



## Chauncey Billups still feels weird as visitor at Palace

It still feels strange to Chauncey Billups.

As Billups looked around the empty Palace while the Los Angeles Clippers were concluding their preparations to play the Detroit Pistons Monday night, it still felt weird to him to be an opponent on the floor where the Pistons clinched the 2004 NBA title.

Despite the awkward feelings, Billups said he has nothing but fond memories of his six-plus seasons with the Pistons.

But could the Pistons be part of his future?

Billups, 36, will be a free agent after this season, and the Pistons will have sizable cap space. With the need for a veteran point guard to mentor Brandon Knight, there could be a match.

Billups, who said he feels good and could play several more years, didn't rule out such a reunion, but you get the sense his time in Motown will remain in the past.

"I will just say this first and foremost: No matter what happens, I'm a lifetime Piston. I always feel like I'm a lifetime Piston," Billups told the Free Press. "As you know, I would have loved to retire a Piston when I was here, but that really wasn't in the

cards.

"You never say never to any situation. I got nothing but great memories about here and winning, and this building was on fire. I would like for my memories to stay like that."

The Palace isn't on fire nowadays, with attendance ranking at the bottom of the NBA. It has been a steady decline over the four years since president Joe Dumars sent Billups to the Denver Nuggets for Allen Iverson.

Billups admitted he still doesn't understand the **trade**, although he is still in contact with Dumars.

"We haven't talked in depth about the actual trade, nor do I really (want to)," Billups said. "He's in his position. He's the man, He makes the calls. The players move accordingly after that.

"I'm not in that position. It is what it is. I still don't get it. You see the results. You know

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what I mean? That's how it is."

Billups was dressed in warm-ups because he's sidelined with a left ankle injury. He is eager to return to the lineup of Clippers, who lead the Pacific Division, but he isn't going to rush it.

Still, Billups is closer to the end of his career than the beginning. A poll of general managers named him as the best coaching candidate among current players. Billups didn't rule out a coaching or front-office position.

"I got enough experience at dealing with different egos and different personalities and game-time situations, so I could do it," Billups said. "I could demand the respect of the guys on the team, which I think is a big deal as a coach.

"So I think I have some good characteristics, which is probably what most of the GMs thought, too. So we're just going to see."

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Free Press columnist Drew Sharp will answer your questions about all things Detroit sports in a live chat at 11 a.m. Wednesday at [freep.com/sports](http://freep.com/sports). [Submit early questions here](#).

## More Details: Ramblin' man

**Who:** Chauncey Billups, 36, L.A. Clippers guard.

**Pistons years:** Signed as a free agent in 2002; played six seasons, including championship season '03-04; traded for Allen Iverson two games into the '08-09 season.

**NBA travels:** Drafted by Boston (third pick overall in 1997), played for Toronto, Denver and Minnesota before joining the Pistons; then played for Denver again, New York and now the Clippers.

**Career numbers:** Averages 15.5 points, 5.5 assists.

**Highlights:** MVP of the '04 NBA Finals; five-time All-Star.

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