

## ■ In my opinion



JEFFREY DRANSFELDT  
THREE TO WIN

## Blazers a changed team under McMillan

Whether you loved them or despised them in previous years, the latest reincarnation of the Portland Trail Blazers is worth supporting.

Surprising, considering this sentiment comes from a diehard Los Angeles Lakers fan.

The differences with this Blazers squad, guided by new coach Nate McMillan, are commendable. He brings a commitment to team discipline and an idea to play "the right way."

McMillan stresses it daily, rookie Jarrett Jack said in a pair of interviews with him and the Blazers coach. At the NBA level, you're always the subject of attention and have to act responsibly, Jack said.

"You are always in the public eye," Jack added. "You are not allowed in some ways to do what everyone else does."

McMillan's message is something basketball fans, team loyalties aside, can latch onto. Professional sports are riddled with rich, spoiled athletes complaining about the most minuscule and meaningless things. For years, the Blazers have made daily headlines with fighting, arrests and the temperamental play of Rasheed Wallace, Darius Miles and the promising Zach Randolph.

Enter Coach McMillan, exit a more lenient coach, Maurice Cheeks, and add players with strong character including Jack, and former University of Maryland teammates Steve Blake and Juan Dixon, and you have a recipe for a successful, well-behaved franchise. The additions of Martell Webster and Sebastian Telfair can make "successful" and "winners" common adjectives in the future.

It was hardly Cheeks' fault, but professional athletes need a coach that won't back down from athletes with large paychecks. At a recent practice, McMillan kicked Randolph out after he heard the fifth-year pro mutter something he didn't like after a drill.

When's the last time you heard a pro coach eject a player making more than \$10 million? Not recently, not in this coaching era, where replacing coaches is easier than trading players with massive contracts.

"Every day, so many players with so much talent ... feel they can control the game by themselves," McMillan said. "It's a team game, a team sport."

And to think, there is hope in this hype-saturated sports-dominated society.

NBA commissioner David Stern recently adopted an NBA dress code, something Jack said the Blazers already had in place. Stern wants to improve league image and get "the game back to where it's supposed to be."

So don't shy away today, go to the Portland Trail Blazers game against the Utah Jazz at McArthur Court tonight at 7 p.m. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.com or by calling 503-797-9600.

Students shouldn't miss an opportunity to see former college stars again within a college atmosphere.

Jack is a smooth guard from Georgia Tech. Two

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## ■ Club tennis



The Oregon club tennis team is coming off a year in which it won the Pacific Northwest Division of the USTA Campus Championship. The team placed 18th at nationals.

COURTESY

## Team ready to defend division title

*Club hosts tournament kicking off season, looks to improve on 18th-place performance at national championships*

BY WILL SEYMOUR  
FREELANCE REPORTER

The University of Oregon Club tennis team served up some fun and excitement Oct. 16 with its preseason on-campus tournament, testing students' skills in both singles and doubles competition. The tournament also allowed the club to prepare for the upcoming season, when the team will defend its first-ever division championship.

Thirty athletes dusted off their rackets, laced up their sneakers and took to the court for a full day of tennis. The participants split into teams of five, and then faced off in two men's singles matches, two women's singles and a mixed doubles match. At the end of the day, Tina Snodgrass, Ben Pritchard, Patrick Wilhelm, Anthony Sparks and Courtney Whitfield emerged victorious.

The club capped off the evening with the presentation of the trophy it received for winning the Pacific Northwest Division of the United States Tennis Association Campus Championships. The club is optimistic about the

chances for a repeat performance, largely because the squad returns with half of its members from last year's successful campaign.

"We think we could do a lot better this year," club coordinator Erin Small said.

The Ducks' season was up in the air until the final tournament in 2004; Oregon entered that competition tied with Portland State. Oregon fought off challenges from the Vikings and the defending champion Western Washington University to take the title in only the team's third year of existence.

"The first year it was just finding other teams that were interested in having a match," Small said. "(The club was) a great way to stay involved in tennis and to meet a lot of people."

After the regional tournament, Oregon advanced to the national competition, where they contended with a large field and a strange tournament format.

"We didn't know what to expect," Small said.

What the Ducks found was unlike anything that had seen before. Matches at the national tournament featured a substitution policy that

allowed teams to remove a player at any juncture in the match, even between a first and second serve.

In addition, the winner of the match was determined by the number of games won as opposed to the number of sets won as in traditional tennis.

"If a team needed to come from behind, they could keep playing the last match even after it was over, as long as they didn't lose a game," Small said.

Despite the unorthodox formula, Oregon placed 18th out of 52 teams.

The Ducks will bring that postseason experience to bear this year as they defend their division title. Singles specialists and twin sisters Erin Miller and Beth Miller look to lead the way on the women's side of the club, while veterans Ricky Huynh and Ryan Wahl are two of a solid group of men on the team. Coach Greg Smith is also returning to the club, albeit after a hiatus, which left the squad without a coach last year.

"It'll be nice to have someone to help us improve our skills," Small said.

The club tennis season consists of two multi-team tournaments and around 10 one-on-one matches with other schools both in and out the division. Oregon will take part in a tournament Nov. 5-6 in Portland to kick off its title defense.

## Fred Jones represents youth program

*The former Duck star and current NBA player was selected after kids identified him as an Oregonian they admire and respect*

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS  
SPORTS REPORTER

Former Oregon basketball standout Fred Jones became a spokesman for the Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program on Monday. The OYCP is a voluntary 17-month program providing at-risk youth a second chance for success as the only alternative school for high school dropouts in Oregon.

Jones agreed to be an OYCP spokesman in light of the organization's worthwhile contributions made toward helping dropouts attain necessary training for adulthood.

"The Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program provides education and life-skills training for high-school dropouts who

want to become productive and responsible adults," Jones said.

Prior to being the first-round choice of the Indiana Pacers in the 2002 draft, Jones averaged 18.6 points and 5.4 rebounds per game in his senior season with the Ducks. He helped lead Oregon to a 26-9 record, which was good enough for its first outright Pacific-10 Conference title in 63 years.

Since then, Jones has made a name for himself playing in the NBA with the Pacers. He was the 2004 NBA Sprite Rising Stars Slam Dunk Champion and hopes that he can help families statewide learn more about the OYCP.

"I am pleased to represent the program because it provides the structure and educational

opportunity for at-risk youth to succeed," Jones said. "I look forward to helping raise awareness about the program as well as working with the cadets and cadre."

Jones was first asked to be a spokesman for the program after he was recognized by OYCP students as an Oregonian who OYCP and its peers both admire and respect. Upon considering this and his achievements on the court and in the classroom (Jones earned a bachelor's degree in sociology), Col. Mike Caldwell of the Oregon National Guard saw Jones as a formidable candidate for spokesman. Caldwell is a Deputy Director for State Affairs with the National Guard.

"Freddy Jones is an excellent role model who values hard work and education, which are at the core of our program," Caldwell said. "We are delighted to be associated with Freddy and very

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