



Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes
Sports Editor

The Portland Trailblazers crossed their fingers, held their breath and were utterly delighted when their turn came in the 1983 NBA draft. Harry Glickman told a large gathering, by telephone, that the Portland Trailblazers, with the selection of Houston's 6-7 Clyde Drexler, are "now pledged to become members of Phi Slamma Jamma." The question now is does this pledge also include head coach Dr. Jack Ramsay? Drexler, at his best is a freewheeling, open court player who can excite a crowd while making things happen. A "Dr. J." type, only a little bit bigger. It's plain and simple that Ramsay hasn't always been appreciative of the one-on-one game.

The now departed and much maligned Billy Ray Bates is a prime example of Ramsay's philosophy. Billy Ray was the freest of all free spirits. He simply captivated the fans with his awesome display of individual talent.

Billy was never meant to be anything more. Billy's role should have been that of instant offense, much

like that of Freddie Brown in Seattle.

But Ramsay, the eternal teacher, tried to make Billy the complete player. It never worked; Bates became frustrated and the rest is history.

Remember Calvin Natt, the young rookie acquired from the New Jersey Nets for veteran power forward Maurice Lucas and two No. 1 draft picks. Well, Calvin wasn't always a "pit bull." He only acquired that reputation after completely changing his style. Natt came to Portland as a high scorer. He needed the ball and wasn't afraid to take the shot from 20 feet on in. Ramsay's dislike of the freewheeling Natt caused Calvin many head shaking, soul searching nights. If Calvin put up the 20-footer and Ramsay thought a few more passes were in order... then Natt could expect Bobby Gross to be reporting for duty.

This treatment shattered Calvin. "I was always the man called upon to score in crucial situations," lamented Calvin, "it's difficult see-

ing myself treated differently here."

Calvin went on the trading block, changed his style to conform to the Ramsay system and led the team in shooting percentage while standing second in rebounding and third in scoring.

"Last year, if I scored 15 points in the first quarter, I still knew I was going to sit the next one. I can't keep my game going like that. Neither can Bobby (Gross)." With that, Natt became a new man. Bobby Gross was let go after Calvin destroyed both he and rookie Jeff Lamp in training camp. Lamp's name was already penciled in for Calvin prior to fall workouts.

"I truly believe Jeff Lamp is going to be a very good NBA player," VP Harry Glickman said. If Glickman believes as much... the question is still why draft Clyde Drexler? Does Portland intend to give the rookie the green light? If you know Jack Ramsay, you would have to believe otherwise. Ramsay's philosophy has always been to run a set, controlled offense.

If a player is to stay in the game,

and Ramsay's good graces... then he is not expected to get out of the offense. No matter what the defense allows.

Portland's present offense does not allow for freelancing.

Drexler's game is built around cutting, moving to the hoop and applying the now famous Slamma Jamma.

Will established stars such as Mychal Thompson, Natt and Paxson be willing to sacrifice their games? Will Ramsay change and will Clyde get the playing time one would expect? These are just a few questions that are facing the team, and will have to be answered.

Will Clyde Drexler, with all his talent, lie dormant on the Trailblazer bench?

The truth is that Drexler is not the player that would normally fit the Ramsay mold. Something or someone will have to change.

For the answer, tune in next September, October or November. By then the test should have been completed.

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Beaming proudly are the Dr. Reynolds minor league champs '83. Bottom row L-R: Glynn Harper, Michael Martin, Daniel Martin, Jason Lowery, Greg Caesar, Abdul Shabazz. Second row

L-R: Alton Fergusson, Joe James (MVP), Armand Harper, James Edwards, Jeff Mitchell, Rodger Mitchell assistant coach. Managers Amar Shabazz and Keith Edwards in back.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Kuz-Ins league prospers

by Khris Caldwell

A small crowd has gathered around Irving Park's center basketball court to watch the undefeated New Jersey Nets keep their streak alive. But with the National Basketball Association draft just over and the season weeks away, how can the Nets already be playing, and why Irving Park?

The answer is the Kuz-Ins' Basketball Summer League. NBA President Larry O'Brien does not call the shots in this league. Twenty-two-year-old co-founders Byron Brown and Tracy Cage are in charge. Don't look for professionals like Dr. J. or

George Gervin, but watch some of the best non-professional talent in Portland. Phil Hopson, Amos Allen, Thomas Channel, Darryl Mayes, Andy Mott, Darrell Tanner, and Gregg West are amongst those who are helping to make the Kuz-Ins one of the most competitive summer leagues in the state. An amazing feat for a league only in its second year of existence.

Brown and Cage had modest goals in mind when they originated the league last summer. First, they wanted to contribute something to Portland and their community. They also wanted to provide a safe, clean, structured environment for

Portland youths, and in so doing, keep them off the streets. The league's motto — "develop unity through community" — reflects these goals.

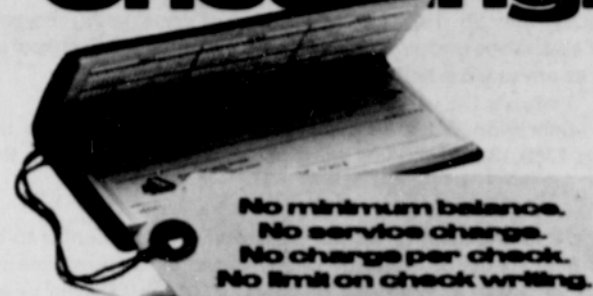
In its second year, the Kuz-Ins' Summer League has become more than just the casual "recreational option for young adults" that the co-founders had envisioned.

It is a full scale program consisting of a twelve game regular season schedule; a post season tournament complete with playoffs and a championship game; an all-star game; and a benefit game in which the Kuz-Ins themselves (Byron Brown, Tracy Cage, Dennis Bradley, and Bruce Johnson) plus friends, will take on the championship team.

Well before the season opened, corporate donations were sought to finance the league. Converse, Royal Crown and Osborne and Ulland provided solid backing for the league this year. Then informational flyers were distributed to attract players. Teams were taken on a first come, first served basis. Currently, there are 12 teams and about 120 players (each team is allowed ten players). The teams are split into two divisions (east, west), and there are six teams in each. Games are played Tuesday-Thursday, at 5:30 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday, at 5:00 p.m. at Irving Park on center court.

Kuz-Ins plans to eventually expand the league to accommodate four more groups: young women 10-13, 13-16; and young men 10-13, 13-16.

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