

Blazers' new backcourt duo say they're ready to succeed

■ **NBA:** Kenny Anderson, Isaiah Rider come to Blazers wanting to erase doubts and troubled history

By William C. Crum
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — The newest Trail Blazers say all the right things.

But the question for Portland is whether Kenny Anderson and Isaiah Rider will play up to their potential or live up to their reputations.

Portland landed next season's likely backcourt duo in a torrent of trading and deal-making, clearing out disgruntled point guard Rod Strickland and 15-year veteran Buck Williams to make room for the newcomers.

Anderson immediately walked in and said he intended to erase any doubts about his ability to play up to the potential that made him the second pick overall in the

1991 draft.

Rider declared himself ready to "buckle down and do the right things in life" after three troubled years at Minnesota and three run-ins with the law since the NBA season ended.

Third-year coach P.J. Carlesimo, whose conflicts with Strickland led to his point guard's six-game walkout last season, said the deals addressed some "glaring weaknesses" on a team that struggled to find the money from the field and from the free-throw line.

After going to the NBA Finals in 1990 and 1992, Portland hasn't gotten past the first round of the playoffs in four years. Williams was the final remaining starter from the Western Conference championship squads.

"We've gotten significantly younger," Carlesimo said after the Rider trade was announced in the first of two quick news conferences Tuesday night. "I think it's a new

beginning for both of us."

Besides bringing Anderson in at point and Rider in at shooting guard, the deal-making finalized Tuesday brought forward Rasheed Wallace from Washington to join Arvydas Sabonis and Clifford Robinson on the front line.

The Wallace deal, announced last week, was settled when Washington agreed to waive a requirement that Strickland take a physical. Strickland reportedly wants more money from the Blazers.

The Strickland deal also sent forward Harvey Grant to Washington in exchange for guard Mitchell Butler.

Forward Bill Curley and guard James Robinson went to Minnesota along with a first-round draft pick in 1997 or 1998, at Portland's option, for Rider.

And Portland renounced the rights to Williams, who was due to be paid \$5.1 million, along with rights to Rumeal Robinson

and Elmore Spencer.

Now Portland must find out if its new lineup is a winner.

The 6-foot-1 Anderson was an All-Star in 1994. But he has been hampered by injuries and questions about his defense throughout a five-year career.

The 6-foot-5 Rider was arrested in his hometown of Oakland, Calif., this summer for offenses including marijuana possession and gambling. He was questioned but not charged in an alleged rape. In April, he settled a lawsuit filed by a woman he kicked in a sports bar in 1994. Following the incident, Rider was convicted of assault, fined and spent four days in jail after violating probation terms.

After leading Minnesota with 19.6 points per game last season, Rider called his move to Portland "a time to check myself, check what I'm doing, I have to fix what I'm doing, period."

League suspends Irvin for drug charges

■ **NFL:** Michael Irvin will miss five games and lose about \$500,000 for no contest plea

By Dave Goldberg
The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Michael Irvin, who pleaded no contest last week to drug charges, was suspended by the NFL on Wednesday for the first five games of the regular season, a punishment whose severity was due in part to Irvin's prominence.

The suspension comes eight days after Irvin pleaded no contest to felony cocaine possession charges for which he was fined \$10,000, placed on probation for four years and sentenced to 800 hours of community service. It leaves the three-time Super Bowl champions without their top wide receiver and one of the best in the NFL for almost a third of the season.

"You serve as a highly visible symbol of the Dallas Cowboys and the NFL," commissioner Paul Tagliabue wrote to Irvin in a letter informing the Cowboys' star of the suspension.

"As such, you are an unusually prominent example for good and for bad for young people. While that visibility affords you substantial benefits, financial and otherwise, it significant-

ly increases and magnifies the negative and detrimental impact of your misconduct on the league, its teams, its players and its fans."

The five-game suspension will cost Irvin over \$500,000 — he makes \$102,647 a game. He will miss games with the Chicago Bears, New York Giants, Indianapolis Colts, Buffalo Bills and Philadelphia Eagles before becoming eligible to return on Oct. 13, when the Cowboys are at home against Arizona following a bye week.

Earlier Wednesday, owner Jerry Jones had suggested that Irvin's prominence might add to the severity of the suspension. The usual suspension for such offenses is four games, the penalty meted out to Bam Morris, who was released by the Pittsburgh Steelers earlier this month after pleading guilty to felony possession of marijuana.

Tagliabue said much the same, both in his public announcement and his letter to Irvin.

Irvin was arrested March 4 in hotel room in Irving, Texas, near the Cowboys' workout facilities at Valley Ranch after a motel employee complained about noise. Irvin and two women also in the room were indicted March 1 on drug possession charges.

Last Tuesday, Irvin interrupted the trial to enter the no contest plea.

Tagliabue's letter to Irvin, who went home to Miami instead of coming here to the Cowboys' camp, was strongly worded.

"In my judgment," he wrote, "the impact of your involvement with illegal drugs ... has had an extremely adverse impact on the league, its teams and players generally."

"The length of your suspension also reflects my judgment about the need, in light of some of your recent statements, to reinforce for you, the necessity of your compliance with the league's drug policy."

Irvin's absence will leave a major hole in the Dallas offense.

Kevin Williams, who started last year for the first time, is the only experienced wide receiver on the team. Deion Sanders, the NFL's defensive player of the year two years ago, is working out almost exclusively at wide receiver in anticipation of the suspension but he has never played the position on a regular basis.

That also leaves a hole at cornerback, where Kevin Smith is still recovering from an Achilles tendon injury and Larry Brown has left for Oakland as a free agent.

Outdoors: Kids take to the rock

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the top."

There must be solid fact behind his theories, because his young climbers are among the best in the country. Shena Sturman, Lasey Bonstead, and Anchen Texter finished first, second and third in the 14 and 15 year-old category at Eugene's recent Pacific Northwest Regional.

The three girls glide across the walls of The Crux like spiders, stretching for one tiny hold after another. At times, the climbers pause and hang away from the wall to plan their next move. As he watches them, Grosowsky talks about the elements of climbing. It's as much a sport of strategy as strength, and it is because they use their heads that they're such good climbers, he says.

If the three girls and the other junior climbers who train at The Crux continue their success, they will qualify for the upcoming World Championships in Moscow. Sturman is already assured of a spot on the US team because of her success in the climbing circuit this season.

So, as the rest of the world comes to Oregon's Smith Rock to climb, it appears that the Northwest will be sending out some excellent home-grown climbers to represent us in Moscow.

Gymnastics: Strug will be a Bruin after Games

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she's the only American to win it.

The United States still has several other top contenders.

Shannon Miller, who now has six Olympic medals, including a silver from the '92 all-around, was the No. 2 qualifier behind reigning world champion Lilia Podkopaeva of Ukraine. Dominique Dawes qualified sixth.

Strug's replacement is 14-year-old Dominique Moceanu, who finished fifth in the event at last year's world championships.

Moceanu got the jitters Tuesday night and fell twice on the vault. That set up Strug's performances.

Three gymnasts per squad advance to the 36-woman field. Only two per country can be among the eight challengers for the apparatus finals on Sunday and Monday.

In Barcelona, Strug was the third for the United States in the all-around spot after com-

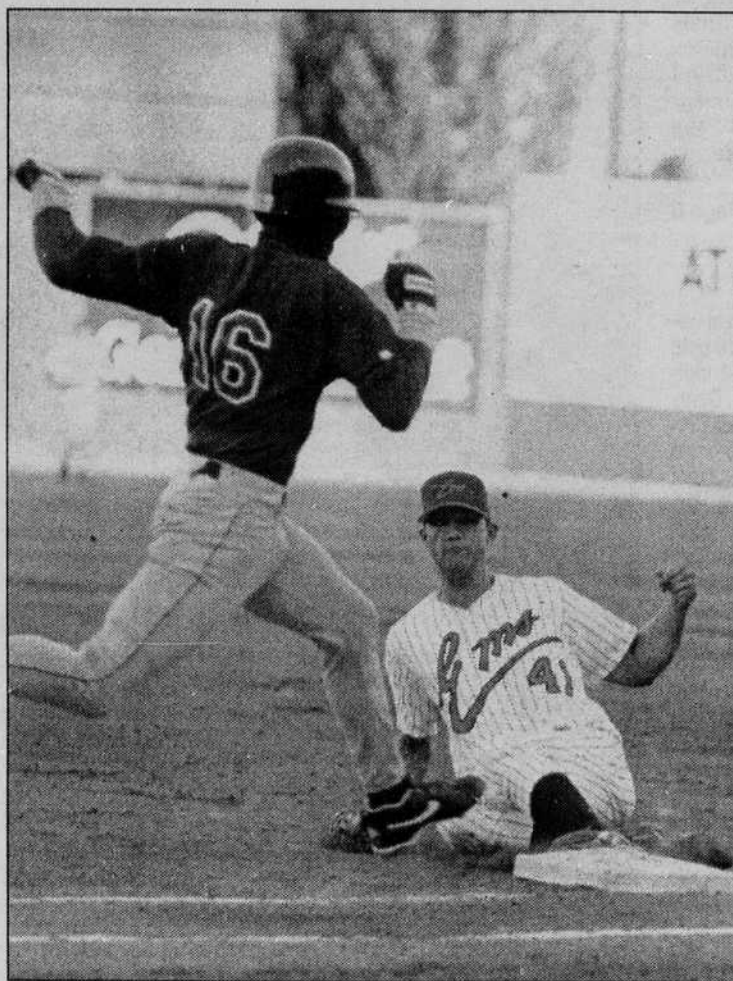
pulsories. But the big news was that reigning world champion Kim Zmeskal fell off the balance beam and was in danger of not advancing.

Zmeskal, one of Karolyi's stars, did bounce back in the optionals, tying Strug on the last apparatus — the vault. Then she slid past her and into the all-around with the third U.S. spot.

Come September, look for Strug in Hollywood. She'll enter UCLA on a four-year scholarship.

Tuesday night, after her ride to the medals ceremony in Karolyi's arms, Strug found time for a brief visit to Planet Hollywood as the special guest of owners Bruce Willis and Demi Moore, who had watched her perform at the Georgia Dome.

Strug and her teammates are staying at a private residence until gymnastics ends Tuesday, then they plan to move into the Olympic Village for a real taste of the games.



First baseman Jerrod Wong aggressively slides into first base, just beating Theo Fefee who was called out on the play.

Baseball: Ems' pitching, batting come through

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homer to left.

Ems Manager Jim Saul pulled Cochran one out into the eighth, replacing him with Rodney Allen, who came in and immediately gave-up a double and a walk before getting himself out of the jam to end the inning.

Eugene added some insurance in the bottom half of the eighth, scoring two more and putting the game out of reach.

Cochran came back in the ninth, sitting the Hawks down in order, to get the save.

"Outstanding pitching tonight," said a jovial Saul after the game. "(Cochran) did a great job and Allen came in and did a great job."

"We are going to be in all the games. The kids just don't quit. Tonight we come in and got six runs, they come back with four, so we went out and got a couple more. That is a plus for this club."

Stuck in second place behind the Hawks all season, the Ems will head to Boise for a three-game stand starting tonight with a chance to take over first place.