

stuff shots

Blazer trades unpopular, but were they bad?

by MARK FLOYD
Sports Editor

It certainly hasn't taken Portland Trail Blazer fans long to sever their love affair with the local NBA franchise.

Just a couple of short years ago, the Blazers were hailed as one of the greatest, if not the best, team in NBA history. It was easier to get an audience with the president of the United States than it was to get a Blazer ticket.

Now things are different. Portland games are officially sold out, but empty seats are noticeable and if one really tries, tickets can be found.

The championship team of a few years ago has been taken apart like a model airplane. Bill Walton left the team and wound up in San Diego. Johny Davis was traded to Indiana and just last week Maurice Lucas and Lionel Hollins were also dealt away leaving Bob Gross as the only starter from that magical team.

Portland, specifically president Larry Weinberg, has come under much criticism lately for their handling of their players. Weinberg has been criticized for refusing to renegotiate contracts, a policy which has left several players unhappy. On the other hand, Los Angeles Lakers' owner Jerry Buss tore up several contracts and the Lakers are as happy as clams. And winning.

Now many Portland players, and fans, are screaming for Weinberg to change his policies or take a flying leap out of basketball. Were it not for Weinberg, Lucas and Hollins would still be here instead of averaging 20 points or so for New Jersey and Philadelphia.

I have a slightly different view of the situation. Good riddance to Lucas and Hollins and may they have their best years elsewhere.

First of all, since when does a player have the right to demand a contract renegotiation? If he isn't satisfied with an agreement, he shouldn't have signed it in the first place. There aren't too many other fields in business which would sign an employee to a contract then, on his demand, rip it up and make a new agreement. Lucas and Hollins should never have signed long-term agreements if they wanted more money.

Secondly, even if a contract was to be renegotiated, did those two players really deserve more money? Both Lucas and Hollins are among the more injury-prone players in the league and missing 20-30 games a year hurts a team greatly — while they're gone and during the games it takes for readjustment to the rigors of the NBA.

While waiting for renegotiation or a trade, neither player performed up to their ability. Fans have claimed it was because their playing time was limited. But the main reason their playing time was limited was that Portland was more effective with other players in the lineup than a half-hearted Lucas and Hollins.

Now that they are with other teams and doing well, Portland has been criticized for letting them go. But neither were doing that well earlier in the year when they had the chance.

One last thing to watch is how long the two will play for their respective teams before going down with injuries. When Lucas hurts his wrist and Hollins his knee, perhaps Blazer fans will view the trades more kindly.

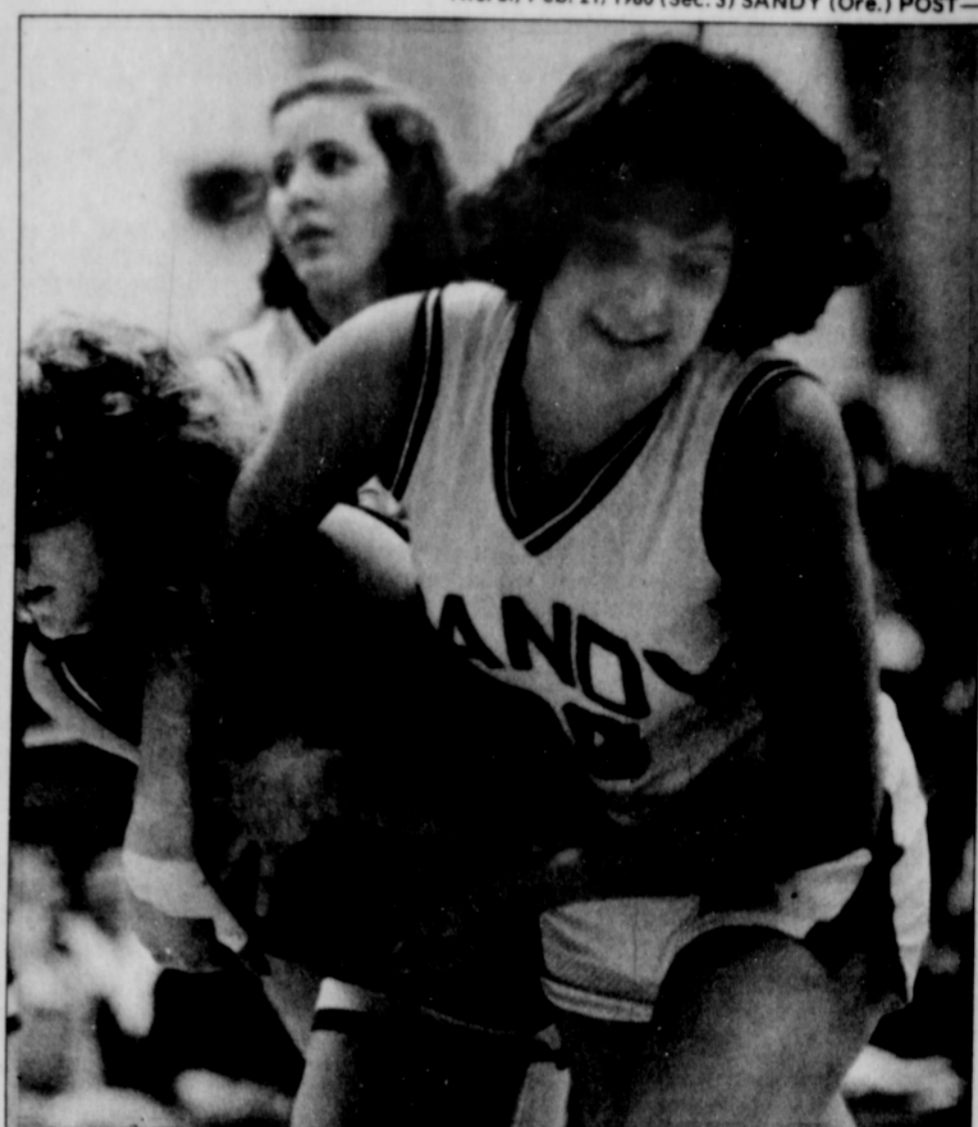
Obviously, the Blazers are not the team that they were two or three years ago. But they have good, young talent, the best collection of forwards in the game and the sometimes brilliant, but erratic guard Ron Brewer.

By drafting a center and a lead guard, Portland could once more be on top of the NBA heap. Even the Boston Celtics needed a building year or two before re-emerging as a power this year.

Is there another Larry Bird out there?



Using the two-pronged inside attack of Dawn New (50) and Sue Wilson (30), Sandy dumped Estacada 57-43 Monday in a Timber Valley League girls basketball game. New hit for a school record 24 points in the game while Wilson added 11 and hauled down 11



rebounds. It was the third win of the season for Sandy and moved the Pioneers into sixth place in the TVL.

Pioneer girls dump Rangers 57-43

by MARK FLOYD

After a so-so first half, the Sandy High girls basketball team exploded during the last two quarters and humbled Estacada 57-43 in Timber Valley League action Monday.

The red-hot Pioneers shot the eyes out of the hoop in that second half, sinking an incredible 13 of 16 from the field, a sizzling 81 percent. Sandy sophomore Dawn New scored 13 of her game high 24 points in the second half to lead the Pioneer charge. The 24 points is a single game record for Sandy High surpassing the old mark of 20 held by junior Sue Hartke and Coleen Flach, a guard on last year's team.

The 5-foot-11 New sank 11 of 14 shots from the field and hauled down 10 rebounds to pace the Pioneer inside game. New combined with senior Sue Wilson, Sandy's 6-foot center, to totally dominate Estacada around the hoop. Wilson added 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Sandy broke out of a 27-27 tie in the third quarter with three free throws and an eight-foot jumper by New to go up by five with 1:46 remaining. The Pioneers then exploded for seven unanswered points to start the fourth quarter.

Wilson made the front end of a one-and-one and missed the second, but New was right there to put it back in. Then freshman guard Linda Mosbrucker came off the bench to make a big steal and convert it into a breakaway layin, with 7:18 remaining. Seconds later, Hartke sank a pair of free throws and the Pioneers were up by 12.

Estacada's Sharon Bagley sank a 15-footer to cut it back to 10, but Sandy ran off seven straight points and the game was in the bag. Wilson sank an eight-footer, New put another missed free throw back in and Deena Pursel came off the bench to make what may have been the play of the game. Pursel stripped an Estacada guard of the ball, flew downcourt and made an off-balanced spinning layin. She was fouled on the play, made the free throw, and the Pioneers had a big 17-point lead with just 4:44 remaining. Estacada could get no closer than 13 points the rest of the way.

It was the best game of the year for New but Sandy coach Chris Knudsen said that it wasn't in the game plan to go to the big sophomore that much.

"It just worked out that way," Knudsen said. "We told the girls that Dawn got open a lot on the baseline the last time we

played Estacada but we didn't have it in our game plan to go to her so much. It's just that our guards were making very good passes and Dawn was positioning herself well underneath.

"She's been working hard on her jumper lately and she's been very good with it," he added.

It must have seemed like there were three or four News to Estacada. Sandy got the ball to her the first three trips down the floor and came away with points every time. In fact New had 11 of the Pioneers' 13 first quarter points. Wilson had the other two on an eight-footer.

Meanwhile, Sandy's full court press had the Rangers a bit confused and Sue Maloney and Elaine Gedde picked up a pair of quick steals.

Later in the game, Estacada began sagging in on New and senior Kelly Dowell hit some key baskets from the outside to keep the Ranger defense honest. When Estacada spread the defense again, Sandy went back to New. Dowell had 10 points in the game.

Another key to the Sandy win was free throw shooting. The Pioneers sank 13 of 21 from the line and made most of their one-and-one opportunities. But that barely

matched Sandy's field goal percentage which ended up at .611 for the game on 22 of 36.

"We just came out hotter than heck in the second half," Knudsen understated. "We were working the ball well underneath and getting the high percentage shot. We showed a lot of patience in looking for the shot and on defense limited Estacada to one shot at the basket.

"We also improved in bringing the ball upcourt against the press," he added. "Most of our mistakes now are just mental ones."

The improved play of the Pioneers almost netted Sandy an upset victory at Sweet Home last Thursday. Sweet Home squeezed by the Pioneers 47-40 after leading 25-9 at the half. Sandy opened the third quarter with a press and ended up scoring 11 straight points before the Huskies called timeout. From there on, the teams traded buckets and Sandy could get no closer than five points.

A 21-1 advantage for Sweet Home in the second quarter hurt the Pioneers chances for the upset.

Wilson and New each had 15 points for the Pioneers against Sweet Home.

Third quarter explosion lifts Sandy cagers

by MARK FLOYD

After one of its sloppier first halves of the year, the Sandy High boys basketball team put on a clinic in the final two periods and walloped Estacada 67-52 Friday on the Rangers' home court.

Sandy trailed by one at the intermission, but, after a thorough chewing out at halftime, smoked the Rangers 18-4 in the third quarter.

"I was pleased with the patience we showed at Estacada," Sandy coach Dennis Warren said. "We have a tendency to try to get things in handfuls and that doesn't work in basketball. After a long discussion at the half, we came out and the kids played as well as I could have hoped for in the third quarter."

When the Pioneers get a little stagnant on offense, it's usually Kent Reick who picks them up and Friday was no exception. Reick got the Pioneers off and running the break in the third quarter and hit his first two shots. Sandy's 6-foot-4 center Lee

Godfrey began to dominate the inside offensively and the Pioneers edged away from the Rangers — patiently.

Rick Martin came back from a poor first half — he missed two breakaway layins — and led the Sandy defense in cutting off Tony Britt, Estacada's only outside threat. Martin and Godfrey combined for 14 of Sandy's 18 points in the period.

Leading 50-37 after three, Sandy kept the pressure up and Godfrey got Estacada's 6-1 jumping jack Tony Gach out of the game by drawing a fifth foul. When Gach left the lineup with 4:46 remaining, the Pioneers had the boards owned.

It was an important win for Sandy, which moved from a tie for sixth place to a tie for third with the victory. The Pioneers own a 6-5 league record (before Molalla - see

pg. 1) as do Estacada and Canby. Oregon City is alone in second at 7-4 and West Linn is at the top with an 11-0 record.

The Lions have clinched first place and an automatic berth into the state tournament. The TVL's third and fourth place teams will play off and the winner will face the league's second place team. The winter of the latter game will go on to state as the second TVL team.

"We're going to have to play a lot more consistently if we hope to beat the good teams," Warren said. "In that first half at Estacada, we sure made it exciting for the fans. In the second half we came out and played basketball like we're capable of doing."

Warren had every right to badmouth the Pioneers in that first half. Sandy let the Rangers penetrate and take

open shots from the 15 to 18-foot range. When the Pioneers tightened up a little outside, that let Gach and 6-3 post man Pat Kiggins get inside for uncontested layins.

The height of frustration came when the Pioneers had six consecutive offensive boards and easy shots and couldn't hit a single one on the play. Godfrey was finally fouled on the sixth shot and converted both free throws, but he was so tired after that he had to go out for a breather.

Godfrey had one of his better games inside. The Pioneers' leading scorer led the game with 22 points, but more importantly, played a strong defensive game and had several key rebounds.

Estacada was playing without Mike Miller and Kevin Stockner who have been dropped from the team for disciplinary reasons. The

pair were important cogs for Estacada when the Rangers beat Sandy a month ago in the Pioneer gym.

Warren felt that the Pioneers played well enough in the second half to beat the Rangers even if the two had

played. "We've played pretty tough lately," he said. "We seem to play better on the road than we do at home. It's a good thing because two of our last three are on the road."

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"Honor Prep" of the Week

Senior post man Lee Godfrey lead the Sandy Pioneers to a come-from-behind 67-52 upset win at Estacada recently, scoring a game-high 22 points. The 6'4" returning letterman is a starter on the Pioneer basketball squad and the team's leading scorer. He scored 8 points in the crucial third quarter in the win over Estacada.

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