

Trailblazers: A time for reflection

by Ron Sykes

Seattle goes on. Blazers go home. The Super Sonics, playing again before a sell-out crowd, their thirteenth in a row and 22nd of the season, got the job done against a courageous Blazer team. Seattle won the game, but the Blazers didn't leave empty handed. Not the first time in the Blazers' brief history will they own the coveted Seattle-Portland trophy. This is the trophy given annually to the victor in the Sonic-Blazer series. The series was deadlocked, at three games apiece, but Portland scored 31 more points, therefore, earning the hardware for a year. This was the last regular season game for each team, but in all actuality this one was no different than the first, in the game way back in October.... John Hummer, a fellow no longer around, started a fight with Bill Carsing, both men to be ejected. One need not have the intellect of an Einstein to know who prospered by that outcome. To put it bluntly the Blazers were rooked.

There was no Hummer around this time so Richie Powers did the job — calling Bill for a seemingly bad call that sealed the doom for Portland.

But even in defeat the Blazers were great. Oh, sure, they were going

nowhere, sure they could have very easily suited up and just gone through the motions. But this never happened, the Blazers came to play — and play they did, to the delight of some 200 faithful fans known as the Bouncing Blazers Boosters, who traveled to Seattle to support their team. It was nice to see so many Blazer rooters in the spacious Seattle crowd. Some will say it was a disappointing year for Portland — and I guess it was. But sitting there Sunday night one had to be proud of the effort put forth by our team. They all did well, but Bill and Lionel were superb. We saw the Walton that we know...the baddest red-head in professional basketball (that's right Dave Cowens) Big Bill, when healthy is just too much. And Lionel Hollins, it was really delightful to see Lionel performing well and being appreciated by the fans.

The Seattle fans really love, and cheer their team, so when they had praise for Lionel you know it was sincere.

One Seattle fan had this to say about "Train", "that Hollins is going to be a great guard in this league. I can't believe his over-all talent. He's tremendous." Seattle fans, believe it or not, seem to be more appreciative than Portland fans.

Now that the season is over I guess reflection time is in order. And as we've all learned from our experiences with Watergate, hindsight or the possession of it is a beautiful thing to have. With hindsight we could solve problems before they happen. What are the Trailblazers problems? What areas do they need improvement in? How can they alleviate their turnover problem? Do they need personnel changes? All these questions seem to pop up continually when one discusses the Blazers. Let's deal first with improvement.

My contention is — to improve the team they must make trades. No longer can they depend on the draft for improvement. The Blazers are a "now" team — they must produce immediately. In their formative years the draft was the proper choice. But now with the nucleus we have — and after the frustration they've had the fans deserve a winning team. Let's take the guard situation. Here we have two Portland favorites, Larry Steele and Geoff Petrie. The Bandit is greatly respected in Blazer town for his all-out hustle. But effectiveness is the name of the game. Larry has made improvement in leaps and bounds, but improvement like everything else is relative — we should judge our talent on the Blazers against that around the league.

Larry is a fine fellow, but not a fine NBA guard. His hustle is fine, but his penetration is non-existent, he can only handle the ball with his right hand, he



LENNY WILKENS

Photo: Lloyd Labasan

only goes to the right, so how can you play guard under those handicaps. Perhaps this is why we're in last place, someone is just not judging talent in the proper perspective.

Wilkins has stated, "Steele played solidly all the way, getting the maximum from his ability." One thing is for sure Larry is a smart ball player. He does nothing to exploit his weaknesses. Sure he doesn't make many ball handling errors — because he never handles it. A guards primary function is handling the ball, when all these duties are channeled to your shooting guard you're in trouble.

J.J. left Portland upset, some will argue that he was justified in being perturbed at his relegation to the bench. Few are unhappy with Lloyd's performance, while many believe there should have been a spot for J.J.

Which takes us back to judging talent. Why was J.J., after losing his forward job, not given the opportunity to play guard? Whoever judges talent for the Blazers took a look at Steele, a former forward, and decided he had the potential to play guard. Now let's look at the now departed J.J., 6'6" tall, brilliant ball handler, excellent outside shooter, good penetrator, adept with both hands. Can he play guard? Apparently not, because

whoever judges talent for the Blazers never gave him consideration. I think this is the main reason for our poor showing over the years. Judgement or non-judgement of talent. Wilkins is convinced that his seven game winning streak in late January and early February, a string which came to an end with Bill Walton's injured right leg. "That streak convinced me that we definitely have the personnel to compete with anyone in the league," he said.

Wilkins says yeah. But his record speaks otherwise. You certainly can't compare our guards with any other team in our division.

We had no one to rival the slick Walt's, Phil Smith's, and other fine guards in the Pacific Division. Sure we have adequate guards, but in all reality could our guard's start on any other team? It would be interesting to check the rosters of either teams to see where we stand. I know Bill Russell has Freddy Brown, a very fine shooter, on the bench in Seattle so his guard situation must be great. We've analyzed the guard situation, later we'll review our forwards.

Golf schedule

The Leisure Hour Golf Club announces its 1976 golf schedule: April 18th, Colwood Golf Course, 8:30 a.m., Qualification round Carmel; April 25th, Merriweather, 8:30 a.m., qualification round Carmel.

May 16th, Colwood, 11:30 a.m., First State Golf Club; May 22nd and 23rd, Green Acres, Vancouver, Washington, Tournament; June 5th and 6th, Spanaway, L.H. Best Ball; June 16th-21st, Ranch Canada, Western State Annual Tourney.

July 4th, Salishan, four groups, open; July 10th and 11th, West Seattle, Eastside Annual Tournament; July 18th, West Delta, 9:15 a.m., Sweepstakes; July 25th, Lewis River, 9:00 a.m., Best Ball pick partner.

August 1st-3rd, Broadmoor, Leisure Hour Annual Tournament; August 5th and 6th, First State Annual Tournament, golf course to be announced; August 15th, West Delta, 8:45 a.m., Sweepstakes; August 29th, East Moreland, 7:00 a.m., Best ball, blind partners.

September 19th, Mountain View, 9:00 a.m., 1st round Club Championship; September 26th, Eastmoreland, 9:45 a.m., 2nd round Club Championship; November 21st, West Delta Park, 9:15 a.m., Turkey Shoot.



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BILL WALTON

Photo: Lloyd Labasan

MEDC offers minority business consultation

Harvey L. Rice, President of Metropolitan Economic Development Corporation announced that they have been awarded a contract from the Department of Commerce for federal funds available under the Office of Minority Business Enterprise to provide management services, business packaging and contract procurement assistance to minority businesses in the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) of Portland and Willamette Valley.

The contract covers a period of time beginning March 1, 1976 and ending February 28, 1977. The number of clients to be accommodated are computed by quarters and geographical areas on a cumulative basis throughout the entirety of the contract. The contracted total numbers of entrepreneurs to be served during the year will be 100, which includes 70 from the Portland Metropolitan Area (PMA) and 30 from the Willamette Valley Area (WVA).

The cumulative total of 100 clients computed by quarters and geographical area are as follows:

SMSA

Clark County
Multnomah County
Clackamas County
Washington County
Marion-Polk County
Linn-Benton County
Lane County

Cumulative Totals

March-May 1st Quarter	June-Aug. 2nd Quarter	Sept.-Nov. 3rd Quarter	Dec.-Feb. 4th Quarter	Total
2	2	3	3	10
9	7	7	9	32
2	3	5	4	14
2	3	5	4	14
0	4	4	4	12
0	1	1	1	3
0	5	5	5	15
15	25	30	30	100

The Metropolitan Economic Development Corporation is a private, non-profit consulting firm in operation since 1970. It is supported by membership dues and consulting fees from minority and majority firms.

Rice said, "It is against corporate

policy to provide consulting to persons when it is not in the best interests of this corporation, for example, if there is reason to believe that the effect of such consulting will be to encourage or support, directly or indirectly, activities harmful to the security and image of the Metropolitan Economic Development Corporation.

Any minority businessperson who feels they are in need of management consulting, business packaging or contract procurement assistance should call 238-9101 and request a "Request for Counseling" form to be mailed to them.

Carnival set

A Family Fun Carnival will be held on Friday, April 23rd at the Polish Hall at 3832 N. Interstate from 6:30 p.m.

The family event features prizes, games, baked food and plant sale, etc., according to Maggie Ostermeier, chairperson for the event.

Admission is \$1 for adults, children free. The event, sponsored by the Multnomah County Democratic Caucus Committee, is a fund raiser for the election campaigns of Multnomah County Commissioners Don Mosee, John Lorenz and Max Runyon.



Potatoes should be smooth and clean when bought. Do not buy any that show the slightest amount of green; they are likely to be bitter.

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