

Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor



The NBA draft: a look!

On May 10, 1984, the Portland Trail Blazers will flip a coin with the Houston Rockets and the winner will receive the No. 1 pick in this year's NBA draft.

The Blazers have participated in five coin tosses in the past. They have a 3-2 record. In 1974, Portland chose tails in a dual with the Sixers.

The shiny silver dollar, tossed by Commissioner Lawrence O'Brien settled neatly on tails and Portland chose UCLA's 6'11" Bill Walton. There's a contest going on in Portland, supposedly, to let the fans make the choice on either heads or tails. Sure this is all done under the auspices of publicity, but does one leave such an important task to the public. The opinion here is that you don't argue with success, you don't stray from a winner. And that winner "tails" brought Bill Walton, a legitimate NBA center, and later the championship. This year's needs are the same as the Walton year. The Blazers are in definite need of a big man. Okay, the big men are there. Win or lose, the Blazers will have a big man available. Just who the big men will be is still a question. The two biggest: Akeem "The Dream" Olajuwon and Patrick Ewing are both juniors. Both have stated publicly that they will stay in school for their last year. However, there have been rumblings from both Houston and Washington, D.C., that both could be available. "I'm going to sit down with Patrick, said coach John Thompson, "and try to see what would be best for him." Thompson is ready to advise his star center whether he should become an instant millionaire or matriculate one more year at good old Georgetown. While Ewing's situation is still "iffy", one can almost bet that Houston's Akeem will come out. So, now Portland and Houston can both flip and no one will be the loser. And, maybe, the league could avoid the conference hook-up, as is used for such dealings, and just let Mr. Ewing and Olajuwon decide which city they would prefer living in for the next decade.

Although the Blazers have indicated that, should both seven footers be available in this year's draft ...Olajuwon would be their choice. We see the top five and in this order: Olajuwon, Ewing, Sam Bowie, Mel Turpin and Sam Perkins. All are centers except the 6'9" Perkins. If the draft were held today, the picks would go as follows: (1.) Houston or Portland; (3.) Chicago; (4.) Dallas; and, (5.) Philadelphia.

Chicago is said to be interested in either Sam Bowie or North Carolina's Michael Jordan; that is if Jordan makes himself available on May 5th. Dallas, like Portland, is only a big man away from being a

power forward Sam Perkins. If Perkins is gone, then look for the Sixers to pick Jordan, if he's there. Whereas Philly is in definite need of a power forward, it would be hard for them to pass on the 6'6" Jordan. The Sixers have their first round selections this year, and undoubtedly will receive help.

With the addition of a true "big man", Portland's roster will certainly change. It will bring about some interesting questions. What will happen up front? Will Mychal Thompson become expendable? If Mychal goes to power forward, what then about Kenny Carr and Calvin Natt? How will Drexler get time if Natt and Carr are stacked at the small forward slot? Olajuwon at 7'0" and 250 pounds will add bulk to the line up. With the 6'10" Thompson and either Carr or Natt, its small forward, Portland could rebound with anyone. But, will Natt and Carr both be satisfied playing limited minutes?

Drexler has openly stated that next year he expects more playing very good team. And Mel Turpin could very well be the Maverick's choice. Philadelphia, drafting fifth,

then out he comes. Then somewhere down the stretch, Jack will wonder why his bench doesn't supply the much needed help. Perhaps, if the bench was primed during the first half of the season, they then would be ready at the end. Oh well, it's really just food for thought.



USA's Laurie Flachmeier, #5, watches her team mates rush to return the save she just dove for in the USA vs. China Women's Volleyball Exhibition at the Memorial Coliseum, Monday, April 23rd.

China won the best of 5 match: 15-3, 12-15, 8-15, 15-6, and 15-11.

(Photo: Dan Long)

would love to use their pick to grab power forward Sam Perkins. If Perkins is gone, then look for the Sixers to pick Jordan, if he's there.

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Bridge tourney success

On Sunday, April 15th, the Club Finesse Bridge Club of Portland sponsored an American Bridge Association class "C" Regional Tournament at the Senior Adult Service Center at 4128 N.E. Union Avenue.

Mrs. Lois Irving, club president, confirmed that more than 52 duplicate bridge enthusiasts turned out, including the A.B.A. Sectional

Vice President, Mamie (Toddy) Price, and a contingent from Seattle, Washington, as well as a host of others from Portland's local bridge clubs.

Mrs. Martha Jordan was the director-in-charge of play, and did an excellent job of keeping play flowing smoothly, making the affair enjoyable for all.

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