



AP Photo/Craig Mitchelldyer

Trail Blazers forward Zach Collins dunks next to Nuggets center Nikola Jokic.

# Blazers' bench was great, but Game 7 is Lillard Time

By AUSTIN MEEK  
The Register-Guard

PORTLAND — Short of a championship parade, all fans can ask of their team is to leave them with memories.

Gosh, haven't the Trail Blazers done that? Every Blazers fan I know will remember where they were when Damian Lillard buried that 37-footer and waved goodbye to the Thunder. They'll remember how they spent each of the four overtimes in Game 3 against the Nuggets, and if they happened to fall asleep, they'll spend the rest of their lives pretending they didn't.

Win or lose, Blazer fans won't forget what happens in Game 7 on Sunday, just like they won't forget Thursday's 119-108 victory in Game 6.

The question is whether the Blazers have one more epic finish left in them. That feels like what it will take, doesn't it? I'm not sure how they'll top what they've already done, but if Lillard knocks out the Nuggets from halfcourt in the sixth OT, we'll know this is a team of destiny.

I'm not saying the Blazers need a miracle, though they wouldn't complain about a little luck. That's usually what it takes to win a Game 7 on the other team's home floor, as the Blazers must do if they want to hear the Moda Center roar again this season.

One thing is clear: If Game 7 turns into a battle of the benches, Portland will have a huge edge. While Nuggets coach Mike Malone was vowing not to lose faith in his reserves, Blazers coach Terry Stotts was explaining why he couldn't take his off the floor.

Lillard and CJ McCollum combined for 62 points but also ceded the spot-

## UP NEXT: GAME 7

- Portland Trail Blazers (3-3) at Denver Nuggets (3-3)
- Sunday, Time TBD
- TV: TBD

light to reserves Zach Collins and Rodney Hood for long stretches of Thursday's game. For a team that leans heavily on its two sharp-shooting stars, that was a welcome sight.

"I thought it was a pretty easy decision," Stotts said. "The impact Rodney had in the first half was clear. I thought Zach had the same impact in both halves defensively. The bottom line, that group was going well. I didn't want to screw it up."

Hood scored 25 points and left the court to chants of "Rod-ney, Rod-ney." Collins scored 14 points, blocked five shots and showed why the Blazers picked him in the first round after his freshman season at Gonzaga.

"He's going to lead the NBA in blocks in the future, for sure," McCollum said.

Collins doesn't run from a fight. His willingness to go nose-to-nose with Denver's Nikola Jokic has been one of the most encouraging developments of this series.

Collins spent most of Thursday night leaning on Jokic, making sure nothing came easy. When the teams started pushing and shoving in the fourth quarter, you could sense Denver's frustration boiling over.

"I always had that competitive edge," Collins said, sporting a scratch on his forehead after the game. "I've had it at every single level I've played at, and it hasn't changed."

These are good times to be a Portland fan, partly because you can look to the future and imagine more runs like this one. There

were years when the Blazers were eliminated and you wondered how they could possibly close the gap with the best teams in the Western Conference.

This year feels different. If the Blazers win Game 7, they'll face either the Rockets or the Warriors in the Western Conference finals. With Kevin Durant's status uncertain, you'd like Portland's chances of playing a competitive series against either team.

If the Blazers lose, they'll enter the offseason with more reasons for optimism than any Portland team in years. Their best players keep getting better, and their young players keep getting older. When you imagine this team a year or two from now, it's hard not to be bullish about their future.

Is it greedy to think they can fast-track that future for right now? Not if the Blazers get another game like this one from their bench, which outscored the Nuggets' by a 42-13 margin.

As impressive as it was, here's a hunch: The Nuggets won't let Hood or Collins beat them in a Game 7. This is Lillard Time, even though Lillard Time will be appearing in a Game 7 for the first time in his career.

After his heroics in the Oklahoma City series, Lillard entered Thursday's game shooting 11-for-44 from 3-point range against the Nuggets. He was 6-for-13 in Game 6, locked in the way we're used to seeing him.

If Lillard has another miracle in his back pocket, Game 7 would be a good time to pull it out.

"It's basically a game where only one team is going to make it out," Lillard said. "It's your last opportunity to play."

Those are the games you don't forget.

# Gymnastics: Bergerson achieved her highest score of the season on vault

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In March, the Astoria team had 11 girls from their Bronze and Silver Xcel teams competing in the USA Gymnastics Oregon state championships in Beaverton.

Infinity athletes ended up taking home three first-place awards.

On the Bronze team (child division), Infinity's Karli Gantenbein achieved her highest all-around score of the season with a 35.975 (fourth place), which included the top score in the state on the bars (9.45).

Kalista Giles finished off the season with her highest score on the bars (9.325) for third place in that event.

In the junior division, Infinity's Lily Schaeffling accomplished her highest score on bars, first in the state with a 9.525. She was fifth in the all-around (36.3).

Competing in the bronze senior division, Sofia Shipley had her highest all-around score of 35.325.

In the silver child A division, Audrey Steele received her highest all-around score of the season (37.25) for fourth place, and she placed first in the state on vault with a 9.5. She was also third in floor, with a 9.475.

Elsewhere, sister Jocie Steele achieved her highest vault score of the season with a 9.25, for ninth.

In the same division, Adelaide Maher finished her season with a great vault for a 9.125 score.

In the silver child B division, Alexis Valdez scored an 8.0 or above in each event, and Calista Valdez, in the senior



Nancy Taylor

Infinity's Maevri Bergerson tied for sixth in the all-around scoring at a recent regional meet.

A division, scored 8.5 or above in each event, including a 9.05 in the vault and 8.925 in the floor.

Bergerson achieved her highest score of the season on vault, a 9.25 for ninth.

And Rehnert had her highest all-around score of the season with a 37.225, for third. She had second-place scores in the beam and floor exercise.

# Naselle players chosen for all-star game

The Astorian

Two members of the Naselle baseball team have been selected to play in the 42nd annual senior all-star game, May 29 at Wheeler Field in Centralia, Washington.

Cole Dorman and Josh Townsen are in their senior years with the Comets. Both have pitched for Naselle this season.



Cole Dorman



Josh Townsen

The all-star game offers a chance for selected seniors from 28 area high schools to showcase their talents.

They will compete for a spot in the all-state series, which takes place June 8-9. Selection for the Yakima, Washington event is based on the players' performances this season, their overall career, and success in the Centralia game.

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## SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
						
65 51	61 48	62 49	60 49	60 48	62 49	60 49
Mostly sunny; cooler	Mostly sunny	Mostly cloudy	Rain possible	Showers possible	Rain	Cloudy



## ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday

**Temperatures**

High/low	85/46
Normal high/low	60/44
Record high	85 in 2019
Record low	34 in 2006

**Precipitation**

Thursday	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	1.10"
Year to date	20.35"
Normal year to date	31.14"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2019

## UNDER THE SKY

**Tonight's Sky:** Low west, Mars sets some three hours after the sunset, but less than 2.5 hours by month's end.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

## SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:48 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:36 p.m.
Moonrise today	12:04 p.m.
Moonset today	2:23 a.m.

	First	Full	Last	New
May 11				
May 18				
May 26				
June 3				

## TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
6:12 a.m.	7.7	12:38 a.m.	3.3	
8:18 p.m.	6.7	1:35 p.m.	0.0	
<b>Cape Disappointment</b>				
5:53 a.m.	7.1	12:44 p.m.	-0.3	
8:00 p.m.	6.4	none		
<b>Hammond</b>				
6:03 a.m.	7.7	12:10 a.m.	3.5	
8:08 p.m.	6.8	1:04 p.m.	-0.2	
<b>Warrenton</b>				
6:07 a.m.	8.1	12:22 a.m.	3.4	
8:13 p.m.	7.1	1:19 p.m.	0.1	
<b>Knappa</b>				
6:49 a.m.	7.9	1:39 a.m.	2.8	
8:55 p.m.	7.0	2:36 p.m.	0.0	
<b>Depoe Bay</b>				
5:03 a.m.	7.2	12:15 p.m.	-0.5	
7:15 p.m.	6.5	none		

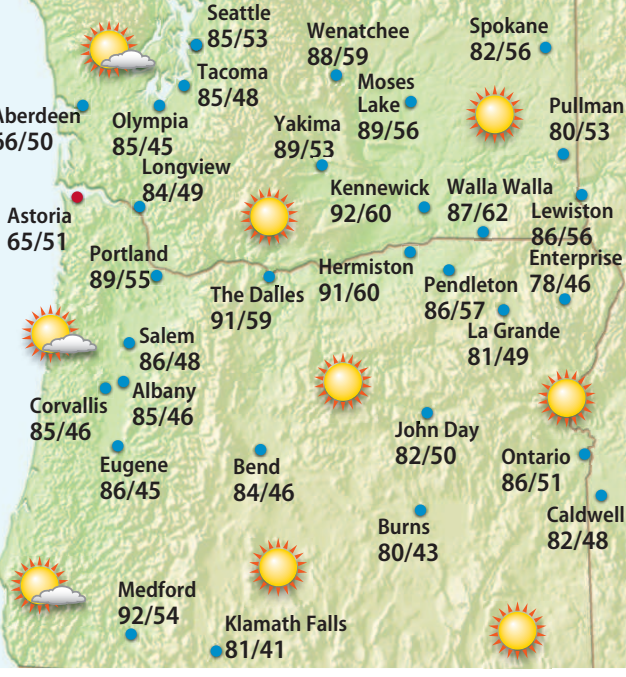
## NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	78/66/t	73/58/t
Boston	65/50/pc	57/47/pc
Chicago	58/43/c	53/41/c
Dallas	71/54/r	77/56/pc
Denver	63/38/pc	69/42/s
Honolulu	86/70/s	86/72/pc
Houston	76/62/t	81/62/pc
Los Angeles	72/58/sh	74/60/pc
Miami	88/77/pc	89/76/t
New York City	68/50/pc	55/48/r
Phoenix	86/66/pc	83/67/t
San Francisco	68/54/s	67/52/pc
Wash., DC	63/55/c	60/55/r

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

## REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Seattle	85/53		Wenatchee	88/59	
Aberdeen	66/50		Moses Lake	89/56	
Olympia	85/45		Yakima	89/53	
Portland	89/55		Kennewick	92/60	
Salem	86/48		Walla Walla	87/62	
Corvallis	85/46		Lewiston	86/56	
Eugene	86/45		Enterprise	78/46	
Bend	84/46		Pendleton	86/57	
Medford	92/54		La Grande	81/49	
Klamath Falls	81/41		John Day	82/50	
Baker City	82/41/s	85/43/s	Ontario	86/51	
Brookings	61/47/s	60/47/s	Caldwell	82/48	
Ilwaco	61/50/s	59/48/s			
Newberg	86/48/s	78/45/s			
Newport	59/48/s	57/46/s			
North Bend	61/49/s	59/47/s			
Roseburg	89/50/s	84/49/s			
Seaside	65/49/s	63/47/s			
Springfield	87/47/s	80/45/s			
Vancouver	87/51/s	78/46/s			