

Trail Blazers visit schools in reading fitness program

Portland Trail Blazers Steve Colter and Kiki Vandeweghe handed out special prizes today to the top fifth and sixth grade classes in the Blazer/AVIA Reading Fitness Program.

Open to fifth and sixth grade students in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Clark counties, over 3,400 students participated in the Reading Fitness program. Classes with the highest number of pages read per student in each grade were determined winners.

winning sixth grade class at South Ridge Elementary in Ridgefield, WA. The Blazers visited her class of 23 students, who read a total of 204,985 pages; the student average was 8,912 pages.

AVIA Vice President of Sales, Mike Elliott, and Portland Trail Blazers Executive Vice President Harry Glickman were on hand to congratulate the students. Colter and Vandeweghe handed out two Blazer tickets to each class member and teacher for the sold-out Blazer game against Atlanta Hawks, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 16. The winning class will receive special recognition at the game.

"I'm thrilled to see the accomplishments of these kids who participated in Reading Fitness," says Steve Colter, Chairman of the Blazer/AVIA BASIC program. "We want to help students get excited about reading for pleasure—at home and at school."

"To develop a love for reading, we need to encourage kids to read all the time. By providing positive incentives, we're motivating our youth to experience the joys of reading," Colter says.

Individual Trail Blazer players visited the 18 runner-up schools throughout the day Jan. 21 to hand out mini-posters and bookmarks and congratulate the students.

The Blazers and AVIA Athletic Footwear provided lesson plans and classroom tools, including a reading entry chart to make participation easy for teachers and students. They also established a 24-hour hotline to answer questions.

Between Oct. 21 and Nov. 21, students recorded daily the total number of pages they read. Students received 50 bonus points if they checked out books from a community library. Each week, students summarized in writing the pages they read.

A total number of 3,437 students in more than 100 schools participated, including one deaf class. Altogether, they read 3,687,329 pages. Each student who joined in the Reading Fitness program receives a unique Blazer/AVIA bookmark.

Part of a three-pronged scholastic program called BASIC (Blazer/AVIA Scholastic Improvement Concepts), the year-long program covers reading, improvement and writing.

The year AVIA expanded its involvement with the Trail Blazers by signing Mychal Thompson and Kenny Johnson, who joined Steve Colter in wearing AVIA shoes.



"ALWAYS TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT IN LIFE!"

Steve Colter



Colter and Vandeweghe visited the winning fifth grade class taught by Dave George at Edward Byrom Elementary in Tualatin. With 25 students, the class read a total of 94,656 pages; the average number of pages read per student was 3,786.

Karen Stolberg teaches the



Although the New York Knicks are banking \$31.2 million on Patrick Ewing hoping he will bring the glory back to the Big Apple, the shy 23-year-old says, "I don't consider myself a savior."

Patrick Ewing: new hope of the NY Knicks

The New York Knicks are banking on Patrick Ewing, the 240-pound, seven-foot man who led the Georgetown Hoyas to an NCAA Championship and the Olympic Basketball Team to the gold, relates the February *Ebony*.

Although Ewing is reportedly being paid \$31.2 million for a ten-year contract to bring the glory back to New York basketball, and although his Big Apple fans are dubbing him "St. Patrick," Ewing says he can't make any promises. The self-effacing 23-year-old says, "I don't consider myself a savior."

One promise the Georgetown University graduate did make was to his mother. "I promised my mother before she died (in 1983) that I would graduate on time, and I'm proud to have fulfilled that promise," the fine arts major says.

Unlike most professional athletes, Ewing is a private person who drives a Chevy, eats at fast-food restaurants and at one time planned a career as a professional artist before his family moved to the United States from Jamaica.

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