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Inside Track - Crunch is on junk-food vendor - Boston Herald (MA) - January 20, 1998 - page 8
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It's the Marinara Man vs. the Crunch 'n' Munch Guy at the FleetCenter where Celtics coach Rick Pitino has crunched popular junk-food vendor Dave Kerpen.

In fact, things got so sticky, Kerpen fouled out of the big Larry Bird-Robert Parish event the other night.

"Rick isn't a big fan," Kerpen told the Track. "I found that out the hard way."

Kerpen, who shills the sticky snack with a shrill schtick of silly songs and shouted slogans, is a big hit with the fans who just love it when he shows up in their section to sell.

"He's as much an element of the game as scoring a goal or sinking a basket," said FleetCenter czar Rich Krezwick. "When he enters a section, the crowd goes wild."

Well, the crowd might go wild, but so does Pitino. And not in a good way.

Kerpen said he was running down an aisle behind the Celtics bench during a timeout the other night and he "disturbed" the Celtics huddle.

"Pitino grabbed a security guard and told him I need to stay away from him. In fact, I heard he said if I ever come near him again during a timeout, he'll punch me in the face." Ouch!

Anyway, after the Celt's displeasure was made known to the FleetCenter and Sportservice, they asked Dave to tone it down for the big Parishfest the other night.

"The Celtics were really uptight with Parish and Bird coming back and they called the vendors in and asked us to chill," Kerpen said.

So Dave tried to behave. But the fans were unhappy.

And they kept asking him to yell his famous slogan: "Crunch 'n' Munch rules! It's delicious and nutritious!"

Naturally, he gave in. And he was promptly thrown out. Now Kerpen's waiting to hear if he's suspended. Or worse.

You may recall that Kerpen was also ousted from Fenway Park last season after a woman was supposedly hit on the head by a nickel thrown at him. He's got a union arbitration hearing on that next month.

For the record, the Celtics claim they - and Pitino - have no problem with the Crunch 'n' Munch man.

"He's something, that's for sure," said spokesguy Jeff Twiss.

And Kerpen says he's got "the utmost respect for Rick Pitino and the entire Celtics organization."

So chew on that.

BEN'S GREAT EXPECTATION

We love to see the hometown boys make good. So we are pleased to report that "Good Will Hunting" star Ben Affleck, a Cambridge homey, not only won a Golden Globe award the other night, but it seems his romance with gorgeous Gwenyth Paltrow is also golden.

In fact, according to Sara Edwards, Channel 7's gal on the Hollywood scene, the two were furiously sucking face when she encountered them in a Hollywood hotel.

"I interviewed Gwenyth and I asked her about surviving the end of her romance with Brad Pitt and she was being coy and everything," said Edwards. "Then I asked her if she was ready for love again and she said `You always have to be open.' "

Well, Gwenyth was sooooo open, after the interview was over Ben bopped in and smothered his new squeeze with "soulful kisses." Yow.

"The kisses were so intense, I heard that the makeup woman had to come in and redo Gwenyth's makeup," said Sara, who was there interviewing the actress about her role in "Great Expectations."

As for Ben's buddy, Matt Damon, Sara said that he and "Hunting" co-star Minnie Driver are over as an item, but are still "good friends."

(Just can't hear that enough.)

But when it came to choosing a date to stroll down the red carpet before the start of the the Golden Globes, who did the boys choose? Each other!

File under: On Golden Blonde.

THE CHIEF TAKES IT EASY

And finally, the Celtics threw a huge blast for returning hero Robert Parish at The Big Easy the other night.

On hand to toast The Chief after his number was lifted to the rafters were Parish's parents; all of the present Celtics, including Rick Pitino and Red Auerbach; and ex-Celts Kevin McHale, Cedric Maxwell, Bill Walton, M.L. Carr and Tom Heinsohn, who was master of ceremonies.

Bet the place was jumping.

Photo Caption: Mascot strikes out with Lewis

We hear new Red Sox outfielder Darren Lewis didn't appreciate the pat on the head from team mascot Wally the Green Monster yesterday during the Sox's stop at the Northshore Mall in Peabody. Because Wally was messin' with Darren's do! Guess the green boy won't be doing that again! The Red Sox roadshow continues today at Solomon Pond Mall in Marlboro, where American League Rookie of the Year Nomar Garciaparra & Co. will be signing autographs. We have spring fever! Staff photo by Nancy Lane

Photo Caption: PALTRO

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

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