

Blazeralert

1300By Eyem-id

Welcome to this year's "New Edition" of the Portland Trailblazers whose inept style is akin to that of the Oregon State football team. Maybe they should be entitled the Poregon State Trailbeavers?

Sure, they're only 2 games into the new N.B.A. season, and they will get their chance to get on the good foot; but first they have to air out the Memorial Coliseum, because they sure stunk up the place in losing the season's opening game 127-110 to the "new edition II" Seattle Supersonics.

After going 7-1 in the pre-season and weeks of hype from Blazer officials and their lackeys, it is apparent that somebody hasn't been forthcoming in regard to the present state of this year's Blazer team.

Will Kenny Carr be able to defend, score and rebound game in and game out against quicker, taller and more offensively minded opponents? Are Sam Bowie's shins really fracture-free? What is the truth about "the truth"? Can Steve Johnson stay out of foul trouble long enough to do what he's paid to do? Score!! Blazer fans want answers on the court, not in the press.

Blazer officials' and players' response to this rhetorical prose could be: tell us something we don't already know.

If they don't know now, they might come to realize later that their fans may no longer idly accept the same steady diet of equivocal excuses they've become accustomed to hearing from Dr. Jack during his tenure. Remember Joe Avazzano? It's time to put your money where your job is.

Portland jumped out to a 14-6 lead early in the 1st quarter by utilizing a combination of fast breaks and deft shooting. Seattle was forced to call a time out, and when play resumed, they quickly forged to a tie. Portland finished the quarter leading 30-29.

Although Portland was playing well enough, three things were becoming obvious to all: 1) no team rebounding, 2) no low-post offense, 3) an unpervasive defense. The last point was to be exposed the next night in Utah where Portland fell 119-110 to the Jazz.

The next quarter was much better for the Blazers; it allowed the fans to get into the game vocally. Early in the second quarter, Sam Bowie (15 pts) picked up his 3rd personal foul—exit Sam—enter Steve Johnson, a bonafide low-post terrorist. Within 4 minutes Portland had built a 10 point advantage against the shell-shocked Supersonics—enter Maurice Lucas (19 pts). Upon his arrival on the court, Lucas promptly drew the 3rd personal foul from Steven Johnson and forced Coach Shuler to remove him; at that moment Portland's low-post offense became a moot part of their overall game plan.

At the half, the Trailblazers led 63-58, however, as soon as play resumed, the lead would quickly evaporate and turn into a deficit.

The second half of the game could have been entitled "The Young and the Breathless", Seattle being "The Young" and the Trail-



Portland guard Terry Porter had 8 assists against the Seattle Supersonics. Photo by Richard J. Brown

blazers, "The Breathless".

A betwixted Portland team took to the court and continued to play as if they had no real zeal for the game, with one exception—Kiki V.

There is no doubt Vandeweghe has been, and is, the team's most prolific scorer and biggest defensive

liability. He was practically the team's entire offense in the 3rd quarter. However, alot of credit must be given to Terry Porter (8 assists), and Clyde Drexler (4 assists) by Kiki for the majority of his 12 points in the quarter. In contrast, Seattle got consistent scoring

from most of their starters and led 95-84 going into the final stanza.

Seattle continued only to get stronger, thanks in part to Tom Chambers (27 pts), Dale Ellis (23 pts), and Xavier McDaniel (20 pts, 11 rebs). These three Supersonics simply took the starch out of Portland—Maurice Lucas shot his way to 19 pts.

Minus their low-post offense and defense, the Blazers had very little to counter with. The fans picked up on this right away, and the subsequent exodus to their cars spontaneously materialized.

What to do? What to do? What to do?—That seems to be a question with many cogent answers, but very few correct ones: Portland must establish a potent low-post offense now in order to keep from further embarrassment when they play high-calibered teams like Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland and Houston!!

One other area that requires immediate, successful results is in the guard position.

Clyde Drexler and Terry Porter should have plays designed to fully exploit their polytechnic skills (i.e. their offensive skills are unlimited and should be showcased the same way they did with former Blazer star Billy Ray Bates and current star Kiki Vandeweghe.)

Word has it that the Trailblazers "never had it, never will". I personally believe they have it.

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Urban League News

Low-Income Energy Assistance

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program funds should be released to distribution agencies December 2nd.

The Urban League Energy Program staff will begin calling seniors served last year in the month of November. If you did not receive assistance last year call 280-2649 to be added to the list.

The Energy Program is not an emergency program, the funds are to help you keep warm during the cold months.

Needed, Volunteer Drivers

The Piedmont/Carter Loaves & Fishes Nutrition Site needs volunteer drivers to deliver meals to homebound seniors. The site is open five days per week, meals are delivered between 11:00 a.m. and noon.

Homebound seniors would love to have you volunteer to help them receive a hot nutritious noontime meal.

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SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.