

NBA playoffs: Get rid of 'The Worm', defense

What is this, the fifth month of the NBA playoffs? Is it just me or do these playoffs just go on forever?

Thankfully, the NBA is down to four teams.

Surprisingly, there's no Chicago, no Phoenix, no Seattle and yes, no Portland. Although Portland not being there isn't a surprise to me, for people up in Portland it probably is.

The Blazers did the right thing last week in firing Rick Adelman. Adelman was through. Yeah, there are plenty of people who will argue that he should have stayed because of all he's done for the organization, and that he was the only coach in Blazer history to take two teams to the NBA Finals.

But the fact of the matter is Paul Allen, owner of the Blazers, is not into being complacent. He saw a problem arising with his team, and he did what he could to fix it (how well of a repair job he does will depend on who he hires to replace Adelman).

Allen could have kept Adelman on, but the fact is Adelman was brought in to coach this team because he was a "player's coach." A coach who knew how to deal with a team of stars, as the Blazers were when he took over the team.

The team that carried him to two NBA Finals appearances was the team of Clyde Drexler, Terry Porter, Jerome Kersey, Buck Williams and Kevin Duckworth. Unfortunately, that team is through.

The Blazers must now start to work away from depending on that core of players and start to look toward the future.

Bob Costas was accused of being racist by a member of the NBA Players Association after he called San Antonio forward Dennis Rodman a "punk" on NBC. He said it after a game against the Jazz where Rodman elbowed Tom Chambers, took a cheap swing at Karl Malone and kneed John Stockton in the thigh.

Costas' remarks were dubbed



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racist because the accuser apparently didn't think he would have made the same remark about a white player who did the same thing.

Well, correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't recall any player, white or black, in the NBA pulling the same crap Rodman has over the course of the season. The only player I can think of who used to play the same kind of game as Rodman was Bill Laimbeer, a white guy who retired earlier this season. I can remember countless times when newscasters called Bill a punk or a bully and no one ever cared.

If someone out there is stupid enough to support or defend the way Rodman plays, that person

is just as thick-headed as Rodman is.

Scoring: what happened to it? I think the average number of points being scored in NBA playoff games has got to be less than 185 points. All the teams that score points, Phoenix, Golden State, Orlando, Seattle and Portland are out of the playoffs.

Remember the Pistons four or five years ago when they beat run-and-gun teams like Portland and Chicago with tough defense and violent tactics? Well, that kind of game plan is no longer used by a minority of teams in the NBA; it is now the style of play used by the teams that are winning.

New York has taken over the role of Bad Boys in the NBA, and right now is the favorite to win the whole thing. Houston and Utah are two of the most boring teams in the league and whichever one wins that series will lose to the Eastern Conference champion.

Let's hope Indiana comes out

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of the east. That is one of the few teams left that actually plays ball. Maybe the Blazers can get Larry Brown.

Dave Charbonneau is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

1994 may be Pac-10 year of quarterbacks

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

All that remains until the 1994 Pacific-10 Conference football season kicks off are 100 days.

September 1 is the official opening of the season when 1993 co-champion Arizona travels east to face Georgia Tech, and Washington State heads to Illinois to face the Illini.

Most of the teams in the conference, Oregon included, wait an additional two days before starting the season. Included on that first weekend are a pair of Pac-10 contests, including Washington taking on USC. Oregon State tries to show how far the wishbone has come September 3 when they travel to Tempe, Ariz. to face Arizona State. Oregon opens that same day at home against Portland State.

The Huskies remain on NCAA probation this year, and are ineligible for the conference championship and postseason play. Washington's Napoleon Kaufman will try to win something that even the NCAA can't take away from the Huskies: the Heisman Trophy.

Kaufman ignored the pressure to turn professional after leading the Pac-10 in rushing, all-purpose running and kickoff returns last season, and is a bonafide candidate for the award. Unlike the NFL, the Heisman committee tends not to discriminate because of his 5-foot-9, 175 lb. frame.

Also back this year is UCLA wide receiver J.J. Stokes, who had one of the best years ever for a receiver in the Pac-10 in 1993. Stokes caught 68 passes for 1005 yards and 17 touchdowns.

Despite the talent at complimentary positions, 1994 shapes up to be the year of the quarterback in the Pac-10. Nine teams

in the conference return their top quarterback of a year ago. Leading the way are Stanford's Steve Stenstrom, USC's Rob Johnson and Oregon's Danny O'Neil, three quarterbacks who treated the record books as rough as they did opposing defenses last year.

Stenstrom set new Pac-10 records for total offense (3,392 yards) and passing yards (3,627 yards). O'Neil threw for 3,224 yards in 1993, also surpassing John Elway's previous conference record. O'Neil and Johnson each came within 80 yards of also moving ahead of former Washington State quarterback Timm Rosenbach's record for total offense.

Although those three seniors will garner most of the attention, there are plenty of other top quarterbacks coming back as well. In California, senior Dave Barr returns after leading the conference in passing efficiency, while throwing for 2,619 yards and 21 touchdowns.

Washington's Damon Huard, UCLA's Wayne Cook and Arizona's Dan White all led their teams to plus-500 seasons in their first year at the helm last year. ASU freshman Jake Plummer didn't start until midway through the season, but threw for 1,650 yards and nine touchdowns.

The most interesting quarterback situation could come at Oregon State, the team least likely to throw the ball. Don Shanklin is the starter entering the fall, but Rahim Muhammad played well when given the ball last year, showing he's capable of running the wishbone.

Washington State is the only team that doesn't return its starter from last year, but if history is any indication, there shouldn't be a problem with the Cougars' offense.

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