

SPORTS

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Trail Blazers spoil James' debut with win over Lakers

By ANNE M. PETERSON
 Associated Press

PORTLAND — LeBron James' debut for the Los Angeles Lakers opened with two thunderous dunks and closed with a loss.

He finished with 26 points and 12 rebounds, but the Portland Trail Blazers prevailed 128-119 Thursday night in the season opener for both teams.

James insisted the new-look Lakers were going to be a work in progress.

UP NEXT: TRAIL BLAZERS

• San Antonio Spurs (1-0)
 at Portland Trail Blazers (1-0)
 • Saturday, 7 p.m. TV: NSNW

"It's not instant oatmeal. It's not that fast," James said. "It takes some time to get that chemistry where you can just close your eyes and know exactly where guys are."

Damian Lillard had 28 points and Nik Stauskas came off the bench to score 24 for Portland, which won its 18th straight home opener to extend an NBA record. It was the Blazers' 16th straight victory over the Lakers.

The opening festivities were tempered by the death this week of Trail Blazers owner Paul Allen. A "Rip City" baseball cap rested in Allen's courtside seat with a single rose.

The enigmatic co-founder of Microsoft died Monday in Seattle from complications of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He was 65. There was moment of silence before the game and tributes to Allen throughout the night.

On the court, the focus was all on James. His monster dunks to start stunned the Moda Center crowd while Nike co-founder Phil Knight looked on from courtside seats.

James signed a four-year, \$153 million deal with the Lakers as a free agent in the offseason after winning three NBA championship rings and taking his team — Miami and Cleveland — to the NBA Finals for each of the last eight seasons.

The four-time league MVP joined a revamped group that includes veterans Rajon Rondo, JaVale McGee, Lance Stephenson and Michael Beasley, as well as a young core of Brandon Ingram, Lonzo Ball, Kyle Kuzma, Josh Hart and rookie Moe Wagner.

While the Lakers made big changes in the offseason, the Trail Blazers returned all five starters from a team that finished third in the Western Conference last season — including the nucleus of Lillard, CJ McCollum and Jusuf Nurkic.

"We wanted to come out and start the season right and to honor our owner, Mr. Paul Allen. That's what tonight was all about for us, not about the noise surrounding the game," Lillard said.

James' putback gave Los Angeles a 25-15 lead. He played just under nine minutes in the opening quarter and led all scorers with 13 points.

Portland pulled in front 46-40 on Stauskas' 3-pointer. Stauskas, who signed with the Blazers as a free agent this past summer, led all Blazers with 16 points in the opening half. Portland pushed the lead to 11 but led just 65-63 at the break.

"He really got in a groove and the guy can shoot, we've seen it in practice," coach Terry Stotts said about Stauskas. "I was really happy for him to start the season like that with a new team. The shots that he made were all in the flow of the offense."



Shrey Sharma, wearing number 17, heads the ball away from the center for Astoria during a corner kick.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Valiants blank Astoria, 3-0

The Daily Astorian

Valley Catholic's final goal Thursday at CMH Field typified the night for the Astoria boys soccer team.

A goal kick by the Fishermen hit Valley Catholic's Nicolas Tubito in the back and bounced directly to teammate Berg Schmiesing, who scored into an open net to cap a 3-0 Cowapa League victory for the Valiants.

The Fishermen were "unlucky," as they say in soccer circles, after playing well against a Valley Catholic team that was fresh off a 4-0 win over Seaside one week earlier.

It took the Valiants just over 27 minutes to score their first goal, and they maintained a narrow 1-0 lead before scoring twice in the final 12 minutes of the second half.

Astoria spent much of the first half turning away attacks by the Valiants, as Fishermen Riley Cameron, Porter Whitsett, Evan Randall and Brooks Fromwiller were busy on the back line.

Astoria's only chance of the first half came on a through-ball from Jonathan Jimenez to Michael Postlewait, who was turned away before getting off a shot.

The Valiants had three shots on goal in the first 20 minutes — all saves by Astoria goal-

keeper Tony Tumbarello — before they connected on their fourth.

Tubito directed a pass to Connor Bly, who put a move on Tumbarello and scored into an open net for a 1-0 lead with 12:58 remaining in the half.

The Fishermen had more offensive opportunities in the second half, resulting in shots on goal for Jimenez, Leo Matthews and Postlewait.

A pass from Rodrigo Palacio-Rojas to Matthews was the closest call, with Matthews' shot missing the left post by inches.

Valley Catholic gained some separation with a goal in the 68th minute, Spencer Wells scoring from close range off a crossing pass from Schmiesing.

"Another hard-fought game tonight," said Astoria coach Lee Cain. "The boys played well. Tony Tumbarello didn't have a perfect night, but he also had a lot of very good saves."

"Overall I really liked our core play and passing game," he said. "We just need to find the attack when we are pressed as hard and as quickly as VC does. They are very good and will deserve the league title they are heading towards."

Astoria's David Bermudez (out with a sprained shoulder) "was sorely missed in the

midfield," Cain said. "He is our Diego Chara, and we just don't have the same game without him. He should be back for next week."

The Valiants have won six in a row, including the last three by a combined 13-0. Valley Catholic hosts Tillamook next Tuesday, while Astoria plays a nonleague game Monday at Westside Christian.

Seaside, Tillamook split games

SEASIDE — The Seaside and Tillamook soccer teams split a pair of games by identical 3-1 scores Thursday night.

At Seaside, the Lady Gulls picked up their second league victory of the season (and second win in three games), with a 3-1 win over Tillamook in a Cowapa League girls soccer contest.

Seaside will close out the regular season Tuesday at Banks.

Meanwhile at Tillamook, the Cheesemakers defeated a banged-up Seaside team, 3-1, in a Cowapa League boys soccer game.

It was the second straight loss for the Gulls, who return to action Tuesday at home against Banks.

VOLLEYBALL ROUNDUP

Warrenton works overtime at Willamina, qualifies for state

The Daily Astorian

WILLAMINA — The Warrenton Warriors were not about to let a share of a league championship go to waste.

Playing for an automatic spot in the state playoffs and potentially the No. 1 seed from the Coastal Range League, the Warriors accomplished the first part with wins over both Taft and Willamina, in back-to-back matches Thursday at Willamina.

The Warriors, Willamina and Rainier all finished with 6-2 league records last week for an official share of the league championship.

To break the tie, Warrenton first had to defeat Taft (which they easily did, 25-14, 25-15, 25-22), and the Warriors followed with a lengthy five-set win over Willamina, 17-25, 28-26, 25-27, 25-19, 17-15.

Warrenton can now take care of the No. 1 seed with a win Saturday at Rainier.

And with the momentum they've built, the Warriors will be looking for much more than just a No. 1 seed. Their first year as a member of the new Coastal Range League resulted in Warrenton's first share of a league title



Warrenton's volleyball team celebrates at the end of a very long night in Willamina.

since 1978.

Warrenton's highlight Thursday was rallying from a 14-10 deficit in Game 5, fighting off match point to win.

In addition to playing eight games on the night, the Warrenton players "have worked really hard this season and overcome their own doubts and inexperience to compete," said coach Staci Mieth. "They have had their ups and downs, but tonight they played with so much heart and pride."

The Warriors overcame five-plus point deficits in the fourth and fifth games, rallying to either win or push the games to extra points.

"We played as a team," Mieth said. "Everyone contributed in one way or another, including the bench and the five awesome JV girls that traveled and out-cheered the home crowd. This was such a great win that was very fitting for an incredible season. I am a very proud coach."

Individually, "Claire (Bussert) was

amazing tonight, not only setting but defensively she saved and dug so many balls," Mieth said. "Mia (McFadden) and Fernanda (Alvarez) were the offensive catalysts. Mia had by far her best hitting game of the season and Fernanda started a little slow, but dominated the third and fourth games."

Elsewhere, "Ruby Dyer had a fantastic night at the service line," she said. "Including serving the game-winning ace in the second game (she) served us from 11-14 to 15-14" in Game 5.

Banks scores sweep over Seaside

BANKS — Banks closed out the Cowapa League volleyball regular season with a three-game sweep Thursday night over visiting Seaside, 25-8, 25-19, 25-18.

Ranked 14th in the state, the Braves finish third in the league standings at 4-4.

The No. 18-ranked Gulls finish 1-7 in league, but that should be good enough for a spot in the regional play-in round, for a shot at the Sweet 16 and the state playoffs.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

TODAY

Football — Valley Catholic at Astoria, 7 p.m.; Seaside at Tillamook, 7 p.m.; Nestucca at Knappa, 7 p.m.; Gaston at Warrenton, 7 p.m.; Jewell at Triangle Lake, 6 p.m.; Raymond at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.; Lummi Nation at Naselle, 5 p.m.