

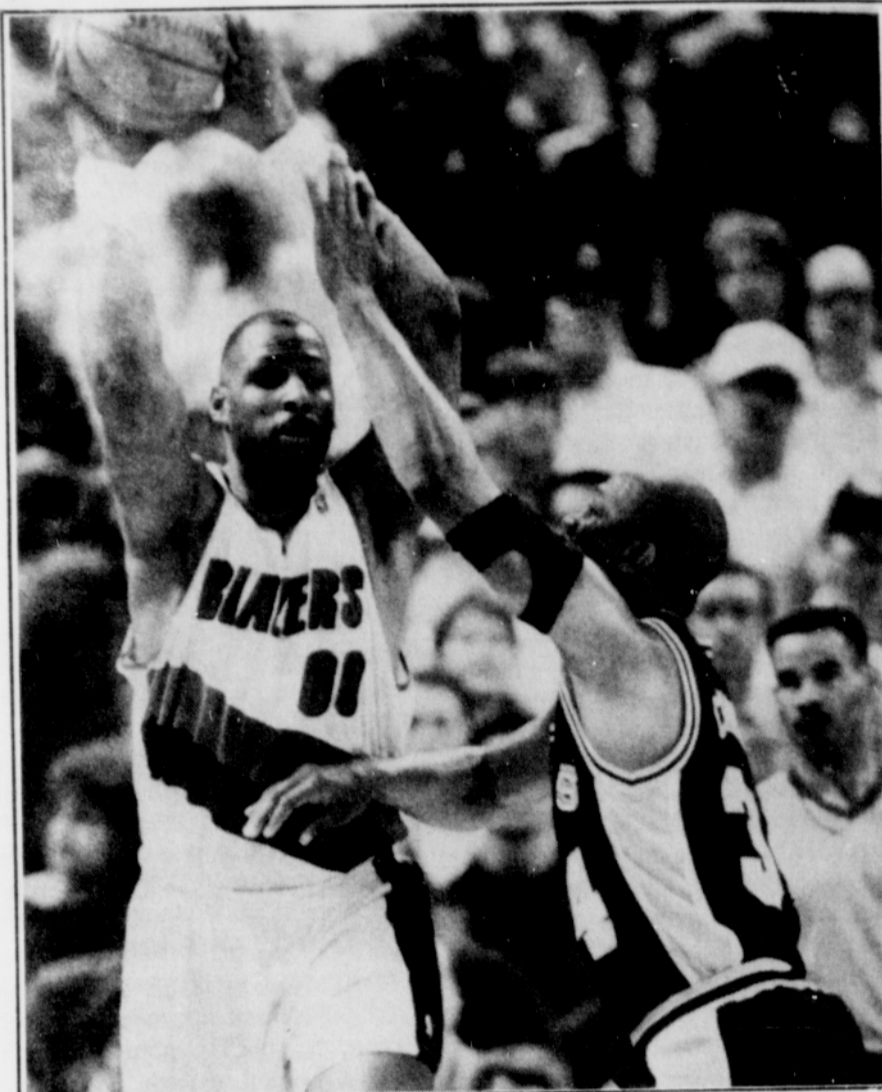
Blazers Win Pacific Division (again), Ho-Hum

BY BILL BARBER

There are only about a dozen Portland residents who were surprised to hear that news (and they just moved here from California this year). Portland fans did not need to be clairvoyant or visit a psychic. They have seen this coming for a long time. It was almost anti-climatic on Sunday. Duckworth's performance was certainly not anti-climatic; there's no doubt he's ready for the playoffs.

"My rookie year we went to the finals" said Cliff Robinson after Portland's thunderous defeat of San Antonio (123-97) Sunday afternoon. "It was my first year and I wasn't really comfortable with what was going on." He continued, "Last year I played well and this year I'm really looking forward to it. We didn't accomplish what we wanted to last year. This year, the whole team has the resolve that they don't want to go back into the playoffs and have the same thing happen again. We are playing well right now. We're going to the boards, moving the ball and playing together. As long as we continue to play together, we are going to hard to beat."

Pacific Division champs! - No champagne - No "We're Number 1." The attitude of the players and coaches in the locker room was just business-like. They were all saying the same thing. "It's only the first step on our list of goals." It wasn't rehearsed that everyone on the team should sound like a pet shop full of parrots. That is simply THE common attitude of a group of determined men, whose goals were chiseled in stone after the last loss of the 1991-92 season. The really interesting thing about that attitude, is that



Kevin Duckworth shows he has what it takes to advance beyond Pacific Division Champ to winning the national playoffs.

you could see it in the faces of the fans as they exited Memorial Coliseum on Sunday afternoon.

The current attitude is not a new phenomenon. In interviews and informal chats throughout the season, it became abundantly clear that everyone

associated with the Portland Trail Blazer team had the same "Get the job done" outlook. I don't think any team in the Western Conference is looking forward to a match-up with the Blazers right now. they're hot! When it comes to overall balance, Portland has to be the

most feared team in the NBA. San Antonio's Sean Elliott said after Sunday's humiliation, "The Blazers are the best team in the conference and maybe the deepest team in the whole league." The Spurs head coach Bob Bass agreed saying "The Blazers are the best team out there."

Balance is always a key in a championship team. Every team in the league has a Superstar or two. Basketball fans all over the country are familiar with the Trail Blazers starting line up. In Portland we are fortunate to have a bench that could probably start on the majority of teams in the NBA. Not just because of their talent; it's the intangibles. They play with a lot of heart, determination, and a team concept that a lot of players forget after college when the big bucks of the NBA start rolling in. they're all playing in their prime ... even if they haven't reached it ... or they're a little beyond it. Everytime they come off the bench, and the other team thinks they will get a little breather because the "Big Boys" have sat down; but the bench comes on to play their precious few minutes like they're two points behind with only 10 seconds to play! Anyone who has ever played the game will tell you, "You can't beat a team like that."

Wayne Cooper, a Portland crowd favorite said, "After 14 years in the league, the thing that you want most is a championship. That is what you are going to remember when it's all over. You won't forget the great games that you had, or the special moments of winning the Western Conference, but winning the championship would be the best thing for me, considering the years it took to do it." We are all in agreement, Coop.

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Bank Of America and Blazers Team Up For United Negro College Fund

The United Negro College Fund is hoping that a lot of people would like to have the Trail Blazers hanging around their house. Why? Because Bank of America and the Portland Trail Blazers have joined forces with the United Negro College Fund to offer "The Playmakers", a series of five limited-edition collector prints of the Blazers with all proceeds going to UNCF.

Each of the 7" x 18" color lithographs features one of the Blazers' starting five (Clyde Drexler, Terry Porter, Kevin Duckworth, Buck Williams and Jerome Kersey), and they are available at any Bank of America branch location in Oregon. The more accounts you have with Bank of America the lower the price of the prints.

"This project is an exciting one to work with because it has such an Oregon flavor," said Adrienne Caver, area development director for UNCF. "The Blazers are Oregon's team and with 65

Bank of America branches throughout the state it makes it a real grass roots fund-raising effort. In addition, a portion of the proceeds raised from these prints will go to Oregon scholars."

The UNCF raises funds to help its 41 member colleges and universities provide high-quality, low-cost education to over 50,000 students who come from all 50 states. Most UNCF students have great hurdles to overcome and more than 90% require financial assistance. More than half come from families earning less than \$14,000 annually. Funds contributed to UNCF help provide tuition assistance for students and for colleges' day-to-day operations, new textbooks and laboratory equipment.

Nationally recognized artist Mark Herman is the designer of the prints. Herman has developed art for CBS Sports, the 1988 Olympics and the U.S. Open.

Blazer Broadcasting To Air Third Prime Time Special

The Trail Blazers will wrap up their highly successful 1991-92 regular season with a 60-minute prime time special entitled "Blazer Trail...The Second Season," scheduled to air Tuesday, April 21 at 8:00 p.m. on KOIN-TV. Blazers fans in Medford and Grants Pass can also view the special on TCI cable. Residents of the Eugene-Springfield area can see the special on "Oregon's Fox," KLSR-TV.

The show will be hosted by Bill Schonely. Game action highlights will center on how the Blazers fared from the NBA All-Star Game through the end of the regular season. Pat Lafferty gives viewers an inside look at life on the road in the NBA. Steve Jones will pay a visit to the Ainge household as Danny discusses the importance of family. The team is active in a number of community service projects and fans will see what kind of impact the Trail Blazers are having on the Boys and Girls Clubs of Portland.

Mike Rice goes one-on-one with coach Rick Adelman, as they take a look back at the second half of the regular season and a look forward to what the upcoming playoffs may hold for the Trail Blazers. Jones pairs with Rice as the two analysts dissect the last half of the regular season and preview what may be in store for the NBA Playoffs.



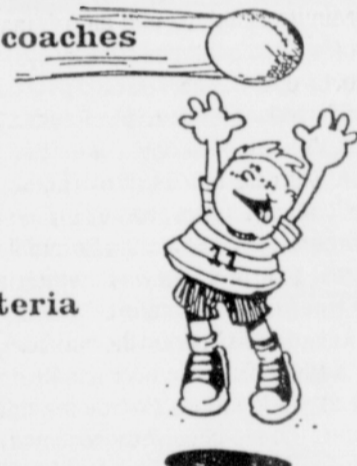
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