

RIP CITY UNITES BEHIND YOUNG TEAM

STORY AND PHOTO BY JAMES HARLEY

"Blazers win! Blazers win!"

These are familiar words Portland Trail Blazer fans have been hearing the last several years. After multiple playoff seasons and winning records, everyone thought it was safe to say the Blazers were going to continue the trend, but those thoughts diminished after last season, when Portland lost four out of their five starters and looked to rebuild.

The ESPN preseason power rankings had the Blazers ranked 29 out of 30. In the rankings, writer Marc Stein said a "steep fall in the West is unavoidable no matter what sort of damage Damian Lillard can wreak".

We all know now that those predictions that were "for sure" going to happen, were completely wrong. After being predicted to finish at the bottom of the West, the Blazers not only made the playoffs, but are now in the second round with a chance to take down the top-seeded Warriors.

By looking at the Blazer roster, anyone could have seen the lack of talent compared to other rosters in the NBA and everybody, including me, thought they would win no more than 33 games. But if they did not simply have the talent, then how did they do so well this season?

Everyone forgets that winning is more than just talent; it takes teamwork, good coaching, and most of all, good team chemistry. If players

don't get along, it's hard for them to play well together.

Aside from possibly Damian Lillard's all-star snub anger he took out on the Warriors, no player played for themselves. They all played for the team, for the fans, and played as well as they possibly could.

Along with great teamwork, the players worked extremely well together because they worked hard to bond and get to know each other.

Gerald Henderson, an NBA guard who only recently was traded to the Blazers, told "The Oregonian" that he thinks this is "the best organization in the league." He also said in that article that the way the players are treated by coaches and the rest of the team is amazing, and that the group of players he plays with are a "great group of guys."

With a mixture of great teamwork, great coaching and hard work ethic, the Blazers have proved all the doubters wrong. They have also proved that stats don't mean everything in sports, because any team can win on any given day.

So get ready Rip City for more wins to come. The Blazers roster is still very young and has a lot to learn, which is exciting to think about, because if they continue the trend they are on, they can only get better.



Blazer fans arrive pregame to the whiteout of T-shirts before game 4 on April 25.

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