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 For more information, call the Student Health Center at 346-4441

Translations for all Blazer fans

Being a Portland Trailblazer fan is like wearing underwear: It's a pretty popular idea, but it doesn't mean you know anything about basketball.

If you're new to Oregon or are contemplating spending the rest of your life here, you need to know about Blazer fans. Each Western state has its subculture of dubious repute: Idaho has neo-Nazis, Washington has grunge rockers, Nevada has casino dwellers and nightclub entertainers, California has mall-loving, junk culture-fomenting, no-brain ... you get the idea.

And Oregon, Oregon has Blazer fans.

They care about their families and communities. They're productive, upstanding members of society. They're not bad people. But unlike other basketball fans, many Blazer fans don't understand basketball.

Maybe it's something in the water. Maybe it's because they've never pumped their own gas or computed sales tax for a candy bar.

Maybe it's their basketball team. Trying to understand basketball by watching the Blazers is like trying to understand physics by watching Road Runner cartoons or trying to understand law by reading John Grisham novels. It's fun, but it's not educational.

To better understand Blazer fans and their team, here is a partially abridged Blazer Fan to English/English to Blazer Fan Dictionary.

- "So, how are the Blazers going to do this year?": Who's playing for us this year? Will the team be any good? Suitable answers include, "Better": You may recognize the new players by the playoffs; and, "They're still one of the elite teams in the league": They're slowly getting older and worse.
- "Chris Dudley was a good



SCOTT SIMONSON

acquisition": He was the only center available in a weak free agent market. Surrounded by bad free throw shooters and another dumb team, he should fit in just fine.

- "Harvey Grant was a good acquisition": He's an underrated player and an asset if used correctly, but bringing a quality perimeter shooter to Portland is like sending a few U.N. troops to Somalia: There are still bad shots everywhere who aren't going to stop pulling the trigger.
- "Good riddance to Duckworth. He was a moody, unmotivated underachiever": Good riddance to Duckworth. He was a moody, unmotivated underachiever.
- "The Blazers never get any respect": They can choke nearly insurmountable leads, their players are petulant and whiny toward referees, and they usually win games by being the more talented team, not by playing smart basketball. This is common knowledge in 49 states.
- "Clyde Drexler needs to be paid what he's worth": He missed most of last season with injuries. He wasn't a factor in the playoffs. He's making about \$8 million next season and he's getting old. So who's complaining?

He's jealous of future stars like Chris Webber and Anfernee Hardaway signing long-term contracts with figures approximating the economies of some third world nations. Those teams are banking on the young

seasons.

The Blazers also never seemed to recover emotionally from a February scandal in Salt Lake City, when four players were accused of having sexual contact with underage girls. No criminal charges were brought, but two players, Tracy Murray and Dave Johnson, were suspended briefly and fined. Two others, Jerome Kersey and Reggie Smith, were fined.

In the off-season, several trades were rumored, and two were made. The Blazers sent disgruntled heavyweight center Kevin Duckworth to the Washington Bullets for forward Harvey Grant, then traded swingman Mario Elie to Houston to open a salary slot that allowed them to sign free agent cen-

players' abilities to lead them to a championship.

Clyde forgets that he put all-star numbers on the league's most talented team and still didn't bring a championship to Portland. How many more second place finishes does Clyde have in him? How many more does Portland want?

- "Did you see the Blazer game last night?": I caught a few minutes of the game between *Wheel of Fortune* and *Cheers* reruns.
- "I missed it": I didn't know they played last night.
- "It was a pretty close game": I liked that *Cheers* rerun.
- "That's another great hustle play by Jerome Kersey": He was a CBA-caliber player and an NBA-caliber athlete. He's become an NBA-caliber player and a CBA-caliber athlete.

His once-dazzling athleticism seems to wane with each game. He hasn't finished a fast break with a dunk since Yugoslavia was a country. If he doesn't dive after every loose ball he sees, he may be out of the league by next season.

- "The real season doesn't really start until the playoffs start": Most Oregonians don't pay attention to basketball until April. When the Blazers lose in the first round, most Oregonians stop paying attention to basketball in April as well.
- "So, who's going to win it all this year?": I hope its one of the teams I know: The Sonics, Suns, Lakers, Bulls or the team with Shaq.
- "Last year was a fluke. This year, they could go all the way": All the way to the second round of the playoffs, and out.

See you for a couple of weeks in April.

Scott Simonson is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

Turn to **BLAZERS**, Page 10

Blazers ready for season to begin

PORTLAND(AP) — Clyde Drexler is satisfied, Buck Williams feels unappreciated and the Portland Trail Blazers are featuring two new faces as they begin their 1993-94 season.

A healthy Drexler has put his contract differences aside until the end of the season as he prepares to come back after a troubled year in which he missed 33 games because of hamstring and knee problems.

Drexler's health was a big factor in the Blazers' disappointing finish a year ago. The team won 51 regular-season games, but with Drexler far below his top form, they were eliminated by San Antonio in the first round of the playoffs.

It was a major blow to a franchise that had advanced to the NBA Finals twice and the Western Conference finals three times in the previous three

seasons.

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