowd in *Bonsecours* on May 2nd for the first leg of the 2008 Division II Play-Off Finals. The hometeam started the game with the intention to win with a large gap in order to travel to Hoboken for the second leg with a relatively good advantage one week later. The first and second quarters were particularly marked by some easy attempts missed in fastbreak situation by the CEP players.

Only **Sam Semijeero** (196 cm, forward/center, born in 1977) in the paint, **Stephen Tison** (176 cm, guard, born in 1984) from long range and **Tomasz Rozewicz** (206 cm, center, born in 1982) at the rebound seemed able to boost their CEP mates while **Thomas Van de Vondel** (197 cm, forward/guard, born in 1980 – see picture) was already well present in all sectors of the game for the visitors.

Around fifty Sint-Jan fans believed in one of their team's feat especially when half-time was reached on the following score: 38-39. In the second half, the men of Coach **Bastianini** (see picture) seemed to have found the right tempo when they took the lead 67-59 but it was without counting on **Van Schil**, **Van de Vondel** and **Lemaire** of Sint-Jan who led their team for a nice comeback (67-66 a few minutes later). **Semijeero** and **Tison** kept showing the way to their mates but it was not enough as Sint-Jan stayed close. After a few wrong options chosen by the CEP players, the visitors came back at 78-73 (**Witse Van Schil** from long range again). **Ward Lemaire** (196 cm, forward, born in 1980) even had the opportunity to fill the gap with 2.4 seconds left on the clock when he was fouled on what seemed to be a last attempt in this game. He made only one of his two free-throws and Coach **Fulvio Bastianini** immediately took a time-out as CEP had only a four-point lead.

The last play after the time-out was worth seeing as **Stefan Moris** (207 cm, forward/center, born in 1986) hit a very important three-pointer on the buzzer. Fleurus' fans could not believe their eyes and the last basket by one of their favourite players made them very happy. CEP will go to Hoboken with a 7-point advantage for the second leg but Sint-Jan players proved that they have not surrendered yet and can still challenge their opponents.

Quarter by quarter score evolution: 23-18, 38-39, 62-59 and 81-74.

Fleurus: **Vanesse** 11; **Tison** 11; **Pirlot** 6; **Moris** 9; **Jadin** 11; **Rozewicz** 9; **Buja** 8; **Semijeero** 10; **Pourtoit** 6.
Sint-Jan: **Gorremans** 2; **Van Rillaer** 5; **Lemaire** 5; **Van Schil** 23; **T. Van de Vondel** 26; **Verrept** 6; **Ceyssens** 7.

Bert went to a basketball game in January 2008: Spirou Charleroi vs Galatasaray (Turkey) in ULEB Cup.

When Spirou Charleroi hosts a Turkish team, it is very often a tough and special game. Through the years, this proved to be true and some observers would easily remember great matches of the past like the one between Spirou and Tofas Bursa of **David Rivers** and **Slimen Rimac** in 1998-99 ending on a great clutch play by former Spirou US star Richie Morton.

On January 8th, Spirou Charleroi hosted Galatasaray at the Spiroudome. One side of the arena was packed with turbulent Turkish fans, coming from all over the Benelux. After a call for calm by the Turkish club's staff to Galatasaray fans who were fighting in the stands, the game started on a very high tempo for Charleroi. Led by **Michael Jordan**, distilling great assists to the centers **Len Matela** and **Andre Riddick**, Spirou took the advantage in the first minutes of the game. Galatasaray players remained concentrated and, thanks to **Dee Brown** as well as a very impressive **Charles Gaines** inside (12 points in the first half, despite missing several free throws), got closer and closer as time went by. Score evolution: 19-13 after the first quarter and 34-34 at the end of the very pleasant first half.

Gaines efficiently started the second half, just like he did in the first one. Spirou players missed some easy baskets (despite many efforts, **Christophe Beghin** missed a few attempts in the paint) and Galatasaray seemed able to dig deeper the gap. Defenses were strong on both sides and after a very intense third quarter, although poor as far as shooting average from the field was concerned, the score was 47-50 for the Turkish visitors. **Cenk Akyol** who had been rather disappointing in the first half looked like he had recovered and hit important free throws as well as a three-point shot. In the fourth quarter, the score reached 51-56 for Galatasaray with **Robert Hite** from long range. Once again, the Belgian team was able to come back and took a 6-point lead (64-58) with a bit less than one minute to go. This was mainly thanks to physical plays by **Tremell Darden**, spectacular rebounds by **Andre Riddick** and pick-and-roll plays by the local US duo **Jordan-Matela**. The end went crazy. Galatasaray supporters, cheering and being much more exemplary during the game than before the start, believed in

their favourite team's comeback when **Brown** drilled a three-pointer with over 45 seconds remaining and got fouled shooting another with just 3 seconds left. His first free throw went in to make it 64-62. **Brown** missed the second. He was forced to miss the last one, which **Darden** rebounded to preserve Spirou's chances of staying alive in ULEB Cup.

Also note that **Besok**, injured, was missing on Galatasaray's side.

Best scorers in this game:

Charleroi: **Moors** 2, **Jordan** 7, **Hall** 3, **Hamilton** 4, **Darden** 13, **Tabu** 4, **Riddick** 8, **Wilkinson** 3, **Vermeulen** 0, **Matela** 18, **Beghin** 2.

Galatasaray: **Hite** 5, **Gaines** 20, **Owens** 12, **Kaya** 0, **Nalga** 4, **Brown** 16, **Akyol** 5, **Erden** 0.

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