

stuff shots

NBA to mull rule changes

by MARK FLOYD
Sports Editor

While most of the nation is casting an eye toward the college basketball playoffs, the National Basketball Association is quietly looking into its own format.

The NBA has been plagued with problems during the last four or five years; image problems, declining attendance, poor television ratings and a general lack of interest. In short, the pros have been ousted by the excitement of the collegians.

Now comes a report from the office of Joe Axelson, the NBA director of operation, that an opinion poll is being circulated around the league. The survey is going to league officials, coaches, player, management and veteran sportscasters and writers and the gist of it concerns the current rules of the NBA game.

Some of the questions include whether the NBA should continue to outlaw zone defenses, and if zone were allowed, what would happen to the 24-second clock. Other items include disqualification after six fouls, the bonus free throw situation and the format for the opening round of the playoffs.

The survey is a good idea and long needed. But perhaps the fans should have been included in balloting — after all, they are the ones who foot the bill. If attendance and image is a problem, the NBA should go right to the horse's mouth to find the cause.

They might find a number of complaints. One would be that the season is too long, but it is unlikely that the owners would want it shortened. That's a lot of bucks down the drain. But the long season lessens the importance of individual games and causes the players to pace themselves more than they should. No one can go full tilt the entire 82-game regular schedule. And when players pace themselves, the game loses a little something.

The survey will also examine free throws, which have long been the most boring part of the game. There is no "bonus" free throws; that is, a player is not given an extra shot for making one. He merely gets an extra chance, a shoot until you miss type of thing. The free throw has become kind of like the extra point used to be in pro football, automatic and boring. But the NFL changed and so should basketball. The NBA should revert to the collegiate rule; have a real one-and-one and drop that silly three-to-make-two farce.

The zone defense has long been a controversial issue. NBA teams have been playing the zone for years under the guise of a sagging man-to-man. They haven't fooled anyone. And no one seems to care. Might as well make the zone legal and extend the clock to 36 seconds.

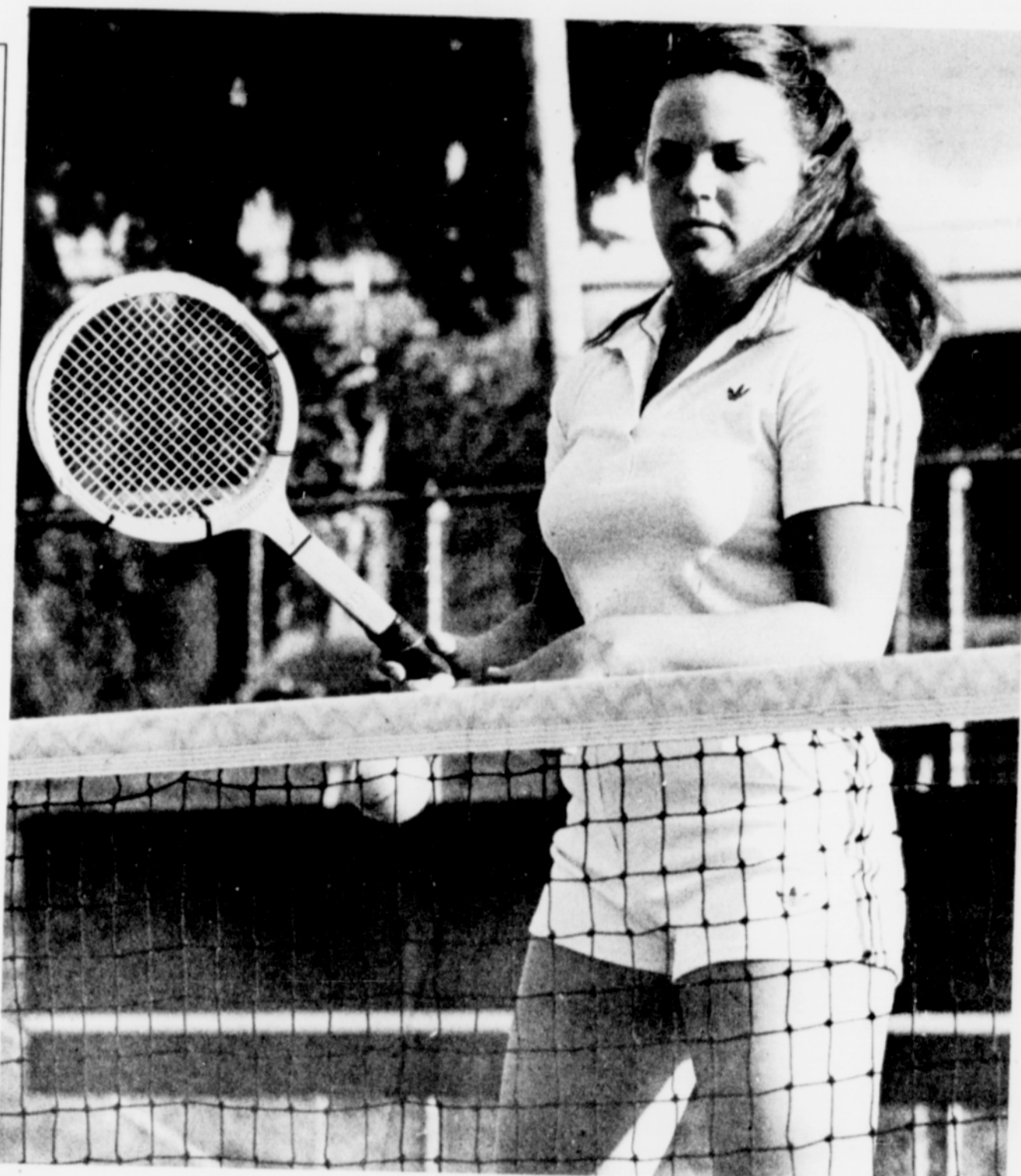
That may make a few NBA officials shudder since it has been an unwritten rule that offense is king in the pro game. But fans really aren't that crazy about scoring — some of the best collegiate games never get out of the fifties.

One idea for a change isn't such a hot one. The survey asks if a player should be allowed to stay in the game after committing his sixth foul. Absolutely not.

Six fouls is plenty and allowing a player to remain in the game would be an open invitation to mayhem. Someone like Daryl Dawkins of Philadelphia would be able to butcher and otherwise intimidate people.

Besides, a zone defense should protect the centers and power forwards from foul trouble.

The survey is a giant step in the right direction, but it should be extended to the fans as well. Then perhaps the NBA can get back on its feet and become the exciting product that it should be.



Sandy Shreeve watches a ball plunk into the net during doubles play. Shreeve and teammate Julie Coleman have a 7-6, 4-3 lead over Silverton's No. 1 doubles team; the match was postponed due to rain. It will be made up on the first available date.

Photo by Mark Floyd

Rain thwarts Sandy netters

The undefeated Sandy High girls tennis team suffered a loss to Mother Nature Tuesday afternoon.

The Pioneers journeyed to Silverton for their first league match of the season, but rain forced the contest to be postponed. The matches that had been played will count and so will the partial scores turned in.

The match will be made up on the first available date, probably early next week.

Tami Shafer won the No. 1 singles match for Sandy with a 6-1, 6-3 win over Tracy Hays.

Silverton got even at third doubles as Chris Fischer and Jennifer Doane claimed a 6-2, 6-4 win over Sandy's Alice Schoppert and Tracy Tool.

At No. 1 doubles, the Pioneers' Sandy Shreeve and Julie Coleman had taken a 7-6, 4-3 lead over Kathy and Teresa Hettwer before the rains came. The Sandy duo

won the first set by tiebreaker, 8-6.

In No. 2 singles, Sandy's Jody Robbins has a 2-1 lead in the first set over Kelly Holt.

None of the other matches had begun when the contest was postponed.

Sandy has a 2-0 record, with non-league wins over Gresham and Barlow to its credit.

The next regularly scheduled match for the Pioneers will be this Thursday, March 26, when they travel to Estacada. Sandy will host Molalla Monday. Both matches will begin at approximately 4 p.m.

Singles win, but Sandy boys lose

Sandy picked up a pair of singles wins, but Silverton won the other five matches and claimed a 5-2 win over the Pioneers in a Timber Valley League boys tennis contest.

The match was played Tuesday on the Sandy courts.

Seniors Steve Frost and Damian Bollermann picked up the Pioneers' first individual wins of the year.

Frost, playing No. 1 singles, had his problems, according to coach Terry Chung, but held on to beat Joe Armstrong 6-4, 6-4.

"Steve didn't play as well as he is capable of playing," Chung said. "The younger kid (Armstrong) was aggressive and kept after him, but Steve won."

Bollermann took the No. 2 singles match, wearing down Silverton's Tom Preston 7-5, 6-2.

The match went downhill from there, however. Ted McCrag stopped Sandy's Brian Buhler 6-0, 6-1 in No. 3 singles and the Foxes swept the doubles matches.

Byron Gehring and David Dalskowski tripped Pat Spriggle and Scott Bender in No. 1 doubles 6-1, 6-3.

At No. 2 doubles, John Tigges and Mike Jones edged Sandy's Alex Brewster and Peter Kallen 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Urban Slyxe and Dave Sanner scored a 6-1, 6-1 win over the Pioneers' Harvey Hazelett and Erik Frost in No. 3 doubles.

At No. 4 doubles, Dave Ball and John Porenteau claimed a 6-0, 6-4 win over Mark Gunderson and Randy Swanson.

"I'm hoping our doubles play will improve," Chung said. "We need more time on the court. There are bright spots, though. We have a lot of young players and they're having fun. They just need some time to develop, especially in a skill sport like tennis."

"These first four matches are just a learning experience," Chung added. "I'm hoping that Alex (Brewster) and Pete (Kallen) will really develop as well as the young players by midseason."

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Cross country skiing picture bleak on Hood

There is little or no snow on the ground in Government Camp and cross country skiing opportunities are very limited.

That word came from the U.S. Forest Service.

Forest Service officials report that a snowfall of at least 12 inches is needed to provide any kind of a skiing surface. They suggest that the best places to start are the parking lots at Timberline Lodge and Mt. Hood Meadows.

Skiers traveling off snow-covered roads should be prepared to encounter rocks, stumps and trees as well as wet areas with open water.

The road system to Trillium Lake is now open and accessible to vehicles. Roads are muddy in the area, however, and there is still snow on S-32.

For more information on conditions in the Mt. Hood National Forest, contact the Zigzag Ranger Station at 622-3191.

Classified? Hotline phone number is 667-6633

Reservations accepted for PGE parks

Reservations for Portland General Electric's Promontory and Pelton Park, for dates between April 24 and mid-September, will be accepted beginning April 1.

The opening of the parks coincides with the beginning of trout season. More than 150,000 persons used the two PGE facilities during 1980.

Promontory is located seven miles east of Estacada on PGE's 350-acre North Fork Reservoir on the Clackamas River. The park has 59 campsites, and many other facilities. It also has a Small Fry Lake, stocked with trout and designated for children.

Prep of the Week:



LARRY TOPLIFF

Sandy High sophomore Larry Toppliff placed first recently in statewide 98-pound-class wrestling competition at the Oregon Freestyle Championships. He won six matches to claim the title, including a pin over the regular season state high school champion. Congratulations, Larry!



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