

Paxson signs contract

Blazers whip the Clippers in Eugene

By Allan Lazo
Of the Emerald

They set up the 24-second clocks and painted in the three-point lines Monday night in McArthur Court as a crowd of 3,838 watched the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Los Angeles Clippers, 105-97, in a National Basketball Association pre-season match-up.

Besides picking up the win, the Blazers received more good news as Jim Paxson signed a new contract with the team and is expected to start as soon as "Jack (Ramsay) and I think I'm ready to go," according to Paxson.

Clipper forward Rory White led all scorers with 20 points while Blazer forwards Peter Verhoeven and Jerome Kersey each tossed in 19 points and grabbed eight rebounds, tops in both categories for Portland.

"I thought we played well, and it was a good game for us. We had some dry spells, but overall, it was a lot better than the Seattle game," said Blazer coach Jack Ramsay referring to Portland's 112-98 loss in Seattle Sunday night.

Last night's game was close most of the way, but the Clippers managed to battle back to within only arm's reach as they turned the ball over 25 times to the Blazers' 17. The Blazers also found their way to the free-throw line 31 times as the Clippers managed only 18 shots from the line.

At one point in the third quarter, Los Angeles even moved into the lead, 72-68, on a White dunk off of a pass from Junior Bridgeman. From then on, the Clippers lost momentum.

By the end of the third stanza, the Blazers had recaptured the lead, 82-75, with Clyde Drexler using a little of his "glide" to pump in six points and grab a steal and an assist for the Blazers.

Drexler finished the game with 18 points and topped the list of assists on both sides with six.

While many of the big names found their way onto the court for both teams, many others were notably absent.

Among those present was former Blazer Bill Walton who saw limited playing time and scored only two points.

For the Blazers, Darnell Valentine poured in 14 points, Mychal Thompson added 11 and for-

ward Bernard Thompson tallied eight.

The Clippers' Marques Johnson and Norm Nixon failed to make appearances in the game. Johnson, a 6-7 forward who was involved in the Clippers' trade with Milwaukee, was nursing a broken shooting hand and guard Nixon remained in Los Angeles because of a contract dispute.

Meanwhile, the Blazers did not play highly touted No. 1 draft choice, Sam Bowie, forward Kiki Vandeweghe or Paxson. A back injury has slowed Vandeweghe in the pre-season.

Paxson and the Blazers inked a 6-year contract that ended a dispute that had kept the all-star guard out of Portland's camp since it opened. Paxson had been looking at an offer from the New York Knicks, but became one of the highest paid Blazers with his signing of a new contract. Reportedly, Paxson's contract will be in the neighborhood of Bowie's and Thompson's salaries.

Although the crowd in Mac Court chanted for Bowie to play, it was not to be as the Blazers' number one draft pick sat out the game nursing bruised ribs.

"Even though it's nice to be playing in the pre-season, we know that we are getting ready for the regular season," said Bowie. "I don't want to do anything to jeopardize that season."

The game in Mac Court marked a homecoming of sorts for two Clippers. Walton and former San Diego State University forward Michael Cage found their way back to the Pit, but with a little different perspective this time around.

"Things are a little different now. I think this is the first time that I have been to Mac Court when there wasn't a sellout crowd. Things are changing in a hurry up here in Oregon," said Walton who was a standout for UCLA in the early 1970s.

"Dick Harter had a very enthusiastic program going here when I played at UCLA," said Walton. "There was a great rivalry between the two schools."

"Then I went to the Blazers, we played a number of games in Mac Court, and it's just great to be back in the Willamette Valley," added Walton who received a loud round of applause as he started the game.

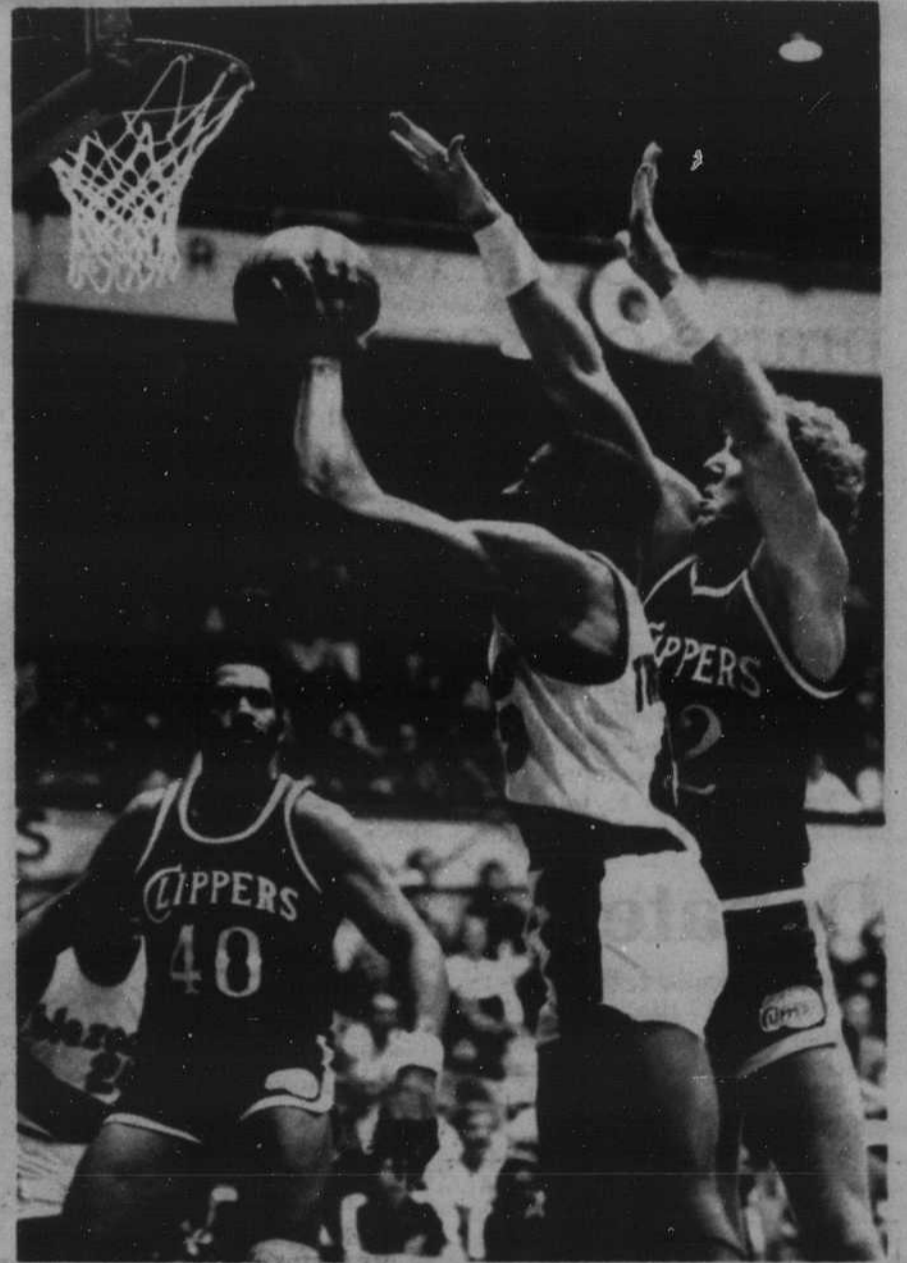


Photo by Brian Erb
Los Angeles Clippers Bill Walton and James Donaldson (40) couldn't stop Mychal Thompson's drive or the Blazers, as Portland rolled past the Clippers 105-97 in McArthur Court Monday night.

Green Bay fumbles game to Denver in 37 seconds

DENVER (AP)—Defensive backs Steve Foley and Louis Wright returned two fumbles for touchdowns just 37 seconds into the game and the Denver Broncos held on for a 17-14 National Football League victory over the Green Bay Packers Monday night in a game played in a storm that dropped ankle-deep snow on the field by game's end.

The Broncos, extending their winning streak to five games, raised their record to 6-1 and kept pace with the Los Angeles Raiders in the AFC West. Green Bay suffered its sixth straight setback after an opening victory.

The scores by Foley and Wright marked the second consecutive game in which Denver's defense had contributed two touchdowns. For the year, the Broncos defense has scored six times.

Despite a mostly anemic offense, the

Broncos made the 14-0 lead standup with key defensive plays, the final one coming when defensive end Rulon Jones sacked quarterback Lynn Dickey and forced a fumble after the Packers had driven inside the Denver 20-yard line with 3:08 left in the game.

It offset a brilliant performance by the Packers' wide receiver James Lofton, who defied the elements by catching a career-high 11 passes for 206 yards, including a 54-yard score midway through the fourth quarter.

On Green Bay's first play from scrimmage, running back Gerry Ellis was hit in the backfield by linebacker Tom Jackson and fumbled. Foley scooped up the loose ball and dashed 22 yards for a score.

On their next play from scrimmage,

the Packers duplicated their disaster. Jessie Clark ran five yards but was stripped of the ball by linebacker Steve Busick, and Wright ran it back 27 yards for another touchdown with 14:23 left in the opening quarter.

Green Bay, with Dickey beginning to connect with Lofton, subsequently threatened to score three times in the first half. But Eddie Garcia missed field goal attempts of 29 and 37 yards, and Dickey was intercepted by Foley on the third threat.

Denver quarterback John Elway completed passes of 16 yards to Steve Watson and 18 yards to Sammy Winder to set up Rich Karlis' 30-yard field goal early in the second quarter for a 17-0 Denver lead.

The Packers applied the pressure again, taking the second-half kickoff and

driving to the Denver five, where Dickey fumbled a snap and linebacker Jim Ryan recovered.

Green Bay finally got on the scoreboard late in the third quarter. Safety Mark Murphy intercepted a pass by Elway and returned it eight yards to the Denver 14. Four plays later, Ellis ran off right tackle for a five-yard scoring run with 1:15 left in the period.

Denver's offense, which failed to gain a first down from late in the first quarter until late in the third quarter, put together a short drive that expired on incomplete passes and helped set up the Packers' second score.

Lofton beat cornerback Mike Harden down the left side and gathered in Dickey's 54-yard touchdown toss as Green Bay drew within 17-14 with 7:31 left.

Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

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