

SPORTS

BLAZERS REWARD KIDS

BY ERIC NOON

How do four small town high school teenagers become the most popular kids in school overnight?

They win tickets to last Tuesdays Portland Trailblazer game against the Seattle SuperSonics in the packed Memorial Coliseum.

The four students from Dayton High School were presented with tickets through the B.A.S.I.C. (Blazer, Avia, Scholastic, Improvement, Concepts) program.

This small school in Dayton, Oregon, with an enrollment of around 225 students held an all school assembly to present the winning students with the tickets.

In a time were Blazer tickets are in high demand, the BASIC program rewards high school students from around the state for their efforts in the classroom.

Based on improvement the Blazers and Avia reward certificates of

achievement to students with significant improvement in a number of different area depending on the individual student.

Random names are then drawn by the Blazers from the pool of students who received improvement certificates presented by the teachers.

The four students from Dayton High (Jerry Evan, Mary Street, Jason Uwing and Bruce Smith) were emotionally overjoyed by the experience.

They seemed proud not only of their accomplishments, but to have the chance to represent their small community tucked into the scenic highway between Newberg and McMinnville.

The looks in their eyes expressed feelings of excitement and accomplishment. Although they seemed a little intimidated by the capacity crowd, the reasons for being there were not far from memory.

"I was doing horrible in school,"

said 15 year old Mary Street. "Then I just turned it around."

With the concept of BASIC focused on improvement, grades were not always the area of achievement. Just making it to school on a regular basis is improvement for some.

"Jason missed a lot of school," said Heather Toller one of the two teachers accompanying the winners. "Now Jason makes it to school almost everyday."

Some of the kids got to meet the program player representative Blazer Clyde Drexler before the game.

"I really enjoy seeing the kids and talking with the parents when I can," said the proud Drexler. "It's really a tribute to the Blazers and Avia for making this possible."

Although the kids from Dayton didn't get to see Drexler in action due to injury, they witnessed the best game of the season.

The Blazers dominated the game from tip-off and led by as many as 28 points in the second half against the best team in the league before cooling off for a 108-99 victory.

This program just shows another example of how sports can have a positive link of influence with today's children.

The positive relationship between athletics and education is going to continue to be a hot issue as the money for schools keeps dwindling throughout the state.

With the "Stay in School" program and others like BASIC the NBA is finding routes to influence today's children the importance of education.

I not only met four winners of tickets to the Trailblazers game last week, but I met four winners in the game of life for understanding that education can give them a winning record.

The Name Of The Game Is Changing

...At least as far as city parks are concerned. Formerly known as the Portland Bureau of Parks, the city has changed that moniker to Portland Parks and Recreation.

"The reason for the title change is to leave the public with a better first impression and to more accurately reflect the character of the organization" explains Director Charles Jordan. "The term bureau sounds like a cold, faceless office, but that is not who we are. We work with Portlanders to insure that they get the most out of their leisure time. Our staff design fun, healthy and educational activities for people of all ages and work hard to maintain areas of solitude and beauty. We think that focusing on the words Parks and Recreation in our

title expresses that a little better."

Another aspect of the change is that it follows current professional standards. Until now, Portland's was one of the few remaining park departments that did not incorporate the word recreation in its title. The change will bring the organization in line with other agencies throughout Oregon and the nation.

The policy will take effect immediately and is already reflected in spoken references and printed materials. Residents will still see the old title at various parks around the city however. In order to keep costs down and reduce waste, the department decided not to change them until they are in need of replacing.

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