

THE LOCKER ROOM

Kevin Duckworth: The Weakest Link?

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.
 "...My perception of Kevin Duckworth is that he is a very inconsistent player and if he screws up early in the game, he has a hard time getting it back together..." C.B. Blazer fan



Kevin Duckworth considered by some as the weakest starter for the Trail Blazers, goes up for a short jump shot. photo by Veronica Green

Basketball talk around Portland barber shops/restaurants these days is not centered around the current "Air vs Magic Show" going on tonight (KGW, 6PM/PDT) as one would think, it's centered around what the Portland Trail Blazers need to improve their fortunes as a team. One would think that there isn't much room to improve on a 63-19 record, but there is. Improvement in, on the court judgement when it comes to officials, free-throw shooting, and post play are imperative if they are to be contenders, as opposed to pretenders, for the NBA Title. Not many teams get far in the play-offs without effective post-up play or a legitimate inside player. Sure, you can argue the where abouts of David Robinson, Patrick Ewing, and Hakeem, but neither player had the full compliment of talent surrounding them to enhance their chances at a ring or the psychological toughness. The Portland Trail Blazers had the total package, but they lacked the top flight big man in the middle. Kevin Duckworth is a fine NBA center when it comes to shooting the outside shot and placing a body on the opposition, but blocking shots and striking fear in players hearts is not his forte. Any team that features a post-up game will give the Portland Trail Blazers and Kevin Duckworth big problems. Benoit Benjamin (Seattle Supersonics), Mark Eaton (Utah Jazz) and more recently, Sam Perkins of the L.A. Lakers caused all types of trouble for Duckworth. Benjamin blocked 13 shots in five games against the Blazers and Perkin's sweet left hand will probably be nightmare food for "Big Duck". Basketball is a team sport, but sometimes individual play can provoke headaches or turnovers. As a team, it's hard to see the Blazers getting better. What are they going to do next season, go 70-12?

If the Blazers are going to move forward as a team, it needs to be in the area of individual growth. For starters, Danny Young, a very decent human being and wonderful person, needs to be traded/waived in favor of a young point guard to be groomed behind starter Terry Porter. When "TP" is not in the game, the tempo slows down tremendously and most Blazer cold spells occur when he is not on the floor. Wayne Cooper needs to be retired and moved to the front office. It would be a waste to just waive him because his million dollar contract is guaranteed. Cooper would be good for the community, the team, and for the Public Relation office that took good shots on the chin during the play-offs in feuds over copyright. The Blazers have a great Media Relations/

Community Relations department, but PR practioners they are not. Timing is everything in Public Relations. Those spats should not have been made public and it eroded what little credibility the Blazers had with ticket hungry fans, who will be asked to shoulder some of the tax burden on a new arena. ALAA Abdelnaby could use up big minutes behind Duckworth or Buck Williams. He and both Mark Bryant can play center/big forward. Both could also improve the Blazers post-up game. Ask Los Angeles, who took 24 less shots from the field in game one, posting up gets your team to the free-throw line (28 of 34 compared to 14 of 18 for the Bulls), not jump shots. Walter Davis needs to either be blended in more effectively or traded to his home state, the Charlotte Hornets, who would benefit greatly from his experience and public relations value. He can still shoot the ball and staying in shape has never been a problem for him. Davis also has a guaranteed (\$900,000 annually) contract for next season. Freeing up a few roster spots investing in some younger talent can only make the Blazers better. As for the starters or the primary players, Jerome Kersey, Terry Porter,

Buck Williams, and Clyde Drexler are solid players. So are Cliff Robinson and Danny Ainge. Free-throw shooting is Robinson's only down fall; Clyde needs to use his jumper to set up his glides and not as a weapon; Terry needs to be more selfish at times and Buck, too, can do some summer free throw shooting in the backyard. He's the heart and soul of the team, followed by Jerome Kersey. Jerome Kersey? No problem. Just stay healthy. Now, at the center of attention in this version of the Locker Room is Kevin Duckworth, who is getting toasted all over town as the weakest link among the starters. He's called slow, too heavy, emotionally insecure as a player, and lacks the fire in his gut to be competitive on the NBA level. Kevin could do himself a favor by dropping 30 pounds and learning to focus more on the court. He can only make the team better with his development as a player. Rick Adlman can do himself a favor by visiting the "Wizard of Westwood (John Wooten of UCLA fame) this summer when he goes to California. There, he can learn how a half court game is played and about the patience his players need to run it effectively.

HAROLD REYNOLDS SAYS SUCCESSFUL BLACKS HAVE OBLIGATION TO HELP INNER-CITY YOUNGSTERS

Blacks who have escaped the ghetto to become successful businessmen have an obligation to give something back to the inner-city children, according to Harold Reynolds, the all-star second baseman for the Seattle Mariners.

"Too often, the only people openly courting these kids are gang leaders and drug dealers," Reynolds told a reporter who interviewed him for PARADE magazine. "It's the gang leaders that kiss these children on the cheek and tell them they love them. Sometimes they're the only ones showing our children they care."

Reynolds, who joined forces with Wane Perryman, founder of Role Models Unlimited, is doing what he can to help. In January, he sponsored a banquet for 1000 successful black businessmen in conjunction with Role Models. "I don't want your money, I want your time," he told them. "Our kids are shooting each other over Air Jordan sneakers, and your writing a check isn't going to stop them."

Recalling that 90 percent of the black athletes he has known were raised by their mothers, Reynolds said, "I was called a racist and a sexist because I invited only black men to the banquet. But I'm not saying women can't be role models. I'm saying they already are."



And more often than not, it's the white fathers that are coaching the kids' teams. Black men have to get involved. They need a better understanding of the word "commitment." These are their children too."

Last spring, Reynolds bought 2000 tickets to the Mariners' 1990 opening game and donated them to Role Models. In the course of the season, he has donated more than 8000 tickets to Role Models and other groups.

"My oldest brother, Don, played for the San Diego Padres when Dave Winfield was there," Reynolds explained. "I went to visit one summer when I was still in high school. I saw a sign in the stands that read the 'Winfield Pavilion.' I was told that Dave bought a section of seats every season and gave the tickets to kids who couldn't afford them."

"That was the moment I knew what I wanted to do with my life. I always knew I'd play in the majors, but that's when I realized it would only be a means to an end. Now I'm able to reach out, the same way Dave Winfield reached me."

Tryouts Scheduled for 1991-92 Blazer Dance Team

Tryouts for the 1991-92 Blazer Dance Team will take place on Saturday, July 13, 1991 at Lewis and Clark College gymnasium. Auditions will begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 5:00 p.m. Applications for the 1991-92 Blazer Dance Team are available at the Trail Blazer office. All dancers must be 19 years of age or older by November, 1991.

There will be two rounds of judging, featuring a basic routine and two dance combinations. Dancers will be judged on dance ability, enthusiasm and appearance. Those selected will return the next day for final auditions, also held at Lewis Clark College gymnasium.

For more information regarding the auditions, call the dance Team Hotline at 231-5275.

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 - III Session.....July 15-19, 1991
1:30-5:30.....ages 9-13
 - IV Session.....July 15-19, 1991
1:30-5:30.....ages 14-18

For more information call:
 Joel Schultheisz
 1-800-321-9371, Ext. 8516
 280-8516 (office)
 COST: \$90.00

Cousin's Share Spot On All Star Team



Karis J. Stoudamire and Erica N. Mashia are first cousins and both occupy a position on the states AAU Girls Basketball Team.

Karis J. Stoudamire and Erica Mashia both take the game of basketball seriously, both are exceeding in their academic achievement and both are looking forward to possible careers in basketball.

Erica is in the eighth grade at Ockley Green School, where her father Eric Mashia lends his assistance as her coach. She has played the game of basketball since third grade, where she receives encouragement and support from Tony Hapson and Ray Leary at the Matt Dishman Center. Erica recently received the Oregon Alliance of Black Educators award for Academic Excellence.

Last year she played on the Oregon State AAU All Star team in Springfield, Oregon and went on to the AAU tournament in Sheaveport, Louisiana and still further to the BCI tournament

in Lovett, Texas.

Her cousin Karis Jeaneese Anita Stoudamire is a freshman at St. Mary's Academy. She has played basketball since she was in the sixth grade. She has a strong support base at St. Mary's where her father Antoine Stoudamire is the assistant coach.

Karis sings in the Portland Symphonic Girls Choir and she also sings in the choir at New Hope Baptist Church where she is a member.

Eric and Karis will need funds to help them get to their tournaments this summer. If you can help, or know of any organizations, or individuals who would be interested in giving them their assistance, please call: (503) 285-3098 or 284-1717.

The girls are looking forward to a great summer season.

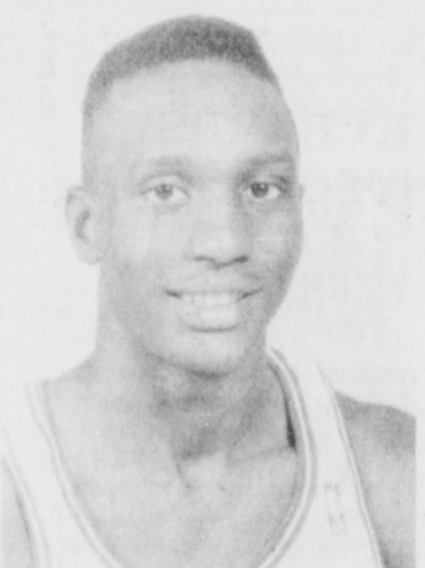
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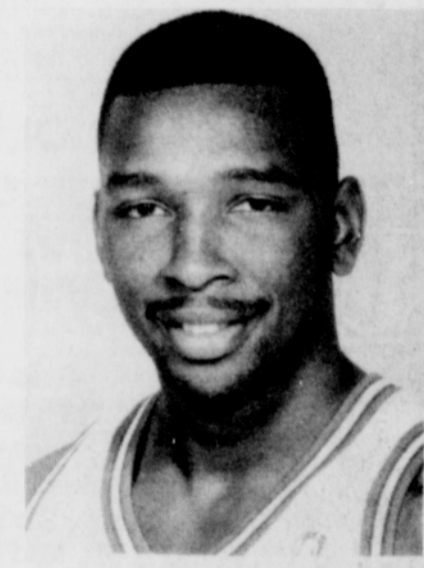
Call 288-9371 ext. 7137
 or 282-4495 or write:



DERRICK COLEMAN



DEE BROWN



LIONEL SIMMONS

COLEMAN, SIMMONS UNANIMOUS PICKS FOR NBA ALL-ROOKIE TEAM

New Jersey forward Derrick Coleman, voted as the 1991 Minute Maid Orange Soda NBA Rookie of the Year, and Sacramento forward Lionel Simmons, who ranked second behind Coleman among all rookies in scoring while leading his team in rebounding this season, were both unanimous choices for the 1991 NBA All-Rookie Team, as selected by the league's 27 head coaches.

Coleman and Simmons each received the maximum 52 points on 26 First Team votes from the coaches, who were asked to vote for All-Rookie First and Second Teams, regardless of a player's position, and who were not permitted to vote for players from their own team. Two points were awarded for a First Team vote and one for a Second Team vote.

Joining Coleman and Simmons on the First Team were Boston's Dee Brown (49 points), Charlotte's Kendall Gill (44), and Orlando's Dennis Scott (42).

Selected to the All-Rookie Second Team were Minnesota's Felton Spencer (35 points), Miami's Willie Burton (24), Sacramento's Travis Mays (23), Seattle's Gary Payton (22) and Denver's Chris Jackson (11).

The 6-10 Coleman, the No. 1 pick of the 1990 NBA Draft out of Syracuse, averaged 18.4 points and 10.3 rebounds per game, leading all NBA rookies in both departments and ranking 10th overall in the league in rebounding.

Simmons averaged 18.0 points, 8.8 rebounds and 4.0 assists per game for the Kings, ranking second among all rookies — behind Coleman — in scoring and rebounding, and third among first-year players in assists. The 6-8 forward was the seventh pick in the 1990 Draft.

Following are the complete voting results for the 1991 NBA All-Rookie First and Second Teams:

FIRST TEAM		
Player, Team	Points	Points
Derrick Coleman, New Jersey	52	52
Lionel Simmons, Sacramento	52	52
Dee Brown, Boston	49	49
Kendall Gill, Charlotte	44	44
Dennis Scott, Orlando	42	42
SECOND TEAM		
Player, Team	Points	Points
Felton Spencer, Minnesota	35	35
Willie Burton, Miami	24	24
Travis Mays, Sacramento	23	23
Gary Payton, Seattle	22	22
Chris Jackson, Denver	11	11

Other rookies receiving votes: Danny Ferry, 9 points; Cedric Ceballos and Duane Causwell, 7; Tyrone Hill and Negele Knight, 5; Alec Kessler and Lov Vaught, 4; Tony Smith and A.J. English, 3; Jerrod Mustaf, 2; Gerald Glass, 1.