



Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes Sports Editor

The Blazers continue to lead the Pacific Division without a single player in the top 10 in scoring. It has been and continues to be a team effort for Portland. Through 39 games Portland has been led in scoring as follows: Maurice Lucas, 9 times; Bill Walton, 20; Lionel Hollins, 4; Bob Gross, 3; Dave Twardzik, Lloyd Neal, and Johnny Davis, one each.

The 76-77 Blazers are a team united... and seem to play one-for-all and all-for-one. Portland's defense is a thing of beauty with everyone helping out and not just standing around as in years past. Opposing teams coming into Memorial Coliseum aren't just beaten, they're dominated by the Blazer defense, except, that is, Los Angeles.

And that brings about another story. Why can't we beat L.A.? We've beaten every team in the NBA except the Lakers, this year. Let's examine our strength. The bulk of our scoring comes from the inside - Walton, Lucas and sometimes our small forward, L.A., with Jabbar in the middle is able to nullify Portland's power causing the Blazers to rely to heavily on our weakness, outside shooting.

Portland fans have roasted Stu Inman, Blazer Director of Player Personnel, year in and year out. There has been talk of him only being a tennis shoe salesman and not knowing a basketball from a peanut. Yes, Stu has certainly taken his knocks from Portland fans through all the losing years.

Now, though, all is quiet...I wonder why? Last week I had the privilege to chat with a Seattle Sonic official and he had this to say, "Stu has certainly done a remarkable job, drafting, in Portland. I think Portland and Denver has the finest talent in the NBA, and the Western Conference should decide the NBA Champion."

Now that the NBA season is entering its second half, talk naturally turns more and more to the playoffs. So let's take an early look at the situation. If the season was over today it would look like this: From the Pacific Division there would be four teams: Portland, Los Angeles, Golden State and Seattle. The Midwest Division would send only its Champion, Denver, and runner up, Detroit.

There's a real rat race going on over in the Eastern Conference. As it stands now, Cleveland and Philadelphia would go as divisional leaders. They then would be followed by Houston, San Antonio, N.Y. Knicks and Boston.

Seattle's Slick Watts said in an interview a couple of weeks ago that, "Portland is just a flash in the pan, and when it's all over it will be Seattle and Golden State going to the playoffs." Well, it's evident that Slick hasn't studied the revised play-off alignment.

How about the play of Robin Jones lately. Robin has certainly shown that he is able to perform in the NBA. It is truly delightful watching someone with the verve young Robin has. Again, cheers to the young man from St. Louis. And by the way ladies, Robin Jones is eligible.

Sunday night at the MC Portland's red-hot Blazers put on an amazing offensive display destroying San Antonio 150-113. San Antonio showed us why they're considered the worst defensive team in the NBA, giving up an average of 113 points per contest.

At times the Spurs seemed completely bewildered on the defensive end. Portland, taking advantage of these mental lapses by San Antonio, worked the give and go time and time again. How sweet it was. Dave Twardzik returned to the line up and immediately made his presence felt. Dave has been nursing an aggravating ankle injury and appears now on his way to leading Portland again.

Generals 104, Benson 63. Coach Tom Jones' Grant Hi Generals punished a stubborn Tech team in P.I.L. Action Tuesday afternoon. Benson, suffering their third consecutive loss of the season, was never really in the game. The Techmen, thanks to some early shooting by Jerry Avery, managed to stay close and at one point led 6-5. Grant, with Mark Radford hitting, repeatedly opened up a nine point margin at the end of the first stanza.

At this point, and for reasons no one could understand, Benson Coach Dick Gray, chose to substitute five new players. Grant greeted them by running up 22 unanswered points, and at one point outscored Tech 46-4.

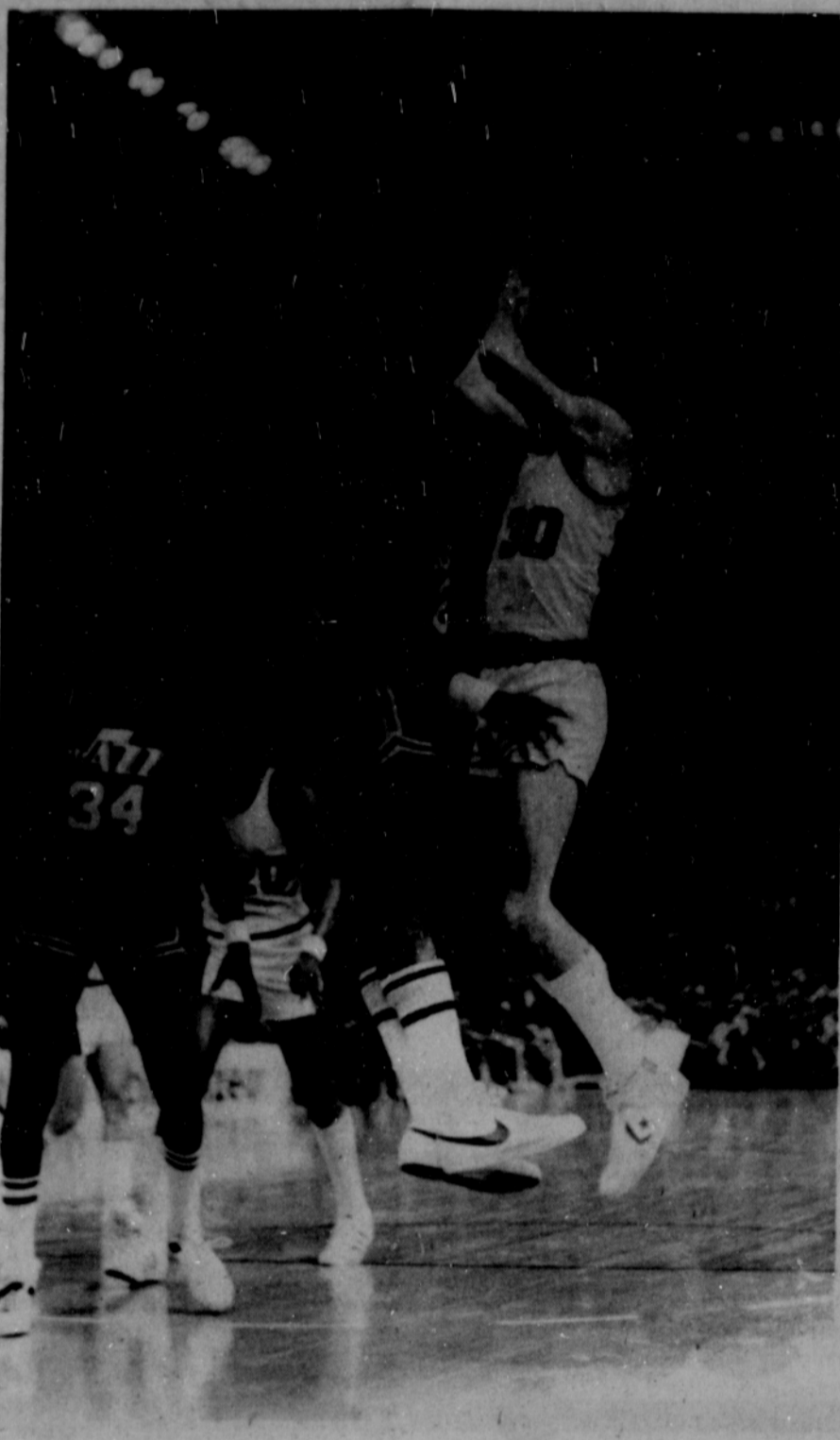
Radford, playing with all the poise of the veteran that he is, scored off drives and dunks to score his game high 32 points.

The Grant Generals, running and gunning against a much inferior Benson team, scored 36 baskets in just 32 minutes of play, putting on a dazzling offensive show. Before the contest Tom Jones said that this would be the first chance for Benson to lose three games in a row in years. And Jones didn't let him get away, hanging one of the worst defeats administered in the P.I.L. this year on the Techmen.

Jones may have been criticized by some for leaving his starters in even when the team was 40 points ahead. But in view of his upcoming schedule one can easily see why he thought it necessary in leaving his starters some much needed playing time.

The Grant starters, due to lopsided wins, have only played an average of two to three quarters in the last three games.

Grant's Generals next opponents will be the Wilson Trojans, Friday night at 8:00 at Grant.



BOBBY GROSS STOPPED HERE - but Blazers go on to a 130-118 win over New Orleans.

Cheers and Jeers

Cheers to Oakland Raiders for their fine Sugar Bowl victory over the Vikings from Minnesota, and also to Running back, Clarence Davis, on his superb performance. Davis rushed for 137 yards, on just 18 carries.

Jeers to sportswriter and sportscasters who overlooked Davis when voting for MVP.

Cheers to Blazer Rookie, Johnny Davis, for his all around, all out play.

Jeers - to Adams High School Patriots who continually refuse to play team basketball. And also to the Adams player who thinks basketball will make something of him someday. From what I've seen of the young man the last two years, I think it would be better if he pursued

some other profession. Jeers - to Benson's Coach for thinking he could employ a two platoon system against the State's #2 ranked basketball team.

Cheers - to Bill Walton who continues to play a total team game. Bill just simply does all the necessary things to win.

Cheers - to Dave Twardzik, tough little Blazer guard, who definitely came to play.

Jeers - to whomever participated, or helped cause the resignation of one of the fine High School coaches in the State, Tom Osborne of Jefferson.

Cheers - to Dave Cowens for returning to Boston.

Jeers - to Cowans for coming back in time to meet Portland Friday night.

Soviet, China relations

(Continued from P.1 col.6)
U.S.-Soviet detente, a prospect that cannot please the Chinese.

SALTING THE ROAD TO DETENTE
Observers agree that the key to U.S.-Soviet progress will be a breakthrough in the stalled SALT talks.

After Leonid Brezhnev conveyed to the new President in November that the

Soviet Union had no intention of testing him, Carter responded by promising to move "aggressively to get the SALT talks off dead center."

Carter laid the blame for the stalled SALT negotiations squarely on Washington and said he shared the Soviet leader's desire for peace, nuclear disarmament and reduction in conventional weapons.

The Soviets have also expressed inter-

est in proposals by the United Nations Association-USA for conventional arms controls and on limitations on military spending. Cyrus Vance is vice-chairman of the private, pro-UN group, which sent a delegation to Moscow in November.

But while grounds for improved relations exist, there may be conflict ahead in other areas of Soviet-American relations. Chief among these could be Soviet demands for elimination of the Jackson Amendment of 1974, which linked most-favored-nation status and trade credits for the USSR to freer emigration for Soviet Jews.

The Soviets apparently view trade as the number two priority (after SALT) on the agenda, and they complain that the restrictions under the Jackson Amendment constitute interference in their internal affairs.

The Soviets are supported in their demand by U.S. multinational corporations and banks because of the loss in trade, which Business Week says amounts to \$1 billion, "mostly to competitors in other industrialized countries offering cheap credits."

But Carter and Vance have indicated they intend to link improvements in trade relations with the Soviets to better implementation of the Helsinki agreement's provisions for free movement of people and ideas between East and West.

(Editor's Note: Banning Garrett, a candidate for a doctorate in political science at the University of California, Berkeley, has specialized in Asian affairs for many years. He is an editor of the Berkeley based International Bulletin, a bi-weekly news publication on world affairs.

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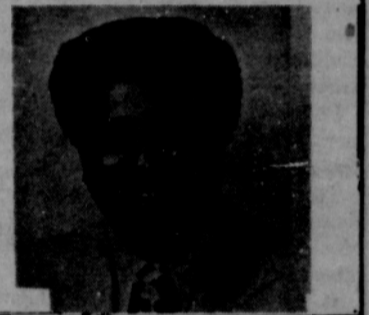
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