

SPORTS/EVENTS

The Locker Room

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.



A Conversation With Broadcaster Steve Jones About Style In The NBA

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

Steve Jones is regarded as one of the best basketball announcers in the country. His career started in 1976 with CBS. He is in his seventh year as an analyst for the Portland Trail Blazers. Jones has also been working the national games for TBS/TNT the last three years.



A product of Franklin High School in Portland and the University of Oregon, Jones worked the Blazers championship game against the Philadelphia 76ers. Against the Houston Rockets last month, a writer noted that Don Chaney's team had a great team on paper and plenty of talent. Jones responded by saying that the Rockets have no style or team identity.

With this in mind, Steve Jones was asked what he meant by style.

"Style is a combination of philosophies and the way you approach the game. Some teams have the philosophy of being a full court team in terms of running, being aggressive, and that sets the tone. Two teams, maybe at the opposite ends of the spectrum would be Minnesota and Portland.

Minnesota's mentality is half-court. They slow it down, use the clock, play

very physical, and put bodies all over you. Portland, on the other hand, would like to play you the full 94 x 50 feet as much as they can. They also like to use their hand-foot speed, quickness, get steals, easy hoops, and use their bench. So, style is the kinda game that suits the type of players you have on your team and the way they like to play."

Portland Observer - Who sets the tone for style and is it something that is established by the front office?

Jones - "It's really a philosophical decision that kinda comes from the front office and depends on the type of team you want to put together. So, if you went back to when the Lakers established 'Showtime'—Jerry Buss took over the team and he wanted it to be entertaining. He also wanted them to run. Then he began to assemble the people who could do that. The key to all of that was Magic Johnson. He picked up James Worthy and then Bryon Scott, all the things needed to surround Kareem. That starts at the top."

Portland Observer - What NBA franchises do you like in terms of style?

Jones - "The teams that have been the most appealing are in the West and it's very difficult to separate the. Los Angeles has been the premier team. Portland and Phoenix are very exciting. For a small team, the Golden State Warriors will always provide you with a high scoring game as well as the Denver Nuggets.

You've got to look around and see what type of basketball you appreciate the most. The NBA is an offensive game and to be able to slow down a high scoring team is a joy to watch. Then, you come back and match them against someone like the Pistons, who really don't like to run. I prefer a game that is more wide open and it lets the players be a little more expressive in the way they try to play the game."

Portland Observer - After all is said and done in the playoff confrontations, who will it be playing for the

NBA Championships?

Jones - "The Lakers and the Pistons. I think that they have the best styles for winning, best command of the game, and the greatest ability to accept the challenge of the playoffs or the pressure that comes with it. They both have a lot of motivation. The Pistons want to prove that they can repeat and the Lakers want to prove that they should have had a "threepeat", but the injuries hampered their chances. It's not going to be easy for either team. This year, the NBA, in terms of the playoffs, are very close to parity and exciting as you can get. Both teams, the Lakers and the Pistons, know what it takes and they can not flinch. Both of these teams are going to have to be on top of their games to get out."

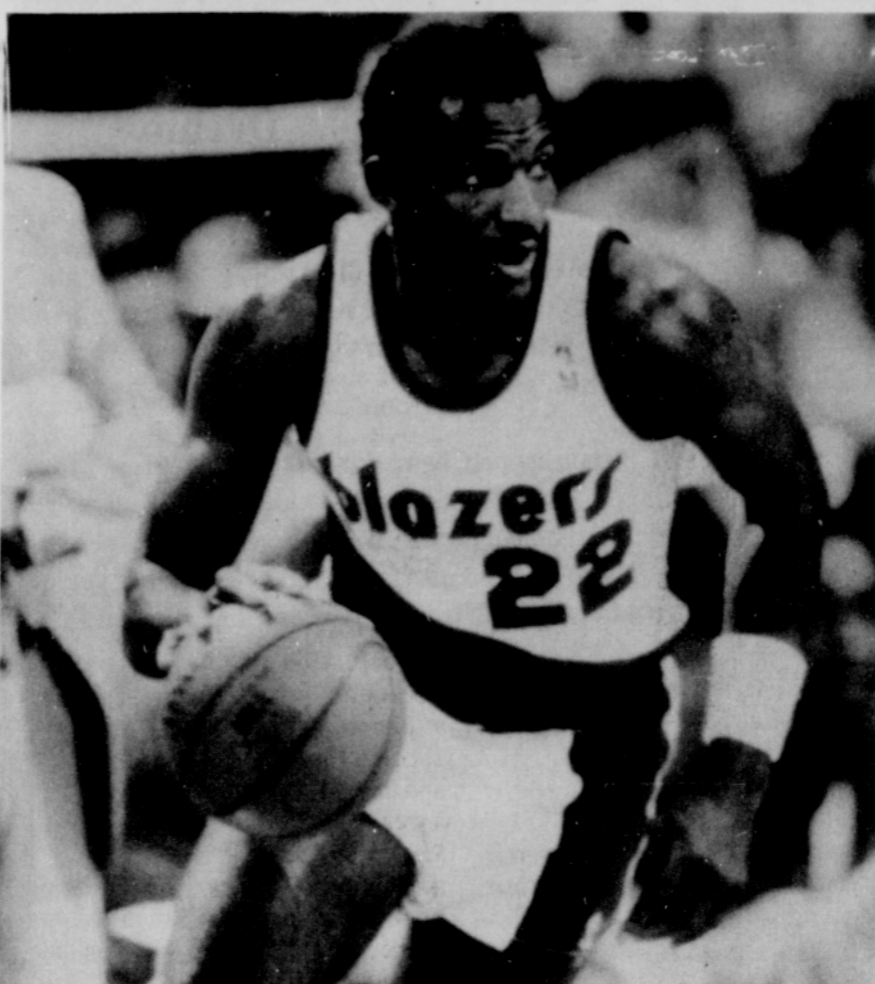
Portland Observer - So, what you are saying is that Portland does not have a prayer or chance to win the NBA title this year?

Jones - "No, they do have a shot. The difference is that they have to go through that experience of having been there. With the talent and season they've had, if everything broke perfect for them, then yes, they could be the winner out of the Western Conference. But that means no injuries, your matchups are perfect, you catch your opponents with a little doubt in confidence or lack of expression in their game, and that doesn't always happen in the playoffs.

If you use the Pistons as a yard stick in terms of graduation to the NBA finals, it usually takes a couple of appearances of the good teams to get out of the conference and into the championship round. The Trail Blazers have as much talent as anyone in the league. Their bench is better now, but they also have to have control of their game and their opponents in playoff situations. They have never done that . . ."

Portland Observer - Thanks, Steve Jones.

Jones - "My pleasure."



Congratulations . . . To Clyde Drexler Most Valuable Player, Portland Trail Blazers, Second Year Running

Peninsula Park Jamboree Underway

The Peninsula Park Jamboree commenced last Saturday with teams from NE Portland competing for The Little League Championship to be held during the summer. Ranging in ages eight-twelve years of age, the youth are encouraged to develop discipline and a winning tradition.

Coaches Terry Tims and Chuck Washington emphasizes a positive attitude which they attribute to 10 championships in 14 years.

The Jamboree boasts five major league teams and six minor league with one being featured each week by the Portland Observer.



Pictured left to right are: Rocco Washington, Dyon Spencer, Chuck Washington, Andre' Washington and Anthony Washington

NBA/Trail Blazer Scholarship Winners Announced

Four local high school seniors have been awarded \$1,000 scholarships by the Portland Trail Blazers and the National Basketball Association.

Rolanda Gaines (Gresham High School), Oona Hathaway (Lincoln High School), Kaia Sand (North Salem High School) and Jeffrey Stewart (The Dalles High School) were the recipients of the scholarships. Selection was based on a letter of recommendation from a faculty member, and essay of 500 words or less on the subject "The Importance of a College Education", appropriate SAT and ACT scores and high school transcripts. Over 300 students competed for the four scholarships.

Educator Merited by Portland Blazers

Karen McAllister, the vice-principal at Rex Putnam High School in Milwaukie, was announced as the recipient of a special "Educator of the Year" award at the Portland Trail Blazers MVP banquet, held last night at Memorial Coliseum.

McAllister received a special plaque and a check for \$500 as this year's honoree. The award is presented annually as part of the Blazer/AVIA Scholastic Improvement Concepts (BASIC) program.

The BASIC program was created in 1984 to help teachers motivate students and to encourage an increased recognition of the value of education amongst today's youth. "Karen McAllister was instrumental in helping establish the BASIC program" said Bill Dragon, chief executive officer of AVIA Athletic Footwear Company. "She origi-

nally approached the Trail Blazers about sponsoring an essay competition as a business/education partnership. The BASIC program evolved from her idea. Today, the program encompasses public and private schools throughout the state of Oregon and Southwest Washington."

Gaines, Hathaway, Sand and Stewart will be recognized during the pre-game portion of the Trail Blazer/Dallas Maverick game on April 13.

The Trail Blazers and the NBA have been involved in this special college scholarship program for the past ten years. Applications were reviewed by a special selection committee that included former players Geoff Petrie and Lloyd Neal, professor Arleigh Dodson of Lewis & Clark College, dr. Ernest Hartzog, assistant superintendent of Portland Public Schools, sports columnist George Pasero and Blazer Vice-President of Public Affairs, George Rickles.

Gaines, Hathaway, Sand and Stewart will be recognized during the pre-game portion of the Trail Blazer/Dallas Maverick game on April 13.

The Trail Blazers and the NBA have been involved in this special college scholarship program for the past ten years. Applications were reviewed by a special selection committee that included former players Geoff Petrie and Lloyd Neal, professor Arleigh Dodson of Lewis & Clark College, dr. Ernest Hartzog, assistant superintendent of Portland Public Schools, sports columnist George Pasero and Blazer Vice-President of Public Affairs, George Rickles.

Outstanding Students Merited

Over 42,000 students from public and private schools throughout the state of Oregon and Southwest Washington participated in this season's Blazer/AVIA Scholastic Improvement Concepts (BASIC) program activities.

The program, which annually kicks-off with the beginning of the school year, was created to help curb the large student drop-out rate. BASIC is sponsored by the Portland Trail Blazers and AVIA Athletic Footwear Company and presented by Seafirst Bank. Activities include three separate segments focusing on reading, writing and personal improvement. Trail Blazer players Clyde Drexler and Kevin Duckworth serve as BASIC program co-chairmen.

The "Improvement" segment targets students in grades one through 12. "Our primary goal with this segment is to help educators give students an extra pat on the back," says Wally Scales, program coordinator. "We divide the school year into four phases and offer teachers and counselors the opportunity to nominate two students per phase to receive special recognition. All nominated students receive special recognition certificates. Nominated students who live within a one and one-half hour driving radius of Portland have their names entered in a drawing to win two tickets to a Blazer home game; students who live outside this radius have the chance to win autographed Blazer memorabilia."

Phase IV of the "Improvement" segment generated 3,656 nominations. All total, over 20,000 students were nominated to receive special recognition certificates this school year. Close to 5,000 tickets to sold-out Blazer games were given away as part of this effort.

The "Reading Fitness" segment was conducted during the month of October and targeted students in grades four, five and six. The objective of this segment, according to Scales, was to help teachers encourage an increased interest in reading. Individual classrooms were challenged to compete against each other to see who could log the most leisure reading hours over a 30 day period.

More than 5,630 students participated, logging over 82,000 leisure reading hours. "Regional" and "Overall" winners were recognized for their effort. Every student received a special recognition certificate. The top "Regional" classrooms at each grade level earned a two volume set of the World Book of Space Exploration. The "Overall" winners each received a complete set of the World Book Encyclopedia for their classroom or school.

Top essay writers in the BASIC program "Write-On" segment were recently recognized at a special halftime ceremony during a Blazer home game at Memorial Coliseum in Portland. Over 17,000 students, grade one through 12, prepared essay entries based on this year's theme: "My Education Is Important To Me Because . . ." Participating schools selected their best essay entries for each grade level and passed them on to the local Education Service District (ESD) offices who selected the regional winners for their area. Grand prize winners, one per grade level, were determined by the Portland Council International Reading Association, who have been instrumental in helping to coordinate this program since it's inception.

Regional winners in the BASIC "Write-On" essay competition earned a two volume set of the World Book Dictionary. Grand prize winners won three tickets to a Blazer game, hotel accommodations, travel expenses, and a pre-game reception with player co-chairmen Clyde Drexler and Kevin Duckworth plus an assortment of other prizes.

To date, more than 245,000 students have participated in one or more segments of the BASIC program. Both the Oregon Department of Education and Education Service District 112 in the state of Washington have endorsed the BASIC program effort. BASIC has also received national recognition for excellence from the President's Private Sector Initiative Council, Family Circle magazine and the International Reading Association.

It is truly rare to find one who is interesting while talking; yet rarer still to find one who is interesting while silent.

Congratulations . . . Portland Trail Blazers On A Successful Season 1989-1990

with it but he's pretty good. He's also very opinionated and he lets you know how he feels."

Buck Williams - "He does have a little style. Steve is a classy guy."

So, there you have it on the style of Steve Jones. Be it dressing or broadcasting, Jones sets his own standards. It was reported last week by Kerry Eggers that Drazen Petrovic took the opportunity to beef up his wardrobe on a road to Philadelphia last month. With the help of Drexler, Cooper, and Williams, Petrovic proceeded to spend \$3,000 to get himself up to NBA standards. One Trail Blazer, who laughed as he asked not to be quoted on the record, wondered if Jones is a "shopping spree" candidate on the next road trip?

Dwight Jaynes, another old friend and sportswriter for the Oregonian put the Steve Jones style issue in its proper perspective.

"Steve has style. It's somewhere between Bobby Darren and Chuck Berry. He's in that time frame, somewhere. He doesn't seem to be real certain where he is in that frame but Steve is there. He's somewhere around 'rocking the clock' and the clock is set back in the '50s."

Back to you Steve . . .