

# Sports Talk

by Ron Sykes  
Sports Editor

## NBA hopefuls neglect college education

by Ullysses Tucker, Jr.

"Before I die, I'm playing in the NBA," said Greg Bunch after the Black squad took a 122-99 victory over the whites in the Portland Trailblazer's annual rookie contest.

"If I die today, I'm still keeping my word because I played last season," stated the former California State-Fullerton hero referring to his brief stay with the Knicks.

Bunch, a native of San Bernardino, California, was a Criminal Justice major, and though he played four years of college basketball, he is still one full year away from graduation.

Of the six rookies interviewed after last week's game, four of them did not have college degrees after matriculation. Others could not be caught in time for interviews.

Actually, out of the 18,587 players available at NCAA-NAIA institutions this year, the NBA drafted only 220 of them last month. That's not to mention the hundreds of free-agents from the WBA, Europe, and the Eastern League who are trying out.

Unfortunately, an average of only 45 players will be listed on the rosters of NBA clubs when the season starts.

There's no telling whether or not the player will last the whole season either, one could be dropped in a twenty-second phone call.

Let's take a look at the other "degreeless" athletes:

Willie Pounds, a 6'6", 240 pound, forward from Chaminade College in Hawaii was seven credit hours away from a degree in Computer Science and attending summer school before he quit to join the Blazer camp. What will Pounds do now that he's been drafted and released?

"I'll probably go back home to L.A. and wait for my injury to heal (bruised heels). Then I hope to try-out somewhere," he said. "The competition here was excellent, a player had to be in excellent physical condition—I was not 100 per cent."

Stan Eckwood, the former Harding (Arkansas) College standout said, "Had I not been selected to play in the Los Angeles summer league, I was going back home to school."

A P.E. major, Eckwood needs eight hours to graduate. "I came here to see if I could get lucky and indeed I did make the cut. But, I do realize that obtaining my degree is essential."

Andy Fields, who the Blazers are high on, is currently lacking the required graduation requirements too.

"All I need is nine hours to graduate in December," he said after scoring 20 points and grabbing 9 rebounds. When asked what happens if he fails to make the NBA, Fields replied, "I'll just try-out with some other interested organization, there's also the chance that I may travel overseas. My education will come later on."

Micky Fox was less serious about being cut by the Blazers. The 6'3" guard from St. Marys College in Nova Scotia, Canada explained his state of mind.

"The way I performed tonight, there's no way they should have paid my airfare to camp," he said. "I felt really bad because I know the organization expected more from me."

Fox, a high school assistant coach and teacher will go back to Canada where he plans to work in the same capacity.

"That's what I was doing before I came here chasing rainbows, but I guess my best days are behind me," he said. "I'm no different from all the others in this locker room, we all are chasing dreams."

The only other player interviewed with a degree was the 6'8" high scorer with 25 points, Abdul Jeelani, who graduated from the University of Wisconsin—Parkside in Communications.

"I have excellent skills in Radio-Television Production to fall back on after the game is over," said the former European star. "But at this point, I'm concentrating on

establishing myself in the NBA. I've always believed in having alternatives, if I fail to make the Blazers I can go back to Europe."

This story should not be interpreted as an attack on the character, or academic abilities of any of these individuals—but something must be done about the increasing number of college athletes attempting to gain entrance into the league without college degrees.

These players are generally left out in the cold after being released by teams, the sad part is that the majority are ill-prepared for the job world and will never complete their education. However, there are exceptions to the rule—even though many still pursue this dream at all cost.

Locally, odds are that Jim Paxson from Dayton University will be the only rookie on the Blazer roster this season. (Why gamble on youth when a cargo of compensation is coming from San Diego for the signing of Bill Walton?)

In the meantime, the other rookies are in Los Angeles scrapping for the chance to take a trip to "Fantasy Island." The land of playing in three cities in three days.

"In the final analysis," said Dr. Robert L. Green, dean of the college of urban development at Michigan State University, and the author of a landmark study on discrimination towards Blacks in the Big Ten (1972). "When the athlete plays his last game and he doesn't have the skills to play pro ball, he'll get dumped. And it's especially true with the Black athlete."

"The average white kid who misses the pro thing will have other options because there's a support system in the white community to help cushion the fall."

"They'll sell insurance or cars, real estate, and enter professions where their reputation as athletes will help them in the white community," Dr. Green stated.

Question: If the NCAA can establish regulations requiring an athlete to have a GPA of 2.0 to enter big institutions—then why can't the NBA require a BA degree to sign a contract in the league and eliminate the hardship rule?

That way, the incoming athlete would be better able to deal with the "real world" just in case "the dream doesn't pan out." The athlete would also be forced to apply himself academically to qualify for the draft, or

to come on as a free agent.

The way it stands now, a player can cruise through college majoring only in basketball and no books.

Enforcing degree regulations would be no more than a "weeding out" process, like the one the Federal Communications Com-

mission uses in its selection of engineers. They are all required to pass the First Class Operators Test.

In short, out of eleven players on rosters around the NBA, five or six will not have college degrees. The Board of Governors should take these factors into consideration.



NBA basketball ended in early June with Seattle taking its first NBA championship ever. Naturally, then, everyone would presumably believe that the fans could rest until next season, after all, basketball, as designed by Dr. Naismith, was supposed to be a winter game just to keep the athlete fit. Not so. Nineteen players, including ten 1979 draft choices strutted their stuff before nearly 7,000 loyal fans.

All draft choices except first-rounder Jim Paxson of Dayton were on hand and gave a lively exhibition of mid-summer basketball. Abdul-Jeelani, 6'8", forward, out of the Italian league showed he can really play the game. Jeelani was impressive with his speed and overall court sense.

Abdul Jeelani, formerly played as Gary Cole when he did his collegiate work for Wisconsin-Parkside.

The 6'8" strongman resembles New York's Marvin Webster on the court, and from his strong performance in the rookie game, he just might be the only rookie with a real shot of making the team.

In order for this to happen though Portland would have to peddle either Maurice Lucas or Mychal Thompson. Most likely Lucas, if one can believe all the rumors that are flying. If any power forward goes Abdul Jeelani will certainly stick.

Those with an outside chance would be Rickey Lee, ex-Oregon Stater; Greg Bunch, 6'6", Calstate-Fullerton; and Stan Eckwood, 6'3", guard, Harding College in Arkansas, ninth round pick.

Rickey Lee does have good skills and his all around game is certainly as good or better than Larry Steele, a player Lee would have to vie with for a spot on the Blazer roster. Lee has good quickness, good ball handler, goes to the boards hard, and his outside shot is rapidly improving.

### Ali refuses South Africa fight

Muhammad Ali supported his announced retirement from boxing by revealing he had turned down a \$50 million offer to fight one more bout.

"I've been offered \$50 million to fight in South Africa, but I turned them down," said Ali, twice the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world and currently the World Boxing Association title-holder.

According to Ali, he was sent a letter of credit from an unnamed South African party to fight the World

Boxing Council champion, currently Larry Holmes. The fight would be a defense of his WBA title and would also be recognized as a title fight by the WBC, thus giving the 37-year-old Ali a chance to become undisputed heavyweight champion again.

According to a spokesman for Ali, who claimed he had the letter of credit in the bank, "The offer was received several days ago, but Ali doesn't want to take it. It's a lot of money to turn down," said the spokesman.

### Concert benefits Tenant Union

Singer/song writer, Beverly Grant, a graduate of Grant High School, is returning to Portland to do a benefit concert for the Portland Tenants' Union. The concert will be held Saturday, July 28th, at 8:00 p.m. at the Northwest Service Center, NW 18th and Everett.

Beverly is a powerful singer and guitar player who leaves her audience with both a sense of shared experience and a feeling of strength. She currently resides in New York where she performs with her band, "The Human Condition". This will be her first local performance since she ap-

peared last summer at the Northwest Woman's Music Festival. Ms. Grant's followers will recall that she appeared, via National Television, on a show called "Women Alive" that was broadcast in Portland three years ago.

Beverly was known locally as a member of the "Miller Sisters", a popular trio in the late 1950s, which appeared regularly on the old Heck Harper show. She is widely known in the Northeast as a class conscious feminist singer. She performs regularly in clubs, coffee houses, schools, universities, music festivals and community events.

Members of the Family Circus Theatre Collective will provide additional entertainment. Tickets are \$2.00 in advance or \$2.50 at the door. Call 232-6956 for information.

For a free government catalog listing more than 200 helpful booklets, write:

Consumer Information Center, Dept. B, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.



She's unmarried. She's pregnant. She needs help. She should call 249-5801 Birthright

free confidential counseling for pregnant girls 4023 N.E. Halsey Just off Sandy Blvd.

friend to friend help

We Specialize In Life & Health Insurance • Investment Products • Group, Medical & Dental Under Ten, All Tax Sheltered Plans, Pension, Etc.



OTIE B. HAMILTON

WESTERN LIFE INSURANCE CO. Wholly Owned by The St. Paul Companies

Call Today

1750 S.W. Skyline Blvd., Suite 220 297-4836



**LOOK FOR THE BIG "T"**  
"A Sure Sign of Good Taste"



**BAKING HENS**  
U.S.D.A. Grade A Flash Frozen 4 to 7 lbs. **59¢**

S.E. 20th & DIVISION S.E. 72nd & FLAVEL N.E. 15th & FREMONT W. BURNSIDE at 21st SAN RAFAEL-1910 N.E. 122nd

14410 S.E. DIVISION 3955 S.E. POWELL N.E. 74th & GLISAN HILLSBORO-960 S.E. OAK

Forest Grove-2329 PACIFIC Oregon City-878 MOLALLA Canby-1051 S.W. 1st LLOYD CENTER

**TRADEWELL**

## WORKS WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS.



Pacific Northwest Bell



**Bell System Yellow Pages**

Put an ad in the Yellow Pages and you'll get twenty-four hour a day, 365 day a year, selling against 96% of all homes and businesses. And, not one word about time-and-a-half, double time, triple time, golden time, or what-have-you.

**IT NEVER STOPS SELLING.**