

Nuggets, Rasmussen to play Blazers for Homecoming

By Capi Lynn
Of the Emerald

The Portland Trail Blazers and the Denver Nuggets, opening-round opponents in the 1986 NBA playoffs, will meet in a preseason game Oct.

19 in McArthur Court at 7 p.m. in conjunction with the University's Homecoming Weekend.

The contest will feature the homecoming return of Denver center Blair Rasmussen to the friendly confines of McArthur

Court, where he earned all-Pacific 10 Conference honors and was a stalwart for the Ducks throughout his career. He averaged 16.1 points and 7.2 rebounds a game his senior year at Oregon and finished his career fourth on the school's all-time scoring list with 1,554 points.

"We are delighted to be bringing Blair Rasmussen back to Eugene," said Blazer Executive Vice President Harry Glickman at a luncheon Tuesday at the Eugene Red Lion Motor Inn. "We hope the attraction will help bring some much-needed revenue to the Oregon athletic program."

"We're pleased that the timing of the game allows it to be encompassed in our Homecoming events," said Phil Super, executive director of the University Alumni Association. "It's a special activity for our alumni and a great opportunity to see one of our more noted recent graduates. It's also appropriate that we have four members of the Portland Trail Blazers franchise (Harry Glickman, Mick Dowers, Steve Jones and John Lashway) who are Oregon graduates that will be visible participants in Homecoming Weekend."

Rasmussen stepped to the forefront in Denver's 3-1 playoff series defeat of Portland, scoring 48 points and grabbing 30 rebounds. His 26 points and nine rebounds pruned the Nuggets' victory in the pivotal third game of the series.

The rookie 7-foot native from Auburn, Wash. averaged 11.1 points and 6.0 rebounds in 10 playoff games against Portland and Houston. Rasmussen's postseason success has put him in position to battle for a star-



Photo by Ross Martin

Denver Nugget and former University basketball player Blair Rasmussen talks with reporters at a recent press conference to announce a pre-season match between the Nuggets and the Portland Trail Blazers.

ting spot at the opening of his second season.

"There was a lot of frustration throughout the season and a lot of pressure from the outside," Rasmussen said of his limited action prior to postseason play. "I just had to react with it and deal with it."

"I built my confidence back up with intense practices the week before the Portland series," Rasmussen said. "Then a couple of guys got hurt, and I got the chance."

The preseason contest could pit Rasmussen against former Oregon teammate Jerry Adams, a fifth-round selection by Portland in last week's NBA draft.

Adams enjoyed a stellar final season as a Duck earning all-conference honors and leading the Pac-10 in rebounding with

10.3 per game last season.

"Don't discount his (Adams) chances of playing in the NBA," Glickman said.

More local flavor will be added to the preseason game with Portland's latest acquisition of Steve Johnson, an all-American at Oregon State University prior to becoming a 1981 NBA first-round draft pick by Kansas City.

The Trail Blazers acquired the former OSU standout last week. Johnson averaged 13.8 points and 6.5 rebounds last season at San Antonio.

The game also will mark the professional debut of Walter Berry, Portland's number-one pick in the 1986 NBA draft. Berry was cited as the best collegiate player in the country this past season when he received the John Wooden Award, Adolph Rupp Trophy and Kodak Player of the Year honors. He led the Big East Conference in scoring (23.0 points a game), was second in rebounding (11.1 a game) and was third in field goal percentage (.598 on 327 of 547 shooting).

Group W Cable and KOZY TV of Eugene, a primary member of Blazer Cable, will assist in co-sponsoring the event.

Tickets for the preseason contest will be available at the University Athletic Department. Prices are scaled at \$8, \$10 and \$12 for adults and \$4, \$6 and \$12 for students high school age and younger.

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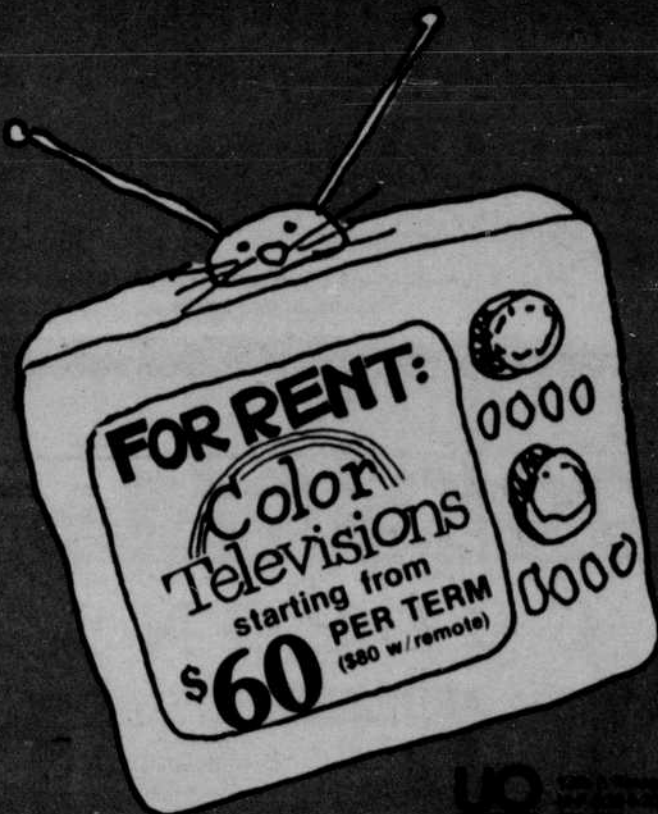
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