

Knick-sanity returns to NYC

Fans in frenzy with division title in sight

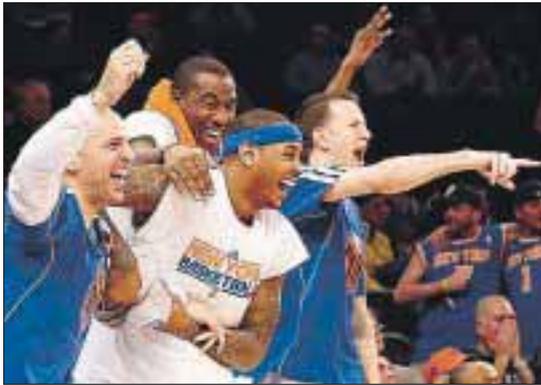
BY TIM HERRERA
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Year after year of disappointing seasons and tire-some off-court drama has left even the most die-hard Knicks fans disheartened. But with the team poised tonight to clinch its first division title since 1994 as it goes for its 13th straight win, fans finally have reason to celebrate.

"I've been following the Knicks for as long as I can remember, [and] the last decade wasn't so great," said Phil Joseph, 22, of Washington Heights.

But "this is the best Knicks team I've seen in the last 13 years," he said. They've "given fans and the people of New York a reason to believe in this team once again."

Rob Rivera, 25, of the East



Carmelo Anthony, center, leads the NBA in points per game.

Village, agreed.

"They finally have the personnel, chemistry and winning formula that can potentially bring a championship," Rivera said. "I want to see a playoff series win."

The Knicks, who this season have won 50 games for the first time since the 1999-2000 season, take on the

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Washington Wizards tonight. And after winning just one playoff game last year against the Miami Heat, the team is finally settling into a formation

that could carry them far into the postseason, experts said.

"It's a good mix of guys. They have a lot of chemistry, they respond well to the coach and they have an identity," said Seth Rosenthal, manager of Knicks blog Posting-andToasting.com.

Tommy Dee, executive editor of TheKnicksBlog.com, said the team is peaking now at exactly the right moment.

"You always want to be playing best at the right time of the year, and they're doing that right now," he said.

"This is the best team the Knicks have had in a long time, and a lot of fans don't remember good basketball," he said. "So it takes them a little while to be come believers."

Dee added: "But the Garden will be rocking like it did in the '90s."

The Dolan family owns controlling interests in the Knicks, MSG and Cablevision. Cablevision owns amNewYork. (WITH ANNA SANDERS)

Knicks timeline

Some memorable years in the Knicks' franchise history:

1999

Last finals appearance

1994

Last division title

1985

Last time a Knick led NBA in scoring (Bernard King)

1973

Last NBA championship

1969

Team-record 18-game winning streak

Nabbed in groping women in Brooklyn

A registered sex offender was arraigned for allegedly exposing himself and rubbing against women and girls — some as young as 14 — in Canarsie and Bushwick self-service laundries. The six alleged assaults against seven women stretched from July 2010 to March 30.

Lowell Britt, 27, of Bay Shore, pleaded not guilty in Brooklyn criminal court. The charges include one count of felony sexual abuse for a July 19, 2010, assault in which he allegedly grabbed a 19-year-old; five counts of persistent sex abuse, six counts of sexual abuse and one count of public lewdness. Bail was set at \$50,000 and bond at \$100,000.

"He was identified through (several) line-ups," said a police source. Information on his lawyer was not available.

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