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Sorting through the stupid mail

Monday, I came into the office and had a couple of letters from this guy who is lacking in sports knowledge.

So I'll use this space to answer these questions, kind of a "Dear Dave" type of thing. We'll call it "Answering Letters From People Who are Lacking in Sports Knowledge."

Letter #1: I was watching the Blazers the other day, and there were a lot of players I didn't recognize.

First of all, they have this big dumb-looking center who is really slow, and really doesn't do anything all that neat. He kind of just stands there in the middle and looks stupid.

Then, the rest of the starters look like they haven't played basketball for 10 years. I really don't recognize these Blazers that some people are picking to win it all this season.



DAVE CHARBONNEAU

- Bart Frankenbegal Student

Reply: To answer the first part of your question, Bart, the new guy is Chris Dudley. Dudley came from New Jersey, and Portland spent the entire summer trying to justify Dudley's contract, which will allow Dudley to raise his salary substantially after this season.

When the Blazers eventually won the case, they made it sound as if they had signed the next Michael Jordan. After the Blaz-

ers' first two games, it's pretty obvious Dudley is no Michael Jordan. Hell, he's not even the next Mychal Thompson.

And if the rest of the Blazers look unfamiliar, that's because they're all grandpas. The average age of the Blazer starters is 31. By NBA standards, they should be in walkers by now.

You're right, a lot of people are picking the Blazers to win it all, a lot of stupid people. Every season, people say this is Portland's last chance to win a title, and this year was no exception. Two years ago, Portland had its last chance to win the title but was crushed by the Bulls. Last season, the Blazers lost in the first round, and it was no accident. Look for the Blazers to win just more than 40 games and lose in the first round again.

Letter #2: I was watching the Oregon football team play Arizona this weekend and missed what I heard was a really great fight between two boxers. Why didn't anybody tell me about the fight?

- Mr. Van Driessen Professor, 1960s Education

Reply: You may be ignorant, but you're not as dumb as the rest of us who made the decision to watch the Ducks rather than pay the \$40 to see the Ridick Bowe-Evander Holyfield title fight, which started about the same time as the Ducks game.

You have an excuse: At least you didn't know the fight was on. The rest of us knew about the fight, but opted to watch Oregon, thinking the Ducks would win and the fight would be lame.

Instead, the Ducks got pummeled and the Bowe-Holyfield matchup turned into one of the craziest fights in history. Three people (although neither of the boxers) got carted off on stretchers, and some idiot parachuted into the ropes and got his butt kicked by the fans. That's entertainment.

Meanwhile, Duck fans sat and watched Arizona build a 21-0 lead at halftime and then were forced by embarrassment to switch the channel and watch *Full House* and *Saved By The Bell: The College Years* until the Saturday night parties got going.

Note: If you have really stupid questions about sports, or even not so stupid questions, write to me and bring the letters to the Emerald office. I'll try to answer them occasionally in my column. It will be cool.

Dave Charbonneau is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

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