

SPORTS

Everybody Has A Blazer Story

BY BILL BARBER

It seems like everybody you talk to has a story about the time they met one of the Portland Trail Blazers. Maybe it was in a restaurant, at the movies or at a talk they were giving at a local school. The wonderful thing about a city the size of Portland, is that sooner or later you are bound to see everybody who is anybody. The mayor, the governor, the TV pitchman, but especially the players on the hometown NBA team. The Blazer players all seem to be anxious to tell the sports writers that they're normal, "just folks" kinds of people. They live well, but none of them have a house full of servants. They go to the grocery and the dry cleaners just like everyone else. They go to restaurants, night clubs, and church like a lot of people; so it is not unlikely that someday you will have your own Trail Blazer story to tell. If you're like most people, it will come when you least expect it.

Just for fun let's pretend you saw one of the Trail Blazers in a restaurant. He is having one of those rare dine-out opportunities with his family between road trips. What would you do? You have seen him on TV. He seems as if he would be a pretty likeable guy. Being this close to what might be a long-time hero can be pretty exciting. What would you do? You have too much class to embarrass yourself and him by standing on your chair and yelling "Yo, come on over here to my table and let me talk to you." However, the temptation to get him to just say "Hi" is hard for any fan to resist.

The best way to handle the situation might be to mentally trade shoes with him before you make your next move. If you charge across the room with a napkin (you don't usually carry an autograph pad, an NBA action photo or a trading card with you) you'll probably catch him just as he takes a bit of

food. Besides, when everyone else in the restaurant sees you have disturbed the man who was trying to eat, they will flood the table. That is probably not how you want to be remembered. A good thing might be to wait until he finishes the meal. Better yet you might be able to catch him as he is headed out of the place. If you have the opportunity to talk to any of the Blazers when there are not a lot of people around, the odds of striking up a conversation are really on your side. Not that it will turn out to be a long-winded discussion on world events or the state of the nation. What do you say, now that you finally have the chance. When you first meet him, introduce yourself. Why? Remember everyone knows him and it is likely that he would like to know who he is talking to. Kevin Duckworth was once asked what was the worst mistake a fan can make when he meets a player? "Calling him by the wrong name" was his reply.

The easiest thing to do is just say what comes naturally...If you are a big fan, just say so. Everyone likes to have people tell them that they are doing a nice job where they work. On the other hand, most of us do not usually start a conversation by saying, "Let's talk about my job." Most of the players will admit that a large number of fans in Portland have a better handle on the Blazers stats than they do. Like most people, what Blazer players do for a living is only a part of what makes them interesting to talk to. Many Trail Blazer fans know where each of the players went to college. Some long-time fans even know about some of the things the hoopsters do off the court. Duckworth would rather talk to you about fishing poles than All-Star Polls. Did you know Duck is also a master woodworker? Maybe you have seen Terry Porter or Jerome Kersey speak at the Boys and Girls Club. Clyde

Drexler may have spoken to one of your children at school as part of the Blazer/Avia BASIC program. Speaking of children, the reason your kids might be wearing their safety belts in the car lately, is that they heard Mark Bryant talking about it at one of his "Buckle-up" seminars. It is Bryant's personal way of honoring his good friend Ramon Ramos. Ramos was injured in a career halting car accident last season. You don't always hear about Danny Ainge's work with the Children's Miracle Network at the Dornbecker Hospital, but it means a lot to him. Danny is always the best one to ask: "What is the hottest Blazer T-shirt? Buck Williams is always glad to talk about his work with March of Dimes. Maybe you know someone who benefited by the "Toy & Joy" project that Wayne Cooper works with. Ask Rick Adelman about Project Graduation.

What about autographs? Most of the players interviewed mirrored the sentiments of Alaa Abdelnaby and Kevin Duckworth who said, "If I had my choice I'd rather talk to a person for a few minutes and get to know a little about them, than have them run up to me with a pen and a piece of paper and run right away." Danny Ainge spoke for many others on the team when he offered, "I hope the fans understand if we don't sign before the game. Like them (fans) it's time to start our work day."

"We have to focus on our game (during the pre-game practice). We want to do our best. We are there to entertain, and make it an enjoyable night for all the fans," said Alaa Abdelnaby.

The Portland Observer's secret tip for the best place and time to meet a Blazer: After Practice (1:00 p.m.) outside the Lewis & Clark College Athletic Building. Shhhh...It will be our secret. Good Luck.

Olympics Force Change In Trail Blazers Television Schedule

BBS's coverage of the 1992 Winter Olympics has necessitated a change in the Trail Blazers television schedule. Blazer Broadcasting will now air Portland's game at Dallas on Thursday, February 6, in place of Portland at Phoenix on Wednesday, February 12. The game will be carried live on the Trail Blazer Television Network beginning at 5:30 p.m. Portland time. These changes do not affect the Trail Blazer Satellite Radio Network.

1992 Spring Training Schedule Begins March 5

The 1992 exhibition season begins Thursday, March 5 with three games scheduled for Florida, Major League Baseball announced January 7.

To begin the spring schedule, the Los Angeles Dodgers and Atlanta Braves will face off at West Palm Beach, the Pittsburgh Pirates will travel to Sarasota to meet the Chicago White Sox and the Kansas City Royals play host to Central Florida University. The schedule goes into full swing the following day.

The Baltimore Orioles will train at Twin Lakes Park in Sarasota and play their home games at Al Lang Stadium in St. Petersburg.



Blazer guard Clyde Drexler is averaging about 25 points per game this season and is one of the leading vote getters in this year's balloting for the NBA All-Star game held in February. The Blazers will host the Charlotte Hornets Friday at the Memorial Coliseum

KPTV 12 Launches Yearlong 'Celebrate America' Campaign

1992 promises to be a year of extraordinary rejoicing and rededication. It is a year that not only carries the excitement of both the summer and winter Olympics, but also showcases the drama of the democratic process as a candidate is elected to office of President of The United States.

With this in mind, KPTV has proudly announced the most comprehensive station promotion in their history, CELEBRATE AMERICA. This multi-faceted campaign is based upon

the celebration of life in this great country, its history, its achievements and its potential. KPTV will conduct the year-long campaign in the tradition of their two previously successful community service campaigns, FOR KIDS' SAKE (1986-87) and TIME TO CARE (1988-90). KPTV will CELEBRATE AMERICA with five prime time specials; daily spots promoting patriotism through sports, democracy and the American people; a unique school program that involves teachers and students in the

campaign; special community projects; news features; a family vacation sweepstakes and more.

Watch for announcements in 1992 as KPTV keeps you informed of the CELEBRATE AMERICA projects both on the air and in our community.

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Home improvement loans are available at 0%, 3% or 6% interest, depending on your income — probably the best rates in town. You may qualify to borrow up to \$12,500 from the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and show your neighborhood pride by making your home and neighborhood an even better place to live.

Your chances of qualifying for one of these City loans are good if:

- You own the home you are now living in
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- Your household's annual income falls below a certain level

You'll see "Neighborhood Pride" signs in neighborhoods where the loans are available: Piedmont, Woodlawn, Concordia, Sabin, Eliot, Boise, Humboldt, King and Vernon.



Before and after photos of a successful home repair loan project — one more family showing neighborhood pride.

"Great Program! A golden opportunity for those of us who qualify. I could not have afforded the work without your help. Thanks!"
— A N.E. Homeowner

To find out if you qualify for one of these loans or if you'd like a Neighborhood Pride sign, please call PDC's Eastside Neighborhood Housing Preservation Office at 823-3400 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We'll answer your questions. Remember, City funds are limited for this program, so call today to begin enjoying the benefits of your home repairs.

PDC is the City's agency for urban renewal, housing and economic development. The home repair loan program is funded through a federal Community Development Block Grant administered by the Bureau of Community Development.

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However you do it, do it by the 18th. Because he who laughs first, laughs last.



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