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Third Release/The Salt Lake Tribune
 Karl Malone congratulates Bulls Coach Phil Jackson.

Photo Finish Closes Title Door We'll Be Back in '98 - and That's No Bull

Legacy: Disappointment Persists,
 But So Does Jazz Determination

Game: Another Last-Second Shot
 By Bulls Kills Utah's '97 Dream

BY LEX HEMPHILL
 THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

CHICAGO — A season when the NBA celebrated its 50-year history concluded here Friday night with the Utah Jazz earning at least a couple of notations for posterity.

Most prolonged determination in pursuit of a championship, one franchise — Utah Jazz, 10 years (1987-97).

Most pain and disappointment endured, one franchise — Utah Jazz, 1987-97.

Was it just another cruel twist of fate that the Jazz ended up losing the sixth and final game to the Chicago Bulls by the same score — 90-86 — of their last most deflating defeat, the seventh game in Seattle last season? The ghosts keep reappearing.

But yet the effort and the determination persist. The Jazz have been legitimately challenging for the NBA championship for 10 years now, dating back to the 1987-88 season when Karl Malone and John Stockton first entered the starting lineup together.

The Stockton-Malone double in Utah is bookended by two strong playoff runs at the last two NBA dynasties — the Lakers of the '80s and the Bulls of the '90s. The Jazz came excruciatingly close to ending both of them, but instead go down as admirable folk.

In the 1988 Western semifinals, the Jazz tried to stop the Lakers from winning their fifth title of the decade. They had a nine-point lead in the third quarter of Game 4 at home, with a chance to take a 3-1 series lead, but Magic Johnson took it away from them.

In their NBA Finals, the Jazz tried to stop the Bulls from winning their fifth title of the decade. They had an eight-point lead in the fourth quarter of Game 5 at home, with a chance to take a 3-2 series lead, but Michael Jordan took it away from them.

In the end Friday, the Jazz had to settle for the distinction of having extended the Bulls more than any other team in Jordan's remarkable run. The Jazz won two games from the Bulls and took three others to the final seconds. They were formidable challengers, courageous losers.

But this year's disheartening ending should be tempered by a sense of unprecedented accomplishment for the 1998-97 Jazz, for not only did they go

See LEGACY, Page A-4

BY JOE BAIRD
 THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

CHICAGO — The Jazz and their fans will see it in their dreams for months to come.

Another late shot floating into the cylinder.

Another Chicago victory over Utah.

And another NBA championship for the Bulls.

Steve Kerr's 17-foot jump shot with five seconds left broke a tie, propelling the Bulls to a 90-86 victory over the Jazz in Game 6 of the NBA Finals at the United Center. Friday clinched Chicago's fifth championship in seven years and ascend in a row.

And the Jazz could only stand aside and watch the raucous Chicago celebration. Utah led much of the fourth quarter and misfired on several scoring opportunities down the stretch. It was another noble Finals effort that went for naught. Jazz coach Jerry Sloan says he will be asleep.

"Except for one game, our people played hard — as hard as they could," said Sloan. "We have to give credit to the Bulls and the kind of pressure they put on us."

Especially Michael Jordan. The Bulls superstar was named out for Most Valuable Player honors by Karl Malone during the regular season. But he won Game 1 with a jump shot at the buzzer, scored 38 points in Game 2 and dropped another 38 on the Jazz in Wednesday's pivotal Game 5, despite suffering from the flu. He did it again Friday.

Jordan scored 39 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and handed out four assists in Game 6, including 10 points in the final quarter.

"He's the greatest player I've ever seen," said Sloan. "He's such a great competitor. He has an unbelievable will to want to win this game."

Malone? The Mailman struggled again, coming off a 19-point outing in Game 5. Malone needed a big game Friday to help the Jazz force a seventh game. But he finished with 21 points and seven rebounds, and was only 7-of-15 from the foul line in a four-point game, the missed free throws were glaring.

Ironically, the shot Jordan didn't take at the end proved decisive. With the score tied, the Bulls called a play for Jordan, but Bryon Russell and Stockton converged on him.

That left Kerr wide open near the free-throw line. The 6-foot-2 guard, maligned for poor play through much of the series, became the hero with his jump shot.

The Jazz had one final chance, but Bryon Russell's ensuing inbound pass was stolen. Pippen found Toni Kukor, who dunked and ushered in yet another Chicago championship party.

"The fifth [championship] is great. They gave us a hell of a series, but we stepped up like champions do," Seattle Pippen said.

■ Biame Michael Jordan
 ■ Monson, Rosetta give their takes

C-4

C-4



Chicago's Michael Jordan breaks into the open court Friday night, just ahead of Utah's Chris Morris. Chicago earned a 90-86 victory to claim the NBA Championship, four games to two.

■ Jazz Homecoming

The Jazz will arrive from Chicago at Salt Lake International Airport today at about 12:15 p.m., team officials said. The charter flight is scheduled to land at Millon Air on the east side of the airport complex at 2370 West. However, it may be rerouted to another part of the airport.

Jury Says McVeigh Must Pay With His Life for the 168 He Took

'Punishment Fits Crime,' Says Father of Two Boys Hurt in Oklahoma Blast

COMBINED NEWS SERVICES

DENVER — Timothy McVeigh, the once-decorated Gulf War soldier who turned his killing skills against the people of Oklahoma City, was condemned Friday to die.

In less than half the time it took to find him guilty, a jury decided that McVeigh must pay with his life for the 168 deaths

in the federal building bombing.

"The punishment fits the crime," declared Jim Benny, whose two children were among the six youngsters in the building's day-care center to survive the April 19, 1995, blast, the worst act of terrorism ever committed on American soil.

"We got him," whispered Cathleen Trainor, who lost her daughter and in-laws in the explosion.

Gathered by the concrete remains of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, survivors of the explosion erupted into a lusty cheer as word of the death sentence was relayed from the Denver courtroom.

But McVeigh didn't flinch, didn't even blink. He just stared straight ahead when he learned he was doomed to the same fate as his victims.

"Death," U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch read, his normally strong, gravelly voice trembling ever so slightly.

The 29-year-old, decorated Gulf War veteran turned anti-government zealot wore the same mask he wore when he was convicted 11 days ago of murder and conspiracy.

Yet as he was led out of the courtroom, he made a small, two-fingered wave to his parents, mouthing "It's OK" and then

Defense Strategy Puzzles Legal Experts, Who Say, 'It's Sort of a Disaster'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — After two years of proclaiming Timothy McVeigh's innocence in the Oklahoma City bombing, his lawyers all but admitted during the penalty phase that he did it. Why?

Was it sheer strategy? A blunder born of desperation? Or possibly a political statement orchestrated by McVeigh himself?

"I have to say I've been a bit puzzled by their strategy," Laurie Levenson, dean of Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said before the jury came back with its decision that McVeigh must pay with his life.

Instead of begging for mercy or trying to raise more doubts about the crime, defense attorney Stephen Jones made a tactical admission of McVeigh's guilt and all but adopted the prosecution's theory of the crime — that it was, in McVeigh's mind at least, an act of patriotism plotted to avenge the deadly 1993 government siege at Waco, Texas, and stave off encroaching tyranny.

"It is a political crime. It is an ideological crime," Jones told the jury. "He is not a demon, though surely his act was demonic."

Denver defense attorney Scott Holliston said, "I don't see it as selling him down the river. I see it as the lawyer taking on the terrorist persona of his client."

Andrew Cohen, another Denver trial attorney, said McVeigh, believing his cause lost, may have ordered a "political statement instead of a legal maneuver." But "from a legal position, it's sort of a disaster."

Whatever strategy lay behind the curious defense, it utterly failed.

Jones also urged jurors to spare McVeigh's life to preserve the possibility that he might reveal others involved in the bombing plot.

"Two people share a terrible secret. One of them will not tell you and the other one cannot by his oath of office," Jones said in reference to the attorney-client privilege. "But the one that can may," he concluded in a reference to McVeigh.

Irvon Box, an Oklahoma defense attorney who has defended death-penalty cases, found that tactic offensive.

"Saying that his client knows is totally admitting guilt," Box said. "It absolutely is not an unprofessional act; there may be some ethics problems with the bar."



A jury has ordered death for Timothy McVeigh, shown in a police photo.

■ McVeigh jury's sentencing form

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