

SHERON'S SPORTS SCOOP

Young Blazers go to war for Western Conference

ASHLEY SHERON

Staff Reporter

Being the second youngest team in the National Basketball Association isn't holding the Portland Trail Blazers back. Without injured player Raef LaFentz, and newly acquired veteran, Michael Ruffin, the Blazers average age is 23.5, the youngest team in the NBA.

Last year the Blazers were the youngest team in the NBA, and it showed when they finished 41-41. They weren't able to grab a playoff spot, finishing behind both Golden State and Denver.

This year the Blazers are going to fight to stay above fourth place in the Western Conference and secure home court advantage. The Blazers are currently bouncing between fourth and fifth in the Western Conference and continue to win.

The deadline for trades on Feb. 19 was a date many players were stressing about. There were many rumors and a lot of names being talked about as potential trades. Everybody thought the Trail Blazers would make a big move to help them advance to the playoffs.

With the Blazers having a general manager known for making big trades, the rumors for the Blazers included well known names such as veteran guard, Vince Carter. When the day came there were no headlines on oregonlive.com about a big move. The only headline was "Blazers stand pat at deadline."

The Blazers didn't make any big moves but they did make a smart move by trading Blazers forward Ike Diogu for Sacramento

forward Michael Ruffin.

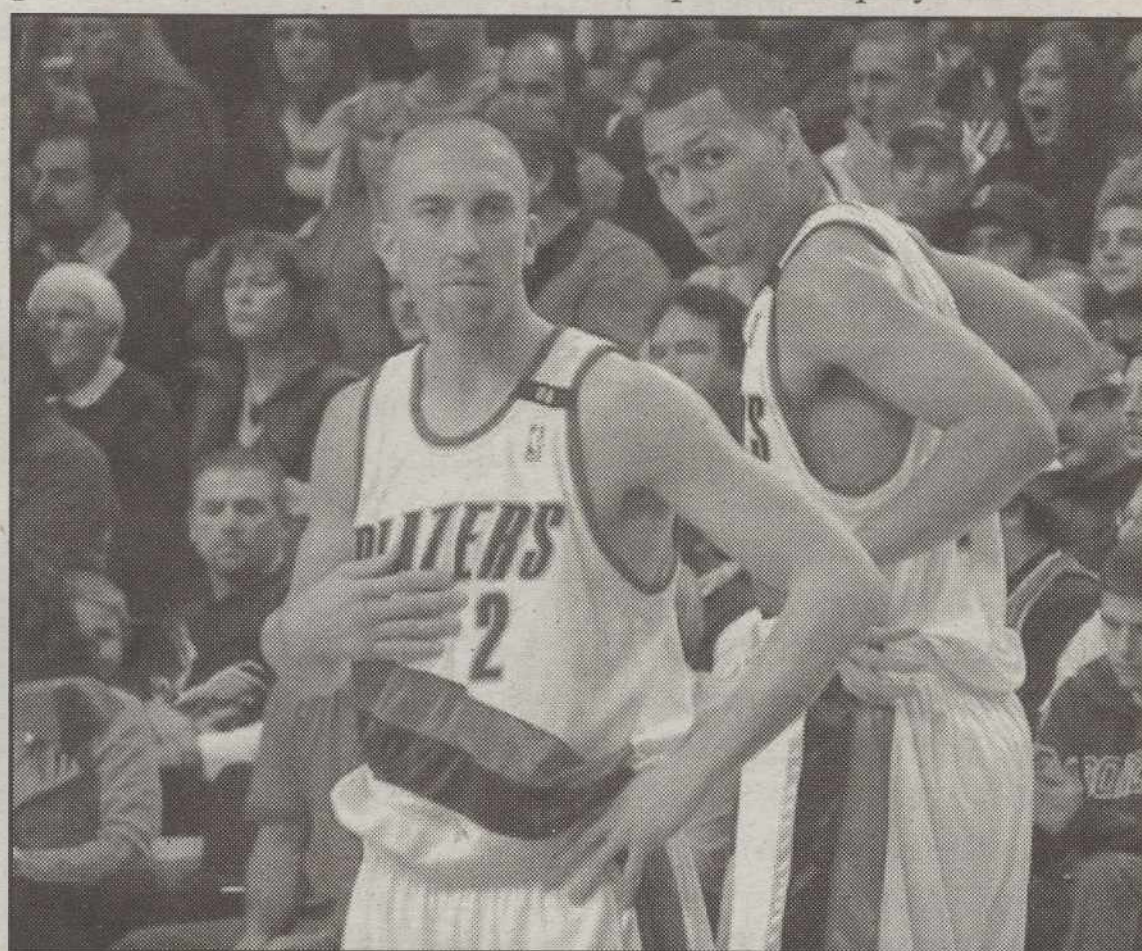
The rest of the trade also included a 3.13 million dollar trade exception in which the Blazers can make a trade for a player whose salary is worth up to \$3.13 million without having to give up a player on the current roster. Instead, the opposing team is paid \$3.13 million. The trade must be made in one calendar year. The next big move rumored for the Blazers is to acquire Spanish player Ricky Rubio.

With the first half of the season over already the Blazers have their best record since the 2002-03 season. If they continue at fourth for the rest of the season they will have home court advantage, where the Blazers are 23-5.

Espn.com ranks Portland's playoff odds at 95.7 percent and they are ranked to stay

in fourth place at finals at 8.7 percent and being NBA champions as only a 2.3 percent chance. The Blazers

are considered underdogs but Portlanders would love to see them shock the nation and go deep into the playoffs.



Brandon Roy and Steve Blake, Portland Trail Blazers guards, look towards Nate McMillan, head coach, in the team's first season meeting with the Golden State Warriors. The team is currently in fourth in the Western division.

Photo by Ashley Sheron

New teachers appreciate advanced

New Teachers

continued from page 9

Enjoyable parts of the job: I most enjoy teaching material in which I have great interest to students that care about expanding their viewpoints and understanding of the world. I get up every day and think about "what matters today?" Only if



Anastasia Conlin

something really matters in the scheme of life should it be taught. I enjoy that creative freedom that most other jobs lack.

Classroom rules: I no longer accept late work. In the real world one either turns in something on time or loses his or her job.

Work load effecting teaching: I work 55 hour weeks and work on material for school seven days a week. I take pride in my work. What I lack at the moment is a social life.

Reason for coming to West Linn: I came to West Linn for the opportunity to work at one of the best schools in the state. I student taught

here three years ago, and having formed excellent relationships with the social studies staff, I jumped at the opportunity to return when I heard about a job opening.

Anastasia Conlin
English teacher

Outlook on teaching: I've learned at West Linn to spend more time encouraging my students to trust themselves and their ideas. Learning is a conversation that students must actively participate in, so helping them lessen their reliance on the teacher to do all of the thinking is one of my main goals.

What West Linn has to offer: West Linn is a far more "traditional" high school than the two I taught at in California. Conversely, the technology available to West Linn students is light

years ahead of what most California students could expect. There is also a great emphasis here at West Linn on how things appear.

Most enjoyable parts of the job: I'm

one of those strange people who loves teenagers, especially in the classroom setting. I enjoy my time in the classroom more than any other aspect of the job.

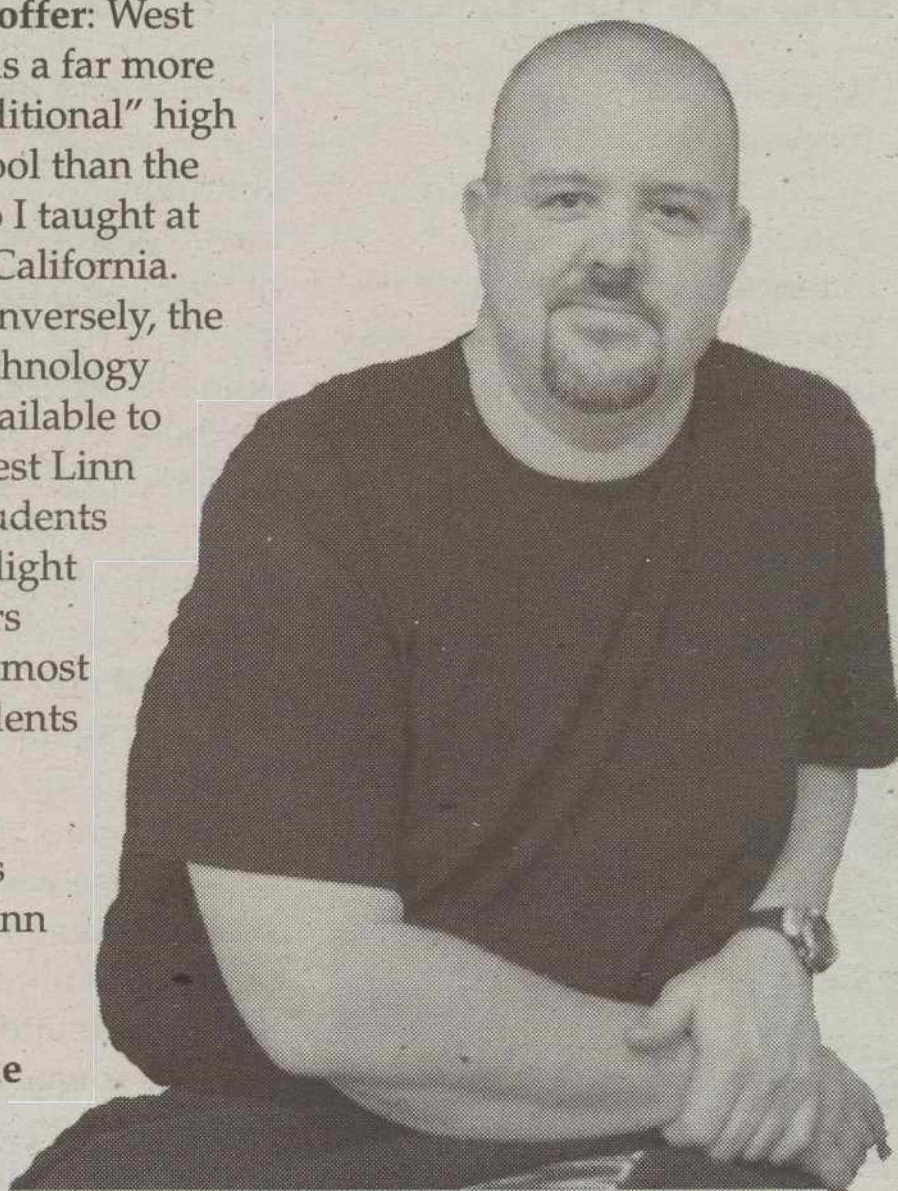
Classroom policies: I don't think my policies have changed much. I expect to be

much stricter about certain things next year, especially now that I know the culture here so much better. And, yes, I'm talking about cell phones!

Workload and teaching: I'm an English teacher. This question incites indignant and self-righteous fury in all English teachers. I'm so apoplectic I can't even dignify this question with an answer!

Reason for coming to West Linn: I was impressed with West Linn's dedication to academic rigor.

Butch Self
English and history



Butch Self

Highlights of first semester: The football season. What a ride. Heartbreaking ending.

Outlook on teaching: I don't think it has really? I have been teaching for 13 years. I truly love teaching. Sure there are better days than others, but

on a whole, teaching is a wonderful experience. It isn't for everyone, but in my particular case it is a job that I love to do each day and actually feel rewarded for the experience. I have found West Linn students to be very academically strong, and care about their experience. That is rewarding for a teacher.

What West Linn has to offer: In a lot of ways students are students. However, compared to where I have been before, the most noticeable difference at West Linn, is the expectations students have for themselves. The intrinsic desire the majority of students demonstrate to do well in school, and be willing to work at it. For example, students take notes, turn work in on time, come ask for help, etc. You might think that this is silly, but in other schools teachers constantly discuss how to get students to do these things.

This is truly a great place for learning, and I encourage students to continue this tradition. What students can accomplish from here is amazing.

Most enjoyable part of the job: Students. You guys make me laugh everyday. Lunch with Coach (Joe) Cerny. Enough said.

Reason for coming to West Linn: Long story. The Readers Digest version: A great opportunity for myself professionally, and for my own children to attend West Linn.

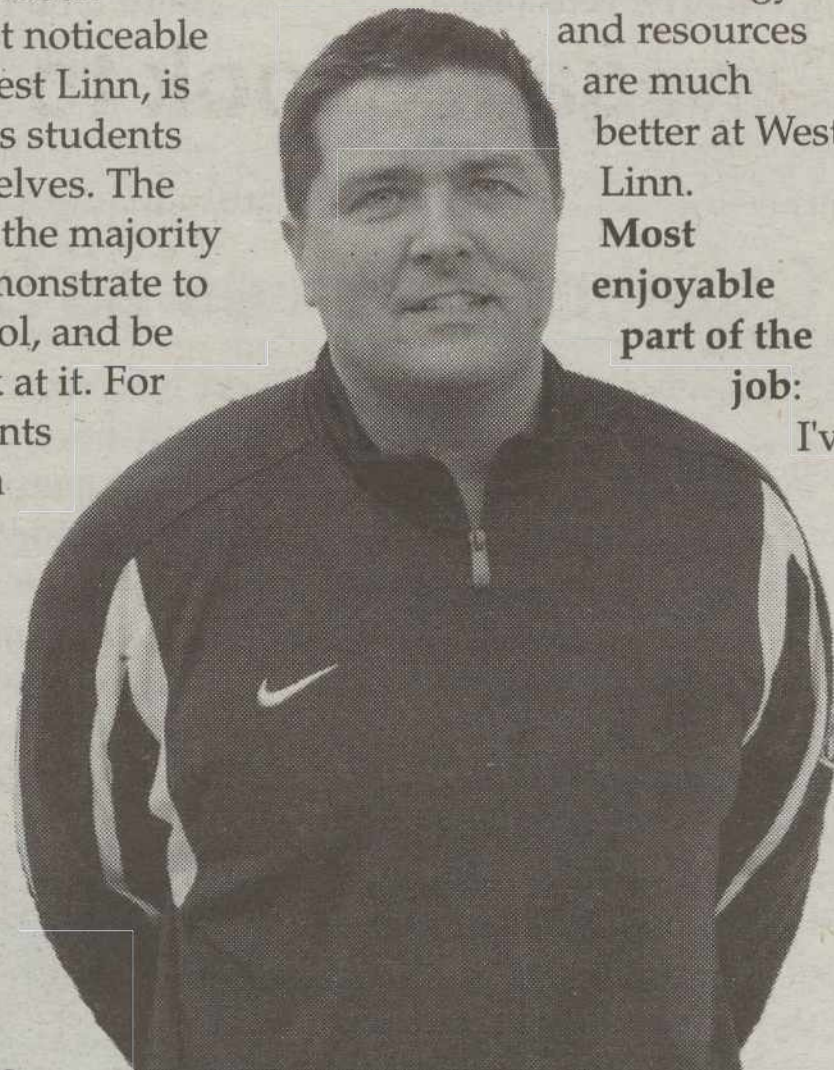
The experiences I have had to get here today are long and interesting if you want to have some other story some day.

Eric Viuhkola
Wellness teacher

Highlight of the first semester: My first semester Healthful living class. They were a mature class but they also knew how to have fun.

What West Linn has to offer:

The technology and resources are much better at West Linn. Most enjoyable part of the job: I've



Eric Viuhkola

enjoyed the changes that we've made in P.E. where we give our students options on activities. I also have really enjoyed coaching the Varsity Boys' Basketball Team and seeing the great improvement from the beginning of the year.

The most stressful part of the job: Having to share four or five classrooms.

Reason for coming to West Linn: I believe West Linn is a place where students want to pursue excellence in academics and athletics.