

SPORTS

Blazers Open Season

By ERIC NOON

With change comes uncertainty and for the 1995-96 Trail Blazers, the outcome of its many changes can only be tested as the team tries to rebuild on the run.

Gone are the faces Drexler, Kersey, Porter, Bryant, Edwards and Henson. And who's next to finish their career with a new team? Change is good, but for a while it's going to be hard to judge the results.

Over the summer, the NBA had a contact dispute that almost disbanded the players union. The league locked out the players and contract between players, general managers and coaches was put in limbo. Bob Whitsitt and his staff found enough time after the settlement to sign the Blazers three draft picks. Randolph Childress of Wake Forest is a 6-2 guard who essentially was what the Blazers ended up with after the dust settled from Drexler deal to Houston last winter. Gary Trent of Ohio University was acquired by a draft day trade and the 1986 draft choice Arvydas Sabonis, the 7-3 Lithuanian, finally signed with the team.

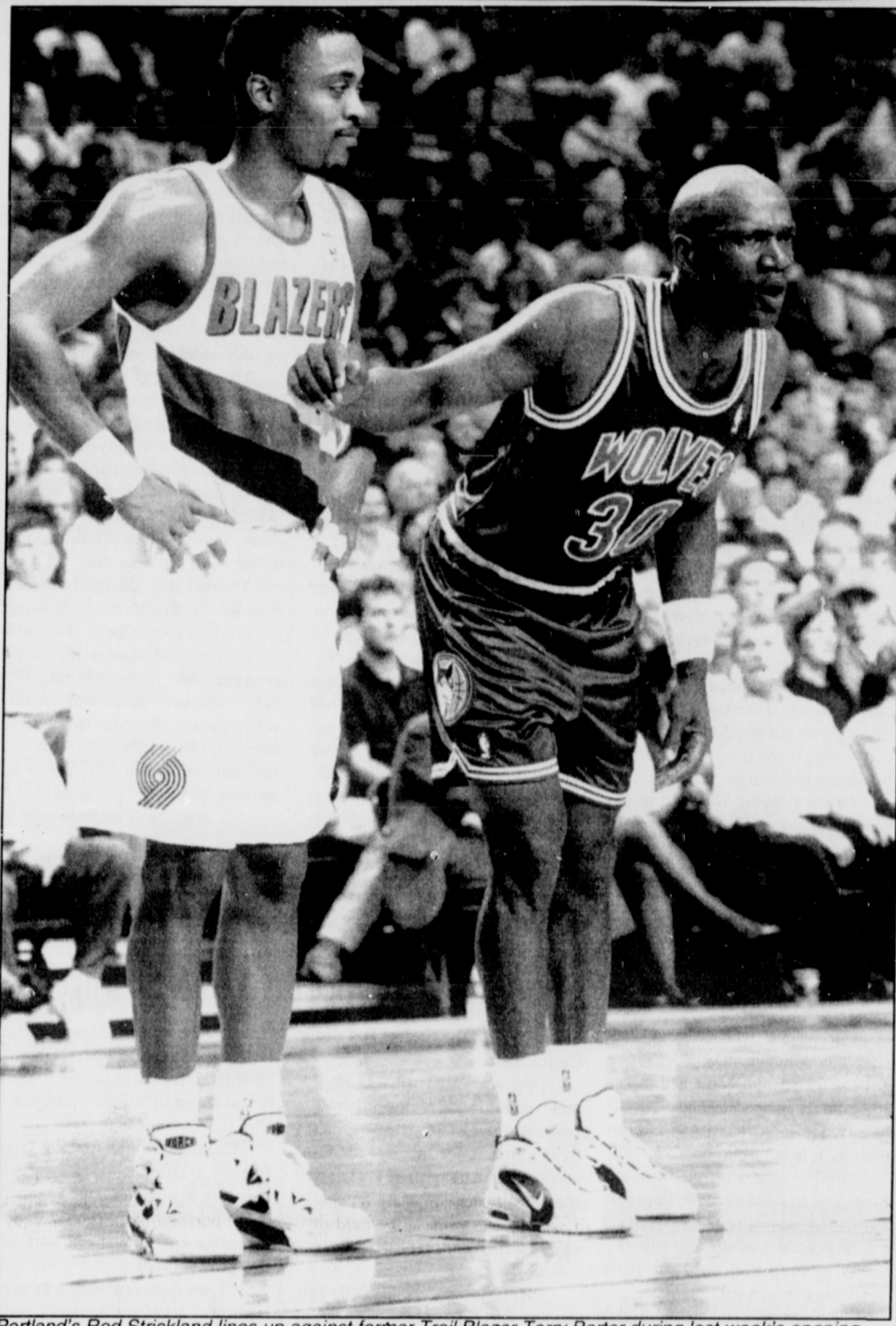
Last year's Blazers had problems with consistency and effort, but had the talent to win more games and possibly go further than the first round of the playoffs, which capped coach P.J. Carlesimo's first year.

This year's squad with the new Rose Garden and the new faces should play harder and give the fans plenty to cheer about, but the fans are in for a long season with the team possibly losing more games than they win.

The Los Angeles Lakers rebuilt their franchise fast and they even had a losing season. Blazer fans can expect this team to give some quality effort.

Sabonis is one of the biggest names in international basketball over the past 16 years and was considered the best player in Europe in the mid 1980s. If he can stay healthy and that's a very big if, the Blazers have a good shot at the playoffs. The 31-year-old rookie has some serious talent and it just's a shame we couldn't get him over here sooner.

Sabonis doesn't run the court real smooth, but at 7-3 with hands like a guard, he has a wide array of offensive skills. One of his best weapons could be passing and a



Portland's Rod Strickland lines up against former Trail Blazer Terry Porter during last week's opening night of the new Rose Garden arena. Porter was released by the Blazers during the off season.

(Photo by Michael G. Halle)

good passing center can make a lot of players get a whole lot better real quick.

Trent looks to be a solid forward for the future. The question is if the 6-8, 21-year-old can step up and play power forward in the NBA after dominating that position in college.

Childress was a prime time guard in college and once scored 107 points in three games in an Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament. At 6-2 he

becomes Portland's next big test at point guard after James Robinson had little success filing in for Rod Strickland last year. Childress brings Portland shooting and gamesmanship. This man wants the ball and wants to shoot and the good thing about that is the it goes in.

The Blazers are not real deep on the bench and players like the rookies and James Robinson will have to step

up their games for the Blazers to be competitive for 48 minutes. Look for Harvey Grant to play some off-guard, a position he's not comfortable with, during the early part of the season.

Strickland and Clifford Robinson are Portland's go to guys and for the Blazers to be able to rebuild on the run with any success, these two players will have to step into more of a leadership role than in the past.

Drexler, McDonald's Tourney MVP

Even without superstar center Hakeem Olajuwon, the two-time champion Houston Rockets had no problems maintaining the NBA's dominance of the McDonald's Championship.

The Rockets cruised to a 126-112 victory over Buckler Bologna of Italy Saturday in the championship

game at London Arena. Clyde

Drexler led the Rockets with 25 points and 10 assists to earn tournament Most Valuable Player honors.

Sam Cassell scored 23 points in 22 minutes off the bench and Chucky Brown added 22 points on 10-of-13 shooting from the field for the Rock-

ets.

Former NBA player Orlando Woolridge led Buckler Bologna with 34 points and set a tournament record with 91 points. Arjan Komazec had 21 points for Buckler Bologna.

The Rockets held a 64-57 half-time lead and increased the advantage to 96-77 after three quarters.

Houston's win marked the seventh time in as many McDonald's tournaments that an NBA team has won the championship.

The Rockets were the first reigning champions from the NBA to play in the event, which featured six title-winning clubs from around the world.

Kersey Joins Adelman At Golden State

The Golden State Warriors have signed former Blazer forward Jerome Kersey to a one-year contract and waived former Blazer forward-center Alaa Abdelnaby.

The 33-year-old Kersey played 11 years for Portland and will be reunited with former Blazers coach Rick Adelman, who was named Warriors head coach during the summer.

Kersey was selected by Toronto last June in the NBA expansion draft,

but was released by the Raptors in October due to salary cap limitations.

Kersey totaled more than 10,000 points and 5,000 rebounds with the Trail Blazers. He ranks among Portland's all-time leaders in 15 categories, including games played (831), points (10,067), rebounds (5,708), blocks (622), steals (1,059) and assists (1,762). Kersey has career averages of 12.1 points and 6.1 rebounds.

Kersey appeared in 63 games last

season and averaged 8.1 points and 4.1 rebounds in 18.1 minutes. He averaged 12.7 points in Portland's first round playoff loss to Phoenix.

"Jerome has been to the playoffs 11 straight years, so he obviously brings a tremendous amount of experience to our team," said Adelman. "He is one of the hardest working players I have ever been around and is extremely tough both physically and mentally."

Oregon Intercepts Cougs For Win

Paul Jensen and Isaac Walker each returned interceptions fourth downs as 12th-ranked Oregon defeated Washington State, 26-7, in a Pac-10 showdown Saturday.

"Those two picks for touchdowns were really the difference in the game," Washington State head coach Mike Price said. "They just made plays today and we didn't, that's really the difference. Other than that, our will to win was there, our spirit was there. We tried awfully hard but they made big plays and we didn't."

Oregon (6-1, 3-1 Pac-10) stayed in contention for the conference title and a second consecutive berth in the Rose Bowl. The Ducks trail Washington and Southern California, who are unbeaten in conference play.

"(Because of the win) We have a winning season now, which is always our first goal - and I'm happy that things are falling into place," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "We have to do our part the rest of the way, but that was one step back to the championship."

Jensen picked off a pass from Chad Davis and returned it 35 yards for a score with 8:41 left in the first period to pull Oregon within 7-6. A two-point conversion failed.

Tony Graziani's 15-yard touchdown pass to Blake Spence with 2:29 left in the first quarter gave the Ducks the lead for good at 13-7. Joshua Smith kicked a 19-yard field goal seven seconds before halftime, giving as Oregon a 16-7 edge.

Graziani completed 21-of-36 passes with one interception and 204 yards

6th Annual Holiday Scratch-it for Charity



Brighten the holidays for your favorite charity. If your team is drawn to scratch off *Scratch-its*, all the money you win will go to the charity of your choice.

Salem Center - Dec. 7

Clackamas Town Center - Dec. 8

Gateway Mall, Springfield - Dec. 14

Rogue Valley Mall, Medford - Dec. 15

For a chance to participate, fill out a 3 x 5 card with the following information:

Your name:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

Charity name:

Charity's address:

Charity's phone:

Charity's Tax ID number:

and send it to:

Holiday Scratch-it for Charity

c/o Oregon Lottery

PO Box 12649

Salem, OR 97309

Entries must be received at the Lottery office in Salem by 5pm Thursday, November 9, 1995. A random drawing to select the two-person teams will be held at the Lottery office on November 13, 1995. Charities may be represented by only one team at each event.



Participants must be 18 years or older.

California Squeaks Out Victory

Quarterback Pat Barnes' two-yard touchdown runs lifted California to a 13-12 victory over Oregon State in a Pac-10 matchup Saturday in Corvallis. Barnes was 11-of-28 for 134 yards as California (2-5, 1-3) defeated Oregon State (1-6, 0-4) for the third straight time.

The two teams last met in 1992 and California has won 12 of the last 18 meetings.