

Hadnot, Unlikely Oaks Hero

By GEORGE ROSS

The least likely sports hero in Oakland's blooming garden of new stars isn't a new one at all, he's come-backer Jim Hadnot, workhorse center for the Oakland Oaks in their victorious debut game Friday night.

Big Jimbo, wheezy and fat a few weeks ago after a three-year layoff following three starts in professional basketball, won his spurs, won his share of the crowd, and won the praise of patient Bruce Hale, his coach.

Jim — the only guy around to wear the name "Oakland Oaks" in two leagues — pulled down 20 rebounds and scored 20 points as the run-and-shoot Oaks racked up a 134 to 129 win over the just-as-big Anaheim Amigos.

The wonder of it all is that

Jim even bothered to try.

"The rap was on me as a quitter," he said. "I just barely made this club in the tryout camp, and I almost didn't get invited to it in the first place."

An old friend, ex-USF star Hal DiJulio, persuaded the Oaks to give the big ex-McClymonds High star a chance this summer when the new Oaks reported to training camp at St. Mary's College.

"I've only played a few pickup games since I quit the Eastern League three years ago," Jim said. "I was up to 270 pounds and running has never been one of my favorite sports. I guess I just sized myself up and said 'Well, you going to do it or aren't you' and here I am."

Jim, who starred at Providence College and had a cup

of coffee with the Boston Celtics, was a rookie with the Oakland Oaks of the ABL in 1961-62, the season the league folded for lack of owners.

He put in a year with Trenton of the Eastern League and Jim decided that was a career, after earning MVP honors, leading the league in rebounding and finishing fourth in scoring.

He opened a liquor store on San Pablo Ave., in Berkeley three years ago and forgot about basketball until the Oaks arose again from the ashes.

"I was concerned about his weight, speed and endurance," Hale said of the 6-10 monster who was three-times an All-NIT selection while in college.

"But he was up to it. He got down to 240 pounds, came to

camp weak and easily winded, but stuck it out. He's got something good inside of him, I'll say that. He's up at 7:00 every morning to do a lot of running.

"I think he did just great in the game," Hale said. "He was banging in there all through the game. He's beginning to toughen up now after all that work to get his weight down and get his body into shape. We're all sold on him."

Hadnot, a quiet and friendly man, says he has a lot still to do to prove to himself he's ready for another season of pro ball.

"It's nice to hear the compliments," he said. I don't know if I'm any tougher or stronger. All I know is I'm older and this team is faster. If I'm going to stay with them, I've got to work and work.

"I got concentrating on a single player who had whacked me in the game and nearly blew it," he said. "Coach Hale took me out in the third quarter partly to give me a blow, but also because I'd lost some rebounds while getting into a thing with this guy. You can't do these things and be a good team man."

Hale put him back into the ball game and he finished strong in the fourth quarter.

The players, like everyone else in sight, are very impressed with the coaching they're getting from Hale.

"He stays calm through everything," Andy Anderson, the perpetual motion little guard from Canisius, said. "We go to the sidelines during time outs, and he calmly tells us what we're doing, and gets us straightened out."



JIM HADNOT
Wins his spurs