



# Metro/Sports

## Blazers start play-off ethics with Jazz win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Portland Trail Blazers coach Mike Dunleavy was reluctant to read much into their victory over the Utah Jazz. "There was no statement. We just needed a win badly on the road," Dunleavy said after Portland beat the Jazz 90-86 on Monday night. "We're trying to play good basketball and we

know this is as tough a place as there is to play."

But when Greg Anthony's 3-pointer with 21.8 seconds remaining carried the Blazers to victory, it seemed more than just another win.

If the current seedings hold up in the playoffs, Utah and Portland will meet in a second-round showdown for the second straight season. Last year,

the Blazers eliminated the Jazz 4-2.

So while Dunleavy was diplomatic, his players were more direct.

"This was a big win for us," said forward Brian Grant, who scored 16 points. "Not only will we probably face the Jazz in the playoffs, it also puts a little momentum on our back for up-and-coming games."

Steve Smith also hit a big 3-pointer

with 51.9 seconds to play, as the Blazers blew a 16-point lead early in the second half and survived Utah's fourth-quarter charge.

"That got us over the hump," Anthony said. "It's such a big victory for us because of the way we've been losing games like this. So to win over such a good team was a big confidence builder."

Portland stumbled in two of its previous three games, losing to Houston and Vancouver. The Jazz hadn't done much better, losing Sunday at Houston, and it carried over to a first half where Utah trailed 45-36.

"This is one of the things we've had trouble with, and I've talked about it a number of times," Utah coach Jerry Sloan said. "We come out and we just want to hang out and do our own thing."

Despite the sluggish start, Utah still had a chance to win.

After Bryon Russell pulled the Jazz within 86-83 on two free throws with 13.8 seconds left, John Stockton immediately fouled Damon Stoudamire on the ensuing inbounds play.

Stoudamire hit both shots, giving the Blazers three wins in the four-game season series against the Jazz.

"It's a game we really needed," Portland's Scottie Pippen said. "They really bring out the best in you. We've been able to play their style and win. We were just very patient and we executed."

If the Jazz hold off San Antonio for the Midwest Division title - Utah's lead slid to three games with the loss - they will be the No. 2 seed in the West. But Utah still needs to make up a four-game deficit to Portland to seize homecourt advantage, should the teams meet in the postseason.

Smith added 16 points to lead Portland, while Stoudamire had 12, Rasheed Wallace 11 and Arvydas Sabonis 10. Sabonis was activated from the injured list Monday after sitting out with a right foot sprain.

Karl Malone led the Jazz with 29 points and 14 rebounds, while Russell scored 14 of his 18 points in the second half. Stockton had 18 points and nine assists and Howard Easley scored 10 for Utah.

## Griffey gives dad a record 400th homer

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Ken Griffey Jr.'s 400th home run was a special present on his father's 50th birthday.

Griffey became the youngest major-leaguer to reach that milestone when he connected Monday in the fourth inning of the Cincinnati Reds' 7-5 loss to the Colorado Rockies at Coors Field in Denver.

Griffey hit a 2-0 pitch from Rolando Arrojo into the left field seats, a 378-foot homer. It was his second home run of the season and second in as many days. He was cheered by the crowd as he rounded the bases, then was high-fived by teammates and hugged by his father, Reds coach Ken Griffey.

At 30 years, 141 days, Griffey beat the mark set by Jimmie Foxx, who was 30 years, 248 days old.

It was the fourth time Griffey has homered on his father's birthday, including home run No. 1 in 1989.

"I haven't really had a chance to think about it," Griffey said of No. 400. "The biggest thing is, I tell my dad it's a cheap way of not buying him a gift. So he'll get this ball. Mom got 399, and he's got 400."

St. Louis 8, Houston 7: Mark McGwire homered for the third consecutive game, raising his career total to 525 — nine behind Jimmie Foxx for ninth on the career list — in the Cardinals' win over the Astros at Houston's Enron Field.

Dave Veres got his second save.

Chicago 4, Atlanta 3: Shane Andrews hit a game-tying three-run homer off Kerry Ligtenberg (0-1) in the bottom of the ninth inning, and pinch hitter Jeff Reed singled home Damon Buford with the winning run in the Cubs' home opener.

Mark Guthrie (1-1) won in Don Baylor's debut as Cubs manager at Wrigley Field. Andres Galarraga hit his fourth home run for Atlanta. Milwaukee 4, Florida 3: Geoff Jenkins homered and Milwaukee's bullpen held another lead as the Brewers beat the visiting Marlins in front of 53,509 at County Stadium's final opener.

Philadelphia 9, New York 7: Mike Lieberthal broke a 7-7 tie with a two-run homer off Rich Rodriguez (0-1) in the fifth as the Phillies overcame a 4-0 deficit in their home opener to beat the Mets.

Arizona 8, San Diego 4: Erubiel Durazo hit two home runs, including a three-run shot, and Jay Bell, Steve Finley and Kelly Stinnett also connected to match the team record of five as the Diamondbacks beat the Padres in San Diego.

Notes: Chicago right-hander Kerry Wood, who missed last season after having an elbow ligament replaced, will make a rehabilitation start Thursday for Daytona against Tampa in the Class-A Florida State League. Philadelphia right-hander Curt Schilling gave up two hits and struck out nine in four shutout innings with Clearwater in an injury rehabilitation start against Daytona. He is scheduled to rejoin the Phillies next month.



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