

Written by

Saturday, 11 June 2011 10:44 - Last Updated Saturday, 26 May 2012 06:27

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (jGLi) – When Miami Heat lost to the Chicago Bulls in the first game of the best of seven in the Eastern Conference Finals last month, Filipino-American coach Erik Spoelstra went on a panic mode early by telling the media that his team needs a “cavalry” to even things up.

When his player, Chris Bosh, was asked by the media what Mr. Spoelstra meant by “cavalry,” Bosh bluntly answered, “I don’t know what my coach was talking about.”

Maybe the first Filipino-American and the first Asian-American NBA coach kept the meaning of “cavalry” to himself. But my guess was, it was clarion call for his team to press the panic button now that they are a game away from elimination.

Erik Spoelstra Wants Filipino Fans to Root for the Miami Heat - MabuhayRadio

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Trailing 2-3 in the Finals against Dallas Mavericks, the team that won the off-season blockbuster acquisition of LeBron James and Chris Bosh to make up the “Three Kings” with Dwyane Wade that rivaled the Boston Celtics could create a hysteria of excitement if they win Game 6 on Sunday, June 12, and gain momentum for Game 7 Tuesday or make their fans cry if they lose.

Erik Spoelstra, who tempered his excitement by not answering questions by the Philippine media when he was asked about acquiring James and Bosh during his off-season basketball clinic in the Philippines last year, was still very guarded when I interviewed him some months ago.

When I asked him why his team was losing from teams they were supposed to beat during the regular season, Mr. Spoelstra did not beat around the bush by readily admitting that James and Bosh were still trying to fit into his system.

But when the Heat dispatched Philadelphia and later Boston during the playoffs, many were convinced that Miami was for real.

When they dominated the Chicago Bulls, owner of the season’s best record, Miami Heat were installed favorite to beat Dirk Nowitzki and the Mavericks in the Finals.

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After beating Dallas in two close games, Miami was stunned after Dallas stole Game 2 in Miami and dominated them in Dallas' home court in Games 4 and 5.

Tomorrow, Sunday, Miami needs not only the cavalry but also prayers by Miami fans for Game 6.

During my last of my two interviews with him, Mr. Spoelstra, a 40-year-old bachelor and on the third season as coach of the Miami Heat, said, "I hope the entire Filipino nation will root for Miami when we get to the Finals."

I'm sure even the Filipino-American Chicago Bulls fans, whose loyalty was divided when Miami was playing Chicago, will now be rooting for Miami.

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Mr. Spoelstra has every reason to ask for Filipino fans support. Spoelstra is an avid fan of Filipino boxing great Manny Pacquiao, whom he dreams of holding basketball clinic during his off-season third consecutive trek to the Philippines this year. # # #

Editor's Note: To contact the author, please e-mail him at: (lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net)

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