

stuff shots

NBA to begin second season

by MARK FLOYD
Sports Editor

It's become something of a cliché, but the second season is about to begin in the National Basketball Association.

The long and tedious 82-game regular season is over and the field is set for the playoffs. Now the real work begins.

There is no clearcut favorite for this year's title drive. Certainly, defending champion Los Angeles has to be considered, but the Lakers have yet to return to the form which got them last year's title. A lengthy absence by Magic Johnson is the major reason for the change, but Johnson is back and healthy and the Lakers could be a force.

Boston and Philadelphia also have to be listed in the top three for contenders. The 76'ers have the toughest row to hoe, coming in second in the tough Atlantic Division. Philadelphia now must face Indiana and Milwaukee just to get into the Eastern finals.

Old rival Boston is the likely opponent there. The Celtics played good, but erratic basketball during the last two weeks of the season and have the homecourt advantage.

Boston, Philly and L.A. appear to be the teams to beat, but there are a couple of other strong teams and two or three dark horse contenders. Those dark horse squads may also play a spoiler role, dumping a favored team, but losing the next time out.

Phoenix and Milwaukee are the strongest of the rest. The Suns won the Pacific Division, edging out the Magic-less Lakers, and the addition of All-Star guard Dennis Johnson seems to have given them the chemistry they lacked before. Milwaukee had no problem winning its division and the Bucks have the muscle to stay with anyone.

San Antonio may also rate a nod as another of the strong teams, but the Spurs have a track history of choking in the playoffs. Their sporadic defense has improved this season, but not enough for them to win three consecutive best-of-seven series.

Dark horse contenders are many. Indiana has played good basketball all season under the tutelage of Jack McKinney, but the Pacers must get by Philly in the opening mini-series. A win there would put them against Milwaukee, then probably Boston.

Boston must survive the winner of the Chicago-New York series, both teams which fit the dark horse tag. Chicago comes into the playoffs as the hottest team in the NBA, winning about 80 percent of its games during the last month. New York compiled a record of better than .600 while playing in the same division as Philly and Boston.

Indiana is sound, but lacks the overall horses to compete for more than one series. Chicago wears the choker label come playoff time and the Knicks live and die by their guards. Any of those three teams could pull off a surprise or two.

The last of the dark horse contenders is the Portland Trail Blazers. Portland began the season like it didn't belong in the NBA, but the Blazers rallied and actually became a force over the last two-thirds of the year. Portland has an advantage in the opening mini-series, going against the Phil Ford-less Kansas City Kings, perhaps the weakest entry in the playoffs this season.

Portland's major weakness is at the center position. Mychal Thompson is good offensively, but lacks the strength to bang heads with the big boys on the board and on defense. Luckily, the Blazers' next opponent, should they survive KC, would be Phoenix and Alvan Addams, who plays a similar game to Thompson. However, the winner would likely face L.A. and the everpresent Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

In the mini-series contests, look for Philadelphia to squeak by Indiana in three; New York to edge Chicago in three; Portland to get past Kansas City in three; and L.A. to dump Houston in two.



A big shot

Junior Dale Rasmussen placed second for Sandy in the shot put with a toss of 45-6, but the Pioneers lost their opening meet to Jackson. See page 1 for details.

calendar

TRACK
April 4 - TVL Invitational at Oregon City 11 a.m.
April 9 - Sandy at Silverton 3:45 p.m.

BASEBALL
April 2 - Sandy at Sweet Home 4 p.m.
April 4 - Sandy at Centennial (DH) 12 p.m.

bowling

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Zig Zag Inn	29	27
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High Game: Dessie Steele	182	
High Series: Dessie Steele	498	
Team Game: Deane's Auto Rep.	708	
Team Series: Eagle Foundry	2,081	

April 7 - Sandy at Estacada 4 p.m.
April 9 - Oregon City at Sandy 4 p.m.

SOFTBALL
April 3 - Canby at Sandy 4 p.m.
April 6 - Sandy at Tigard 4 p.m.

BOYS TENNIS
April 6 - Sandy at Sweet Home 4 p.m.
April 7 - West Linn at Sandy 4 p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS
April 6 - Sweet Home at Sandy 4 p.m.
April 7 - Sandy at West Linn 4 p.m.

BOYS GOLF
April 7 - Molalla at Sandy 4 p.m.

FROSH BASEBALL
April 4 - Sandy at Centennial (DH) 12 p.m.
April 7 - Estacada at Sandy 4 p.m.

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Sandy upsets Estacada in TVL girls tennis

The season is still young, but the Sandy High girls tennis team has already made its coach happy for the year.

The Pioneers upset Timber Valley League co-favorite Estacada 4-3, Thursday, on the Rangers' courts. The win kept the Pioneers unbeaten on the year.

"That was a year's goal," said an elated Debbie Hunter, coach of the Pioneers. "We hadn't beaten Estacada since I've been coach and it sure was nice. It's been a goal that has been in the back of my head all season, but I never told anyone."

"The girls played really well," she added. "The matches were very close the whole way."

Sandy picked up one win in the singles competition and four in doubles. Senior Tami Shafer took over the No. 1 singles spot for the Pioneers and responded by taking a 6-4, 6-1 win over Leah Hopton of Estacada.

Sandy Yantes dropped a close contest at No. 2 singles as Estacada's Kathy Wilson outlasted her 3-6, 6-3, 6-1. The

Rangers' Becky Henry took No. 3 singles, scoring a 6-3, 6-1 win over Jody Robbins.

As they have all season, the Sandy doubles teams shined. The unbeaten pair of Julie Coleman and Sandy Shreeve swept the No. 1 doubles match with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Lisa Dye and Sharon Bagley.

At No. 2 doubles, Becky Rodriguez and Pat Wesselink of Sandy held on to nip Teresa Hay and Kelly Darkes 7-6, 4-6, 6-4. The first set was won by the Pioneer duo on a tiebreaker, 7-5.

Estacada picked up a win at No. 3 doubles, as Diane Branson and Donna Bridges nipped Sue Hartke and Zina Seal 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

But the Pioneers clinched the match at No. 4 doubles. Alice Schoppert and Tracy Tool easily disposed of Sharon Buckley and Kit Tust 6-3, 6-0 to keep the Pioneers unbeaten.

The Pioneers were rained out of matches Monday and Tuesday. Sandy will host Molalla Thursday and Sweet Home Monday. Both matches will begin at approximately 3:45 p.m.

Ranger netters rally to overhual Pioneers

Sandy's two seniors picked up singles wins, but the Pioneers lost a Timber Valley League tennis match to Estacada Thursday, 5-2.

Steve Frost and Damian Bollermann, playing No. 1 and 2 singles, recorded wins for the Pioneers. But the Rangers swept the doubles matches and claimed the No. 1 singles.

Frost survived a tiebreaker in the first set and claimed a 7-6, 6-1 win over Todd Perkins in the first match.

At No. 2 singles, Bollermann easily got by Fred Vandrumen 6-3, 6-1. In the final singles match, Estacada's Nick Deide got

by sophomore Peter Kallen 7-5, 6-3.

At No. 1 doubles, Dave Corral and Steve Borman of Estacada dealt Pat Spriggel and Scott Bender a 6-1, 6-1 loss. Rob Bollenbaugh and Dan Jensen scored a 6-4, 6-1 win over Sandy's Alex Brewster and Harvey Hazelett at No. 2 doubles.

At No. 3 doubles, Sean Burgee and Ramon Dominguez of Estacada claimed a 6-3, 6-2 win over Randy Swanson and Mark Gunderson. In the final doubles match, Jim Branson and Todd Hasty scored a 6-3, 6-3 win over the Pioneers' Erik Frost and Brian Buhler.

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Prep of the Week:

Sandy High sophomore Scott Skipper recently won shot-put and javelin honors for the Pioneers in a track and field meet with Jackson. He threw the javelin 180 ft., 2 inches for a state high mark thus far this season. The Pioneer also participates in prep football and wrestling. Congratulations, Scott!



SCOTT SKIPPER



Sandy

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