



Sports Talk

by Ron Sykes
Sports Editor

The Blazers closed out their pre-season with a lackluster 122-109 defeat at the hands of the Phoenix Suns. But the saddest fact of all is that they're heading into their season opener with only nine uninjured players.

Maurice Lucas, Bobby Gross, Larry Steele, Dave Twardzik and the recalcitrant Bill Walton. To say the least Portland does have a problem.

For the past two months the Blazers medical problems have received more flak than a WW II B-59 flying a solo mission over enemy territory.

As if things weren't already bad enough it was learned that all pro forward Maurice Lucas will be lost to the club for three to four weeks with a fractured finger on his shooting hand.

Rookie Mychal Thompson, the number one pick in this year's draft, will be thrown into action much sooner than anticipated by his club.

"Mychal is going to be a definite factor in this league, but it's going to take time," said a bemused coach Ramsay.

Well with the current injury situation and the sudden defection of Mr. Walton, suddenly that time is now.

For sure Mychal can play but realistically he's no Maurice Lucas and without the best forward in the NBA, Maurice Lucas and the premier center, Bill Walton... then Portland's chances are slim as those of an opossum on the Dan Ryan expressway during the 5:00 rush hour.

What happened to all the ballyhoo given to the Portland rookies earlier? It was said that they were so great that it would be difficult to make a cut. Some thought that some regulars would possibly go. Apparently that was just so much idle talk and with the deadline for trimming the roster to eleven rapidly approaching it seems that pre-season play suddenly turned a difficult problem into a very easy one. It seems now that only two rookies will remain, Thompson and Ron Brewer.

Clem Johnson and Willie Smith will probably go to the newly organized Western Basketball League. Clay Johnson and Keith Herron being released outright.

Keith Herron could be an NBA player, and at 6'6" would be ideal for a swing man.

"Herron," Ramsay says, "needs to hone down his play a little." That he's too much in the run and gun

style.

This may well be true but with all the young man has going for himself I just have to believe he would be a better prospect than the veteran Larry Steele.

In fact three years ago I predicted the trade of Steele. This was during the Petrie, Wicks era and rumblings were going on that perhaps one or two Blazer vets would not return. Well it turned out that Wicks and Petrie both left. I wrote in my column that who would have thought that Larry Steele would be around longer than the ever popular Geoff Petrie.

Well after making my assumption, for surely it could not be deemed any more than that, I was confronted in the Blazer press room by General Manager, Harry Glickman who let me know bluntly that the reason Geoff was gone was that just maybe Larry was not so marketable. Which gives one the implication that Larry was shopped around the league with no takers.

Which is probably true again this year.

The Dodgers, after dedicating the

World Series to former great Jim Gilliam, went out and promptly annihilated the travelling show from New York 11-5.

Davey Lopes, Dodger team captain and who was probably moved more by Gilliam's death than any player, went to work early smacking homers in his first two times at bat.

The Yankees bats were silenced until Reggie Jackson's tape measure blast 430 feet into the Dodger bullpen.

Reggie continues to show the world that he's the premier "money player" in Major League baseball.

My prediction: The Dodgers will win the first two... with New York coming back to take the Series in a dramatic come from behind just as they've done all year.

MVP for this year: Reggie Jackson for the Yankees and Dave Lopes for the Dodgers.

The reason the Yankees will lose the first two games is that the ineffective Jim "Catfish" Hunter is scheduled to start in Wednesday's game. If manager Bob Lemon changes his mind, then the Yankees will win in six. And will return to New York 1-1 instead of 2-0.

Vikes lose post season chance

by Bill Schaefer

When Cal Poly completed its 56-20 massacre of Portland State's football team last Saturday night in San Luis Obispo, one could almost hear a sigh of satisfaction all the way from Sacramento.

The sigher would be Bob Mattos, coach of Sacramento State which the previous week was humbled by Mouse Davis' Vikings, 63-7. Mattos was not at all pleased when, in the dying moments of the PSU game, Davis reinserted his first defensive unit in a bid to stop Sacramento's touchdown drive which was being engineered by the second unit. "Bush," was Mattos' description of the episode.

Sacramento State, trailing 63-0 at the time, finally did score.

"It showed me that Mouse doesn't have any cool at all," Mattos said. "I really don't know why he did it. Maybe he got a little greedy and was frustrated by a bad start — losing two games so early in the season. I don't know what the reasons are but something like that is bound to catch up with you eventually."

"Eventually" was last weekend for Portland State. The Vikings surrendered 622 yards via rushing and passing. The bottom line is that Portland State will be going to no post-season this year.

Last week in this space we discussed some of the problems sports officials were encountering this year — they have been guilty of making insensitive remarks to players as well as displaying poor judgement on crucial calls, particularly in the National Football League.

But because these failings were spawned by emotionalism or just plain blunderism they can be

overlooked as being part of the human condition. But what occurred in the first game of the American League Eastern Division pennant playoff cannot be dispatched so easily.

The Yankees had a runner on first base with nobody out. A sharp ground ball was hit to the Kansas City second baseman who pivoted and threw to the shortstop whose relay to first base completed the double play.

The only problem was that the shortstop never touched second base. It was not a close miss. He overran the bag and caught the ball at least four feet from the base. The television replay showed and reshown what happened. The umpire was right on top of the play. Yet he called the runner out. And the baserunner didn't even dispute the call.

Jim Palmer, who was doing the color portion of the telecast, told us those kind of plays were "gimmies," as though the game held no more importance than a Saturday afternoon sandlot scrimmage. "They (the umpires) give 'em those," Palmer intoned. Palmer's sidekick, Howard Cossel, remained strangely and uncharacteristically silent.

I've been covering baseball games for the better part of 25 years but somewhere along the way I must have missed something. When an umpire calls a runner out when he is undisputedly safe and the runner or his manager fails to appeal the decision, the unhappy conclusion is that the rules can be bended. And if they can be bended they can be broken. And if the rules are broken chaos will eventually ensue.

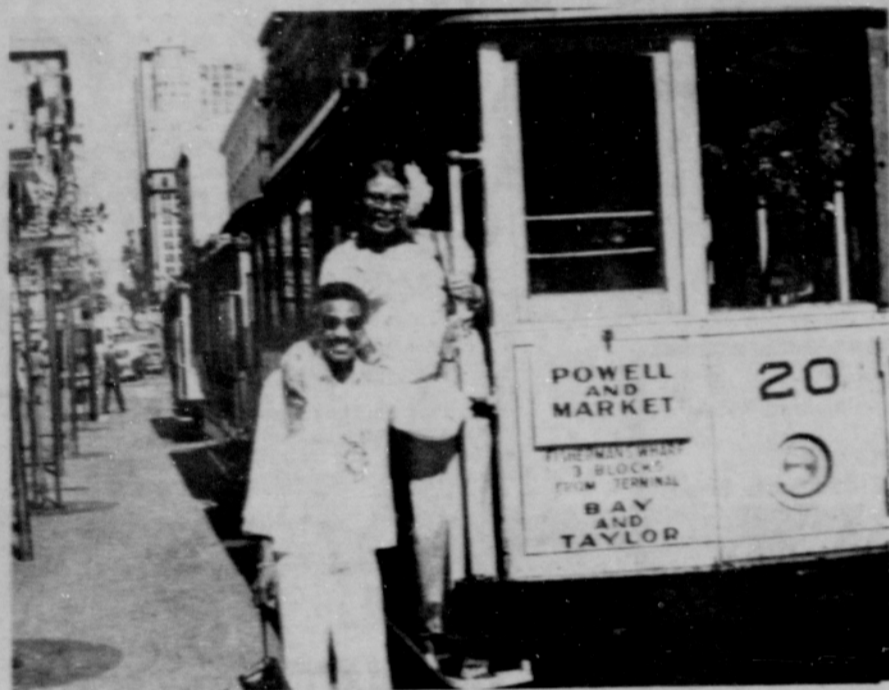
Here was a case when an official's credibility went up in smoke. Such an umpire does not belong on any baseball field, let alone one in which a pennant was to be decided. "Gimmies" are okay when two club golfers get together for a \$5 Nassau. But when it involves an American League pennant, the fans are entitled to a little bit more professionalism.

Jeff track open

In response to a request by School Board member Wally Priestley, arrangements have been made with Larry Ayers, the principal of Jefferson High School to have the gate unlocked so that the track is available for public use until late in the evening.

People from the community and students at the Cascade Branch of the Portland Community College have been welcome to use the track during the day and after school, but the custodians have been locking it after football practice because of some problems with motorcycles on the cinder track. Dr. Ayers agreed that the track should be available to the public and will work with the School District Security Department in combating any problems that might arise from motorcycles.

During football season, one side of the track is largely obstructed by the bleachers that have been placed there for seating of spectators at football games. Joggers can go around the bleachers in the obstructed area of the track.



Paul and Geneva Knawis visited Las Vegas, San Francisco and San Jose, celebrating the 13th anniversary of "Geneva's."



The Mountain Bar Cup, given annually to the winner of the Portland Timbers-Seattle Sounders game, won this year by the Sounders in a 3-2 overtime victory, is presented to Sounder coach Jimmy Gabriel and team captain Mike England by Lenny Wilkens.

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