

SPORTS

Blazers Get By Brandon, Cavaliers

James Robinson scored a season-high 22 points and made two three-pointers in a fourth-quarter run as the Portland Trail Blazers rallied to defeat the Cleveland Cavaliers, 88-81.

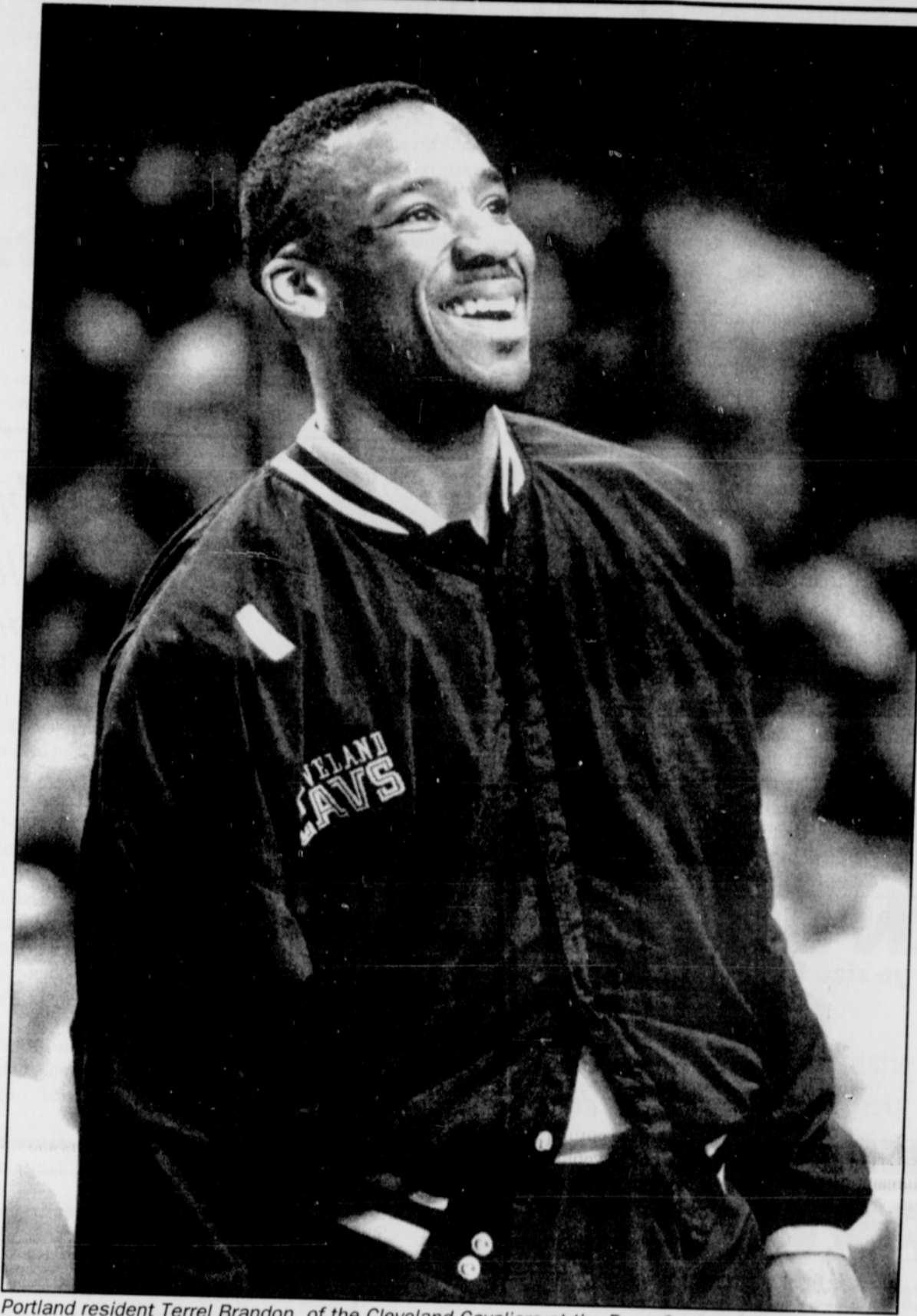
Portland won for the eighth time in 10 games and moved over the .500 mark (20-19) for the first time since December 15th. The Blazers have won six consecutive home games.

"It's no fluke that we've won eight out of 10," Robinson said. "We've been playing together more as a team. Guys are getting more open shots and we're running the offense a lot more. It's just a situation where now we're looking for each other out there."

Danny Ferry scored 20 of his career-high 29 points in the second half and Terrell Brandon added 25 for Cleveland, which wrapped up a seven-game road trip at 3-4.

"All of us are tired but that's the nature of the game to be tired but you have to find a way to fight through it," Brandon said. "I think it becomes more mental then physical. You know we've been on the road for two weeks but every team goes on these type of road trips and we just have to find a better way to end them. Obviously we didn't do that tonight."

Cleveland led 61-55 after three quarters but the Blazers took control of the game with a 14-3 run. Robinson started the burst with a three-pointer.



Portland resident Terrel Brandon of the Cleveland Cavaliers at the Rose Garden Sunday.

(Photo by Michael G. Halle)

Griffey May Leave Mariners

Ken Griffey Jr., the first true superstar of Seattle baseball, is considering leaving the team when his contract expires at the end of the 1996 season.

The Seattle Times reported that Griffey is wavering in his desire to sign a long-term contract with the fiscally conscious Mariners. Among the concerns Griffey has expressed is the weather in Seattle.

"I don't like snow and I don't like cold rain," said Griffey, who has spent this off-season with his family in Orlando, Fla. "I like Seattle, the fans and all. But being here (Florida) where we can go outdoors to hang all the time every day is great."

The Mariners reportedly can meet his monetary needs but the composition and competitiveness of the team are major concerns.

"The Mariners are very much in the ballpark financially," said Griffey's agent Brian Goldberg. "But there are other factors over which no one has any control that will probably figure in what happens."

The Mariners, the American League wild card winners, have un-

dergone a payroll-reducing shakeup this winter. Gone are first baseman Tino Martinez, who enjoyed a breakthrough season with 31 homers and 111 runs batted in. Also gone are Mike Blowers, who had 23 homers and 96 runs batted in, and setup man Jeff Nelson, who sported a 2.17 ERA and struck out 96 in 78 innings.

"I hated to see us break up a good bunch of guys," Griffey said. "I care a lot about who I play with. It hasn't helped me to see Tino and Blow go, or Nellie. The Mariners are always starting over, and that gets old."

Griffey, who hit .252 with 17 homers and 42 runs batted in 72 games, missed most of the season with a broken left wrist. He had a metal plate and seven screws removed in December and is expected to be at 100 percent at the start of the season.

Griffey has talked about playing in Cincinnati, has a fondness for Florida, and his dad is the hitting coach in Colorado. If the Mariners can't sign Griffey he would almost certainly bring back a package of young players the Mariners can build around.

Steelers, Dallas Battle For Superbowl XXX

The Pittsburgh Steelers arrived Monday night in Arizona as the countdown continues toward Sunday's Super Bowl 30 at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe.

The Dallas Cowboys arrived Sunday and will train at the Arizona Cardinals' facility in Tempe. The Steelers will prepare for the game at Scottsdale Community College.

The attention Sunday was focused on Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman, who revealed that he faces possible elbow surgery after the Super Bowl and will miss the Pro Bowl on February 4th.

Jerry Jones also filed a protest with the league asking that Kordell Stewart, the third-string quarterback but all-purpose weapon, be prevented from having communications equipment in his helmet.

Quarterbacks are allowed to communicate with the sidelines but Jones fears that Stewart has an advantage when he lines up at wide receiver or in the backfield. The NFL denied the request.

"We talked to (Jerry) Seeman last Thursday and he promptly got with commissioner (Paul) Tagliabue," said Jones. "We (rules committee) never intended for any player other than the quarterback to have any communication with the sidelines. As a matter of fact the biggest concern of the commissioner was a star wars concept. We don't want to turn our game and make it so technical to communicate to players as they try to make their decisions. We were turned down rather promptly."

"They're (NFL) reasoning for allowing him to wear the head set is he was drafted as a quarterback," said Cowboys coach Barry Switzer. "A lot of players were drafted as quarterbacks and moved on to other positions. I was talking to Jerry Seamon and I said we're gonna use Deion at that position. He was a quarterback in high school, has a great arm and is a baseball player so we're gonna give him a shot at quarterback."

As for the Steelers, cornerback Rod Woodson continues to show progress from knee surgery that has sidelined him almost all of the season. Head coach Bill Cowher said he will make a decision on Woodson's status later this week but at this time he is expected to play.

"He practiced all of last week," said Cowher. "I list him as questionable at this time but we are seeing no setbacks at this time. He has progressed to the point where I think he can contribute but it won't be determined until game day."

The Cowboys-Steelers game will mark the first three-time meeting in Super Bowl history. The only other rematches in Super Bowl history were Miami against Washington, Buffalo versus Dallas and Cincinnati against San Francisco.

The Steelers defeated the Cowboys, 35-31, in Super Bowl 13 and 21-17 in Super Bowl 10.

The Cowboys are back in the Super Bowl for the third time in four years while the Steelers make their first appearance in 16 years.

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