

# SPORTS

## Blazers Send Drexler To Houston

By ERIC NOON

The Portland Trail Blazers made the biggest trade in franchise history last week, trading Clyde Drexler and Tracy Murray to the Houston Rockets for power forward Otis Thorpe, 1993 second-round draft pick Marcelo Nicola and a conditional 1995 draft pick.

For Drexler, the trade was a dream come true.

Not only did Drexler get his wish to be traded to a team in contention for a championship, he's reunited with his old college teammate, Hakeem Olajuwon and back in Houston with his family.

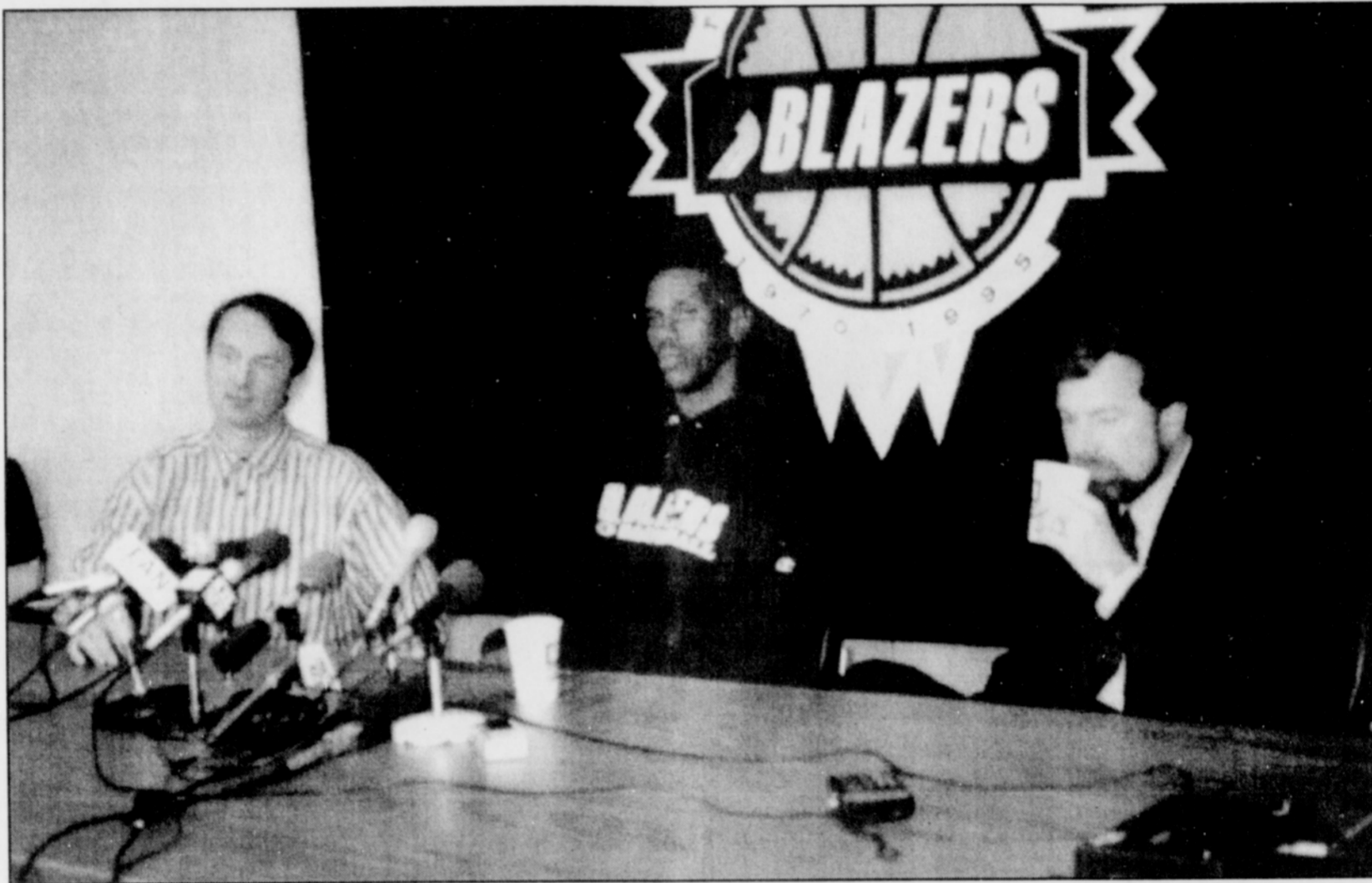
Drexler's contributions to the franchise are remarkable and in the same note his contributions also led to his departure. Drexler felt he wasn't treated fairly by management and his contributions to the organization weren't appreciated.

"It was the nature of the beast at the time," said Blazer radio play-by-play announcer Bill Schonley. "Clyde wanted to move on and it's time for this franchise to move on."

And Shonz went on to say, "and whatever trade Bob (Whitsitt, general manager) does I think it's going to benefit the franchise down the line."

Whitsitt claims he made the trade with Houston in recognition of Drexler's contributions to the team over the years. Not the case, Trader Bob had his back against the wall with Drexler demanding a trade and got the best player he could for Drexler and by chance it happened to be Houston.

Championships have dominated conversations between Drexler and Olajuwon for years now. Sure a lot of these folks focused on the one chance



Trail Blazer General Manager Bob Whitsitt (from left) newly acquired forward Otis Thorpe, and coach P.J. Carlesimo at a press conference following the trade of Clyde Drexler. (Photo by Eric Noon)

that slipped away in the 1983 NCAA title game against North Carolina State.

Many of those exchanges between the longtime friends undoubtedly surrounded the thought that some day they could win the big one together.

"I've learned how to lose. Now I want to learn how to win the big

one," said the anxious eight-time all-star Drexler.

It's probably pretty safe to assume that Olajuwon put in a good word with management for the Drexler trade, knowing his talent and what he could bring to the Rockets as they try to defend their NBA title.

"Clyde, he's a professional," Olajuwon said. "You always know

what to expect of him. He's a worker every night."

Drexler and Murray had to wait a little extra longer to play in their first game as Rockets as Thorpe had to pass his physical in Portland before the trade was finalized. They sat on the Rocket bench for the first half until the trade went through last Thursday.

"I was jumping up and down, the coaching staff was very happy, the players were all hugging," Drexler said, of the half-time announcement. "It was great, and it's a great feeling to be wanted."

I'm happy for Drexler and Murray being able to go where they can contend for a championship, but just like it feels good to be wanted, it also

feels sad to miss someone.

Drexler was nothing but a class act in all my interactions with the humble Blazer. Drexler had a huge amount of success as a Blazer and this truly was his town. More important than his success on the court was his achievements off the court as a quality person and dedicated family man.

Murray was also a talented player and got lost in the shuffle as a player, but not as a person. Murray kept his head up and worked hard and now it's going to pay off for the young man who never got a fair shake as a Blazer.

Losing Drexler in this trade will hurt the team in many ways as Drexler did so many things for the team with his all-around play. On the other hand, the team needs to move on and play some of the young guns of the future, like James Robinson and Aaron McKie, who will lead this team into the new Rose Garden next year.

Otis Thorpe (32) isn't exactly young, but he brings a lot of skills to the court and can score in the paint, something the Blazers have been lacking for years.

"Well, like I always said, I like to take one game at a time," said the new Blazer, as he got acquainted with his new locker room. "Anything can happen and that's my attitude, that's been my attitude, and that always is going to be my attitude."

Not only did the Blazers get one of the best power forwards in the game, the Blazers got a man who knows how to win and brings a winning attitude night in and night out.

There's good players, there's great players and there's winners and in Thorpe I think Portland has not only a great player, they have a winner.

## Benson Falls Short To Cleveland

By DANNY BELL

The Cleveland Warriors, the PIL's also runs this year, sent the state's number one team reeling to its first defeat of the season, 59-58.

An exciting fourth quarter rally saw Benson's 11 point lead evaporate in the last six minutes of the game.

Senior Leonard Prescott, who scored all 20 of his points in the second half, made a five-foot jumper to register the upset victory. Cleveland outscored Benson 18-8 in the final period and brought their win-

ning record to 15-5 overall and 11-5 in league. They will face Marshall and Roosevelt in their last two games of the season.

"We haven't beaten any of the ranked teams in our league and I kept telling the kids they needed to beat one of them if they expected to be anything more than just a so-so team," said Cleveland coach Tom Beatty, who was bouncing around like a Mexican jumping bean amid the throng of players and fans when the game ended.

"The kids really stepped up and

played their hearts out," Beatty said.

Prescott, who scored the team's last seven points, commented, "this should show the rest of the state we're a championship-caliber team."

Senior guard Gary Burks scored 14 points to lead the Techmen, whose record now stands at 19-1 and 15-1.

"It's hard to keep (an unbeaten season) going especially in this league," said coach Don Emry of Benson. "We've had several games we might have lost but we made the big plays to win the game at the end, we just didn't get the big plays here."

The game was close until late in the third quarter when Benson went on a 9-0 run to gain a comfortable lead at 50-39. That margin came with 6:49 left in the game as Benson's Edward Lincoln connected for two free throws.

Then, Prescott, a 6-1" guard, hit from the field and senior forward Gabe Stewart stole a pass, drove the floor and was fouled in the course of scoring. He made the free-throw which ignited the home crowd. The score now was 52-48, Benson.

The Techmen had numerous

opportunities to win the game but weren't able to take advantage of them. They were only 1-12 from the field and six for eight from the free-throw line in the final quarter.

Benson's last lead came on two free throws from Earl Clark, which made it 59-57 with 1:12 remaining in the game. But Prescott responded with two from the field. Clark missed a tough shot on the inside and his pass to Steve Franklin went awry with three seconds left in the game - and that was it.

## Cougars Blast Ducks

By DANNY BELL

The scuttlebutt before the game by both sides was that it might be an important game, but it wasn't a pivotal game.

A win or loss for Oregon wasn't going to determine the rest of the season or jeopardize their first ever NCAA tournament appearance in 34 years.

However, after a 76-59 shellacking by Washington State on Oregon's home court, a rude awakening dawned on the Ducks. Facing ranked Arizona and Arizona State this weekend (to put it mildly) is an uphill battle, if they're going to keep their playoff hopes alive.

Oregon's performance wasn't exactly NCAA tournament caliber as they shot a dismal 29.1 percent from the floor (21 of 72) and 9.5 percent from 3-point range (2 of 21).

"A big surprise to me," said UO Coach Jerry Green. "I really don't know what to tell you. I think this is the worst basketball game we played all year. We probably haven't done anything like this at home since our first year."

Before 10,086 fans, Oregon played too jittery and too much in a hurry, missing 20 of their first 24 shots. That dug them an early and

deep hole from which to extricate themselves.

"The heat was on them, more than it was on us," Washington State Coach Kevin Eastman said.

Mark Hendrickson, the Cougars' standout power forward, said WSU fed off the crowd's noise and challenged the student section during the warm-ups.

"It kind of got us motivated," Hendrickson said. "I think we kind of surprised them (Oregon) with the intensity we came out with. A lot of teams come in here and get scared. If you act intimidated in this place, they'll really get on you."

Oregon played such a lackluster game that Eastman spoke in defense of the Jerry Green program.

"It's already been a (great) year for Oregon," he said. "I hope one game for the local people doesn't take away from some tremendous accomplishments already gathered."

The Ducks, trailing by as many as 15 points in the first half, went into the break down, 35-23. Oregon made one mini-run to pull within nine, but the Cougars were able to respond and extend their lead to 24.

"There's a lot of ways to take the crowd out of a game. First, no three's, the

place explodes after a three. And no high energy plays," was how he explained coming into MacArthur Court and dominating No. 19-ranked Oregon.

The tell of the tape was just as disappointing. The Ducks' box was a disaster. Starting forward Darryl Porter was 1 for 8 from the field. Forward Jeff Potter followed suit with 2 for 8. The Ducks' leading scorer Orlando Williams was 2 for 9 and point guard Kenny Wilkins, who plays an important role in their offense was 2 for 11 with 3 assists.

That's a recipe for failure when four of the starting five are 7 for 36 from the field.

"Our offense just wasn't clicking tonight, said Damon Runyon of Oregon. "We came out flat. This was an important game we needed to win and these guys feel pretty depressed. But what I love about this team is the fact we'll use this as motivation and just work that much harder."

Said Green, "no excuses. WSU deserved to win. They were the better team. They were really ready to play, mentally and physically."

Oregon was sitting on top of the bubble for an NCAA bid. Has the bubble burst? Stay tuned, stranger things have happened.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Drexler, Walton Lead In Vote

Bill Walton and Clyde Drexler led all vote-getters in balloting for the Blazers' Legendary Line-up and Sweepstakes, presented by Bank Of America.

More than 23,000 votes were cast throughout Oregon as fans and members of the media were asked to select their 100 all-time favorite Blazers players and coach in honor of the team's 25th Anniversary season.

The following players comprise the Blazers' Legendary Line-up: Bill Walton and Mychal Thompson, centers; Maurice Lucas, Buck Williams, Calvin Natt and Sidney Wicks, forwards; Clyde Drexler, Geoff Petrie, Terry Porter and Jim Paxson, guards; and Jack Ramsay, coach.

The players and coach have been invited to attend the Blazers' home game against the Seattle SuperSonics on Friday, March 24 where they will be formally introduced at a special halftime ceremony.

### Athletes Sought

Oregon's Columbia chapter of Special Olympics has launched preparations for the spring sport season and is recruiting athletes for 8 to 10 training programs in four sports to start in late February and early March. Gymnastics, powerlifting, track and field and volleyball coaches are also being sought. Interested athletes and coaches should call 230-1146 for more information.



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