

Commentators don't add color

The playoffs. Two little words that mean so much to the National Basketball Association. Come playoff time, the NBA is the sports event.

And with the advent of expanded cable coverage, the average NBA fan is satisfied for the ensuing weeks of playoff action.

Enter Danny Ainge.

(Editor's note: This column is partly inspired by a



deep-rooted dislike for Danny Ainge that dates back to my days working in a movie theater.

Apparently, this million-

dollar athlete didn't think he needed to shell out six bucks for him and his son to go to a movie. And as a consequence, I had to ask a celebrity for his damn ticket stub in front of a full movie theater that didn't think it was too nice to be harassing a beloved Blazer. Thanks a lot, Danny.)

Yes, that fiery journeyman guard best known for his clutch shooting, obnoxious interviews and incredible knack for whining.

And now he brings all of his glory to court-side color commentating.

As if I didn't get enough of Ainge's lip in Portland when he was a Blazer, now I have to listen to him corrupt what is the most exciting part of professional basketball.

Talk, whine, jabber and criticize is all TNT's color commentator ever seems to do. And he does so often — talk, talk, talk, talk.

Throw an extra anecdote here and another complaint about a referee there, and all you would hear is Danny Ainge the entire broadcast.

You would think the man was getting paid by the word — maybe he is. If you cut his role in half he would still talk too much.

I shouldn't be surprised, though, because watching a game with Ainge playing wasn't much different.

A typical game involving Ainge-the-player consisted of constant jawing and chattering, whining to the refs and a pouty silent treatment. Repeat.

A typical game involving Ainge-the-color commentator consists of constant jawing and chattering, whining to the play-by-play commentators and a pouty silent treatment. Repeat.

Remember in the modern hey-day of the Portland Trail Blazers, when Clyde Drexler glided, Terry Porter drained three's and Jerome Kersey just

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The real Tonka trucks



At thousands of dollars a day, a 250-foot mobile crane removes a piece of McArthur Court's wooden-barrel roof Wednesday afternoon. The crane also will be used to maneuver 17 steel roof trusses for the new gable roof.

MATHEW STIFFLER/Emerald

Blazer two-step ties series at two

■ **NBA PLAYOFFS:** Portland gets strong outings from its center and point guard to even series with Utah Jazz

PORTLAND (AP) — Rod Strickland and Arvydas Sabonis provided the offense Wednesday night as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Utah Jazz 98-90 to even their first-round playoff series 2-2.

Strickland had 27 points, seven assists and six rebounds as Portland won its second-straight game at home to force a deciding Game 5 Sunday in Salt Lake City. Sabonis scored 25, hit all three of his three-point attempts and grabbed 13 rebounds.

Portland took the lead for good in the first six minutes, led by as many as 17 in the second quarter, and was up by 21 in the third.

With stars Karl Malone and John Stockton suffering through horrible shooting nights, the Jazz got no closer than eight in the second half.

Strickland capped the victory by sinking two three-pointers late in the fourth quarter. His first, with 5:13 to play, put the Blazers up 89-75. His second, with 2:40 to go, made it 92-77.

Jeff Hornacek was the only consistent offensive threat for Utah, scoring 30 points, including 4-for-4 from three-point range. Malone was 4-for-16 from the field and 7-for-12 at the foul line for 15 points, 17.7 below his series average. Stockton had 11 points and 11 assists, and was just 3-for-13 from the field.

Clifford Robinson scored 15 points for the Blazers despite foul trouble.

Leading 54-40 at halftime, the Blazers outscored Utah 9-2 at the start of the third quarter to make it 63-42 with 9:33 left in the period.

The Jazz scored the next 12 points, with Hornacek and David Benoit both hitting 3-pointers, to cut the lead to 63-54.

Stockton's layup to start the fourth quarter made it 74-66, but the Blazers used a one-two Robinson punch to regain momentum.

Rumeal Robinson's driving layup and Clifford Robinson's three-point play on a foul by Malone boosted the lead back to 79-66.

The Jazz couldn't stop Sabonis in the first half. The rookie was 5-for-5 from the field, including two 3-pointers, and 6-for-7 from the foul line for 18 points and six rebounds in 17 minutes.

Lacrosse teams play in Northwest tourney

The Oregon Club Sports men's lacrosse team faced tough competition last weekend in the Pacific Northwest Lacrosse Association Tournament, losing two of three games.

Before the PNLA tourney, the Ducks lost a 9-2 league semifinal game to Lewis and Clark College. Oregon fell behind 7-0 by half-time and could not recover.

In the PNLA tourney, the Ducks lost to "Steelhead" of Seattle 4-3. The Ducks then defeated "Wy'east" of Portland 7-4, before falling to a Tacoma team 7-2.

"Our defense was strong, but the offense just wasn't clicking," team coordinator Schuyler Harrison said. He also noted that the Ducks were plagued by injuries going into the weekend.

Oregon is now 8-3 in league and will finish the season this weekend with a Saturday road trip to Simon Fraser and league champion Western Washington on Sunday.

The women's lacrosse team gained valuable experience over the weekend in the PNLA tournament. The Ducks lost all five games they played, but considering the team is 90 percent freshmen, their future remains bright.

"It's going to take us a couple of years to get competitive, but it's been fun," team coordinator Rebecca White said.

The Ducks will compete in another tournament this Sunday at Linfield College against the University of Puget Sound, University of Portland and the host school.

Women's water polo team back in action

For only the second time all year, the Oregon Club Sports women's water polo team will be competing this weekend when it travels to Berkeley, Calif., for the Pacific Coast Championships.

The tournament will span three days with three different levels of play. The Ducks will compete in the middle level of play, the B group.

Ducks lack offense in weekend games

The Oregon Club Sports baseball team dropped a doubleheader last Sunday to Southern Oregon State College and a Monday game against Willamette University.

Oregon was downed in its



first game against Southern 12-3.

In the second game of the doubleheader, Southern nearly matched its performance from the first game with a 12-4 win.

Oregon's first game with Southern concluded its league season with a fifth place finish and a 6-10 record.

The Ducks then suffered a 7-2 loss to Willamette. League finals will take place this weekend.

Ultimate teams head to West Coast tourney

Both the men's and women's Club Sports ultimate frisbee teams will be competing in the West Coast Regional tournament this weekend in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Approximately 20 teams will compete in the two-day tourna-

ment, including Stanford, California-Davis, San Diego, Oregon State and Humboldt State.

— Ryan Frank

Crew finishes strong at Cascade Sprints

Oregon Club Sport Crew competed in the Cascade Sprints last Saturday in Tacoma, Wash.

The Women's Varsity Eight finished third with a time of seven-minutes, 32 seconds. The Women's Novice Eight and Novice Four boats each placed second in their races with times of 7:44 and 8:19, respectively.

The Oregon men also placed well in Tacoma, led by the Varsity Four, which finished first in 7:00. The Men's Novice Eight grabbed second place in its race with a time of 6:35.

Team coordinator Zohar Abramovitz was pleased with the Ducks performance.

"We're placing where we should be right now," he said. "By the time we get to the championships in Sacramento we should be ready to do real well."

This Saturday the Women's Varsity Eight travels to Washington for the "Opening Day" regatta.

— Jason Lewis-Berry