

New blood leads Blazers to victory at Mac Court

□ Jam-packed crowd sees Portland sneak by Cavs, 119-113

By Dave Charbonneau
Emerald Sports Editor

No, it wasn't the same team that reached the NBA Finals last season.

But the Portland Trail Blazers treated a sold-out crowd at McArthur Court to a look into the future as they defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers 119-113 on Friday.

Only two of last season's starting five saw playing time. Point guard Terry Porter and center Kevin Duckworth both started but played sparingly as head coach Rick Adelman used the game to get a look at his summer acquisitions.

Forward Jerome Kersey suited up but did not play, despite numerous chants from the 10,067 fans for Kersey to take the court. Buck Williams didn't even suit up, and guard Clyde Drexler — who had knee surgery this summer — did not make the trip.

The game was far from a regular season showdown of two teams expected to contend for an NBA Finals appearance. Instead, it was a game between

two teams trying to decide who will be suiting up for the regular season.

Portland, which had an 18-man roster coming into the game, played a lineup of Elliot Perry, Mario Elie, Mark Bryant, Lamont Strothers and Tracy Murray in the closing minutes of the game. This lineup would usually suggest a blowout under normal circumstances, but the game was close to the very end.

For Adelman, a victory in the preseason was not nearly as important as seeing his new players react in a close game.

"I wanted to see how the younger guys would respond to the situation," he said. "I was pleased with all the young guys; they all had their moments."

Murray, a rookie, had the most impressive performance out of the new players. Murray, who was used to getting the cold shoulder from McArthur Court fans while starring with UCLA, demonstrated his picture-perfect jump shot, hitting seven of 12 from the field.

Murray also showed he could be effective from outside the three-point line, hitting two of two from the arc and finishing with 17 points.

"It was different having fans



here cheer for me," Murray said. "I'm happy they were on my side this time."

Strothers spent most of his time with the Blazers last year on the injured reserve list and has not secured a spot on the team yet. Strothers did everything he could to try and convince Adelman to keep him on as a fifth guard, leading all scorers with 20 points.

Strothers' odds of making the team are not that great consid-

Turn to **BLAZERS**, Page 9A

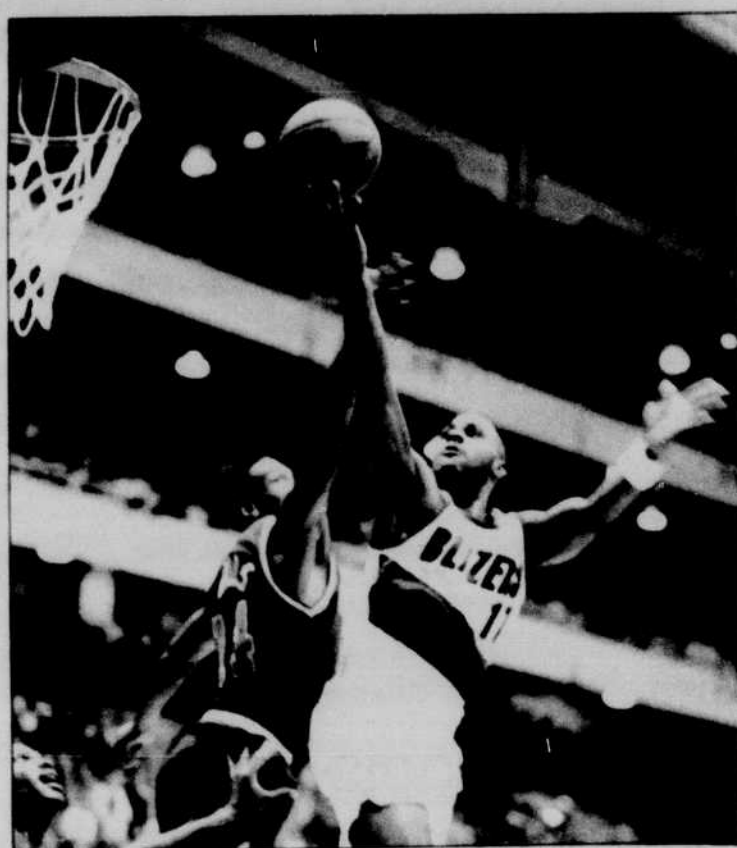


Photo by Jeff Paslay

Terrell Brandon and Tracy Murray (above left) returned to McArthur Court, but this time it was Murray's team getting the cheers. Mario Elie (above), who came from Golden State, scored 13 points for the Blazers on Friday.

LATE NIGHT



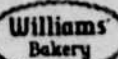
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