

HEAT HEATS UP LATE

Peter Gillis of Chamblee, GA, didn't reach for the Pistons, Bulls or Lakers when he received his cards based on the 1988-89 season. In fact, he didn't even reach for the home-state Atlanta Hawks.

What he did do, however, was conduct a full-season replay of the expansion Miami Heat. And, from all indications, he enjoyed the replay, particularly after the Heat started heating up later in the season.

Miami got off to a bad start, losing 20 of its first 22 games. But it did go on to post an 18-64 record (15-26 at home, 3-38 on the road), three games better than the real-life performance.

The first win came at the expense of Golden State, in game No. 7, and later the Heat burned the NBA champs, the Pistons, 120-96.

Billy Thompson was the team's MVP after leading Miami in rebounding (8.5 per game) and finishing second in scoring (12.7). Keith Edwards was the leading scorer (16.8) - he once scorched the Lakers for 39 - Pat Cummings was an inside force who found time to average 12.2 points and shoot 55 percent from the floor and Jon Sundvold connected on 58 percent of his 3-point attempts (130-225).

Biggest problem was the inconsistent play by rookies, especially Rony Seikaly, and lack of overall scoring punch. "I'm looking forward very much to Seikaly's 1989-90 card and to the additions of 'Miami' (Glen) Rice and Sherman Douglas," says Gillis.