



by Roy Lee Jernigan
Sports Editor

SPORT TALK • SPORT TALK

THE 1985 ALL-STATE BASKETBALL TEAM A JOKE

In years past, I have laughingly just passed aside the Oregon All-State basketball selections but this year I have an outlet for my commentary. Only in Oregon can kids be so severely hurt and disappointed by the media's neglect of their abilities. Personally, I believe it is intentional.

In 1983, Cindy Brown led the Grant Generals to the finals in the girls' Class AAA, where they lost to Crook County. I watched each game Grant played that year and there was no better basketball player in the state than Cindy Brown. When "Player of the Year" honors weren't bestowed on Cindy, I went nuts. There was only one All-American in the state for girls that year, and it was Cindy Brown but she couldn't win player of the year in her own state. For all of Cindy's efforts, Rappin' Rodney got more respect than she did.

They're at it again. The best Tony Ross, Anthony Butler, and Laffaira Taylor could get was Honorable Mention. Aaron Bell was left out completely. It stinks!

On the girls' side of the ledger, Traci Thirdgill could manage only another honorable mention. Karon Howell made the first team and was selected "Player of the Year." There was little that could've been done to deny Karon her honors because she led her team to back to back state championships.

The Class AAA teams were selected by a vote of all the boys' and girls' high school basketball coaches in Oregon. That revelation should make at least a few of them hang their heads.

I will confess that I have not seen all of the players selected, which puts me at

par with many of the voting coaches. How many times do you think that the coach from Ontario High School saw Andre George or Aaron Bell play? By the way, the boys "Player of the Year" was Brian King of Ontario. They must play a pretty heavy schedule over there, wherever over there is.

The boys' first team is as white as the paper I'm typing on, and we know better than that. If the kids could play better ball than the ones they beat out, I wouldn't have a word to say but they can't, and I do. There was not one sportswriter that attended the boys'

state tournament that didn't recognize Keith Smith and Tony Ross' dominant abilities. Keith was snubbed to the third team. Laffaira Taylor led the tournament in rebounding and couldn't make the Tournament All-Star team, not to mention All-State.

Lindsay Strothers led his St. Mary's Blues to the championship in his first year as head coach and didn't get a sniff at "Coach of the Year." That dubious distinction went to the coach from West Linn. He sure had a lot to do with a team that was so big their point guard was 5-foot-11.



KENNY CARR

I no longer have to wonder why kids from Oregon have such a tough time competing on a national level; they're surrounded by coaches that have tunnel vision and are sorry judges of talent.

For you kids that have been subjected to this travesty, take heart in the fact that there are other that recognize your talents without blinders on. Use this experience to make you a stronger and better individual. I'm here to tell you, many others have suffered the same fate and have used the experience to spur themselves on to greater achievements. This is only a sample of what they have out there for you. Remember it, but don't dwell on it, and when you see it being done to others after you. Pass it on!

BLAZERS ROLL TO PLAYOFFS

The Trail Blazers are in. The Phoenix Suns came to town Tuesday night limping and left on crutches after being manhandled by the Blazers 116-100. The home team had already clinched a playoff spot and the win over the Suns put the Blazers one game over the .500 mark.

I won't go into that nonsense about if the playoffs started today, because they don't. No matter which team the Blazers face in the first series, they must win. Trying to escape the Los Angeles bracket won't do either, the Lakers are going to be there.

The overtime loss to the Lakers Sunday proved conclusively that the Blazers are ready to play for the marbles. Kenny Carr has proved himself to be the glue for this team and with the rough-house playoff style that's ahead, Kenny should more than prove his worth.

The bench looks good, as long as Valentine stays on it. Pax is coming

around to form, which is definitely a plus, and Clyde. . . . is Clyde. Sam needed that game against Kareem Sunday to clear his head of that idolizing rhetoric he's been dishing out. One dumb pass doesn't lose a ballgame, so I won't come down on Mychal. Besides Mychal has played more consistently good ball than any Blazer this year.

Steve Colter. . . my man. Now that Jack has found out that this young man is his best point guard, let's see what happens when the playoffs start. Kiki still can't rebound or play defense but I like him on the offensive end. The physical playoff game won't be up Kiki's alley so we might, and should see a lot of Jerome Kersey.

On the basketball floor, I like this team. I picked them to take the Western Conference when the season started and I'm going to stick to that. Off the hardwood is another story altogether. Before the Brothers leave for the summer, we'll get to that story, too.

In order for me to get to the meat of that story, I need some input from you, our readers. What are your feelings concerning the team members and their involvement in our community affairs? Do you consider them as members of this community? Don't stop me on the street and tell me; put it on paper so we can print it and see what the community reaction is.

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A Hard Road to Glory

Because the athletic contest at its best is a pure measure of ability that regards nothing but results, it has often been the only avenue toward esteem open to an outcast American minority. Taking what society would give, Black athletes began fighting for

acceptability and sometimes even survival through sports from the moment the first slave ship left an African shore. Then for centuries all games involving Blacks in America were couched in official racism, ever-present hatred, violence, ignorance

and exclusion. In rare contests with whites, triumph was treated with violent anger by the broader society and defeat with glee. And yet, Black athletes prevailed. In today's America the Black athlete is a paragon, heroic in stature to the point of stereotype. And even this has proven to be a stumbling block, another reason among many that the path of athletes for the Black American has been "A Hard Road to Glory."

The ProServ Television production of "A Hard Road to Glory: The Black Athlete in America," is based on extensive research conducted by tennis great and on-camera host Arthur Ashe.

The two-hour special incorporates seldom-seen as well as famous footage and photographs, dramatic re-enactments of significant moments in American history and interviews with people who changed the world. It represents the first time that the role of the Black athlete in American society has been so thoroughly documented. "A Hard Road to Glory" captures and defines America's most riveting sports drama.

In the ProServ Television production the drama begins with the legendary and controversial Jack Johnson, the first Black heavyweight champion of the world. Arthur Ashe, seated on the edge of a large desk in a sunlit study with bookshelves and portraits of Black athletes visible behind him, explains that Johnson's victory was the pivotal moment in the history of Black American athletics.

Ashe points out that Johnson's victory over Jim Jeffries in Reno, Nevada, in 1910 marked the end of a pervasive belief among whites that Blacks were not physical equals. The camera zooms to a portrait of a determined and fierce Jack Johnson framed on the wall behind Ashe, and as the shot dissolves into footage of one of Johnson's historic fights, the narrator — James Earl Jones — begins the tale of a dock-worker who turned to fighting when he discovered he was pretty good with his fists. . . . still photographs are shown of Johnson as he pursued the heavyweight champion around the world in pursuit of a title fight. . . . there's action footage of him winning the world title, then defending it against Jeffries. . . and newspaper headlines about the killings that followed; the narrator then puts the event into perspective — an American forced to accept the truth that an athlete, at least, is made by talent and determination, and not by the shade of his skin.

Using this truth as a springboard,

the production falls back to the roots of Black athleticism. Dianne Durham, the first world-class Black gymnast, is seen performing a floor exercise routine. Her talent, it is explained, is in-born and God-given. As she leaps into the air, her spin slows and there is an electric rhythm. The narrator says that her talent, like that of Jack Johnson and the many who came before, simply needed the right nurturing in order to bloom. The seed of greatness was planted long ago in the soil where the hard road began.

As the music heightens, an African village appears much as it would have been four hundred years ago. Children are playing games that involve tumbling, wrestling and running. The tribe's most esteemed young men are hunters — athletes who succeed on agility, speed, endurance and strength. The social fabric of the African village carries a theme: survival and honor are achieved through athletic activity. It is a theme that will remain through the dark days of slavery and civil war, through deprivation and discrimination, and will flourish again in 20th Century America.

On this foundation — a pivotal moment early in this century and a quiet moment in the farthest reaches of Black sports history — the program is built.

Ashe introduces the subject at hand from his study or from a significant historical location (such as Comiskey Park in Chicago, where the Negro League all-star games were played and where Joe Louis won the world heavyweight championship). Dramatic re-enactments include boxing scenes with Tom Molineaux early in the 1800s, horse racing with the great 19th Century jockeys Monkey Simon and Isaac Murphy, and the crucial, personal moment in 1910 that inspired Branch Rickey to sign Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers almost 40 years later.

Historical footage includes Jesse Owens running against and Joe Louis fighting against Hitler's supposed supermen, plus footage and stills of Black baseball, football, basketball and tennis stars, even bicycle racers.

The emergence of Black women in sports is seen in footage and interviews. Olympic superstars Wyomia Tyus and Wilma Rudolph and tennis great Althea Gibson are featured.

The role of the Black athlete in the political turbulence of the 1960s will be portrayed through the young Cassius Clay and the older Muhammad Ali, and through Tommy Smith and John Carlos.



Tennis great Arthur Ashe will host "A Hard Road to Glory: The Black Athlete in America," a two-hour special featuring interviews with many Black athletes, seldom seen action footage and dramatic re-enactments to capture America's riveting sports drama.

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