



SPORTS / METRO

BLAZERS UPBEAT FOR THURSDAY'S GAME 2

Shaq, Kobe lead Los Angeles in playoff opener

(AP) - The Portland Trail Blazers know they still have a chance to steal homecourt advantage from the Lakers.

Los Angeles won game one 95-87, and Game 2 is Thursday night at Staples Center before the best-of-five series moves to Portland a week from today.

The Blazers' goal is to win just one of the first two games.

"I think our guys are focused, I think they're ready," said Blazers coach Maurice Cheeks after the loss.

The coach said he was satisfied with the effort, but dissatisfied with the quick shots the team took in the second half.

Scottie Pippen said the game was a "lost opportunity," but the Lakers worked all season to get homecourt advantage.

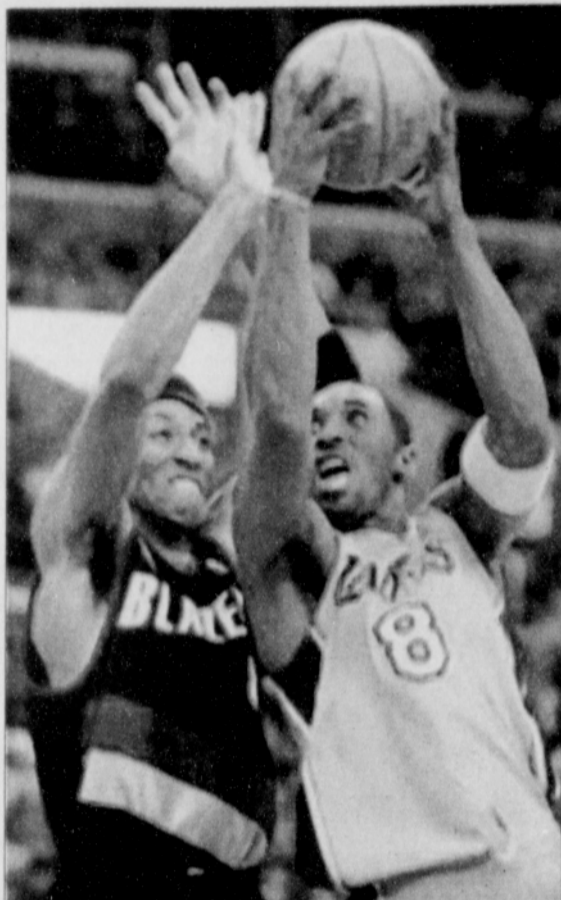
Lakers coach Phil Jackson said his team had a hard time in getting the ball to Shaquille O'Neal early in the game because the Blazers kept two or three defenders on him.

Jackson said the team made up for it by shooting from the outside in the second half.

Kobe Bryant had 34 points and O'Neal had 25 as the Lakers pulled away from the Blazers in the fourth quarter in Sunday's opening game.

Rasheed Wallace had 25 points to lead the Blazers.

Portland trailed by ten points in the third quarter



Scottie Pippen (left) defends the Lakers' Kobe Bryant during Sunday's playoff game. (AP photo)

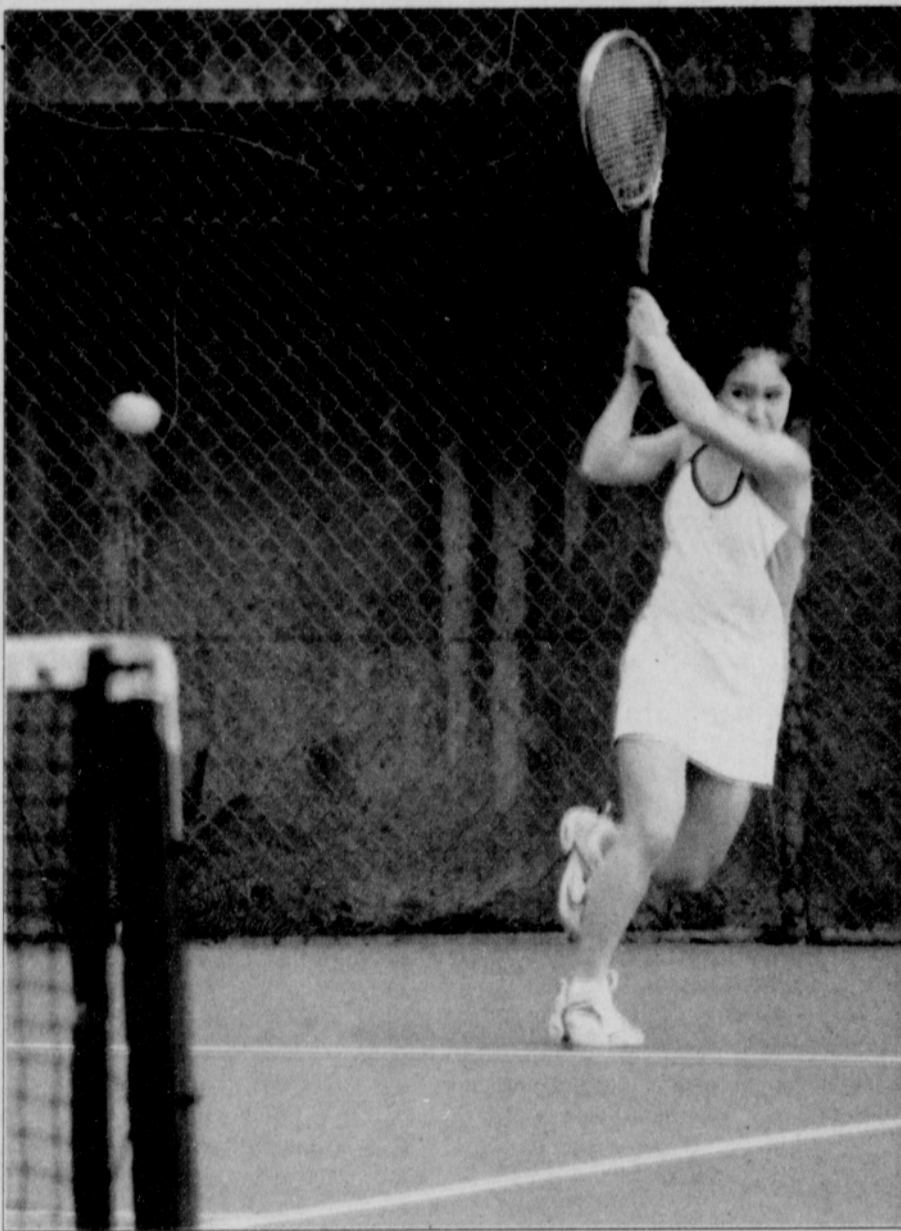
but rallied to get within 68-67 early in the fourth, after a turnaround jumper by Wallace and a three-point play by Derek Anderson.

But the Lakers slowly built their lead after that, outscoring Portland 27-to-20 the rest of the way.

After Bryant's jumper gave LA a 12-point lead, the Blazers fought back again, getting within 87-82 with just under 4:30 to go. But Portland couldn't get any closer.

Bryant started getting hot in the second quarter, when he was guarded by the supposed "Kobe Stopper," Ruben Patterson.

VARSITY TENNIS PACKS AREA COURTS



Momei Qu of Wilson High School returns a serve during a tennis match with Cristin Sammis of Cleveland last week. Portland tennis courts are popular athletic venues during the spring varsity tennis season.

PHOTO BY DAVID GIEZYNG/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Kareem Loses Head Coaching Debut

(AP) Thirteen years after his retirement from the NBA, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar can still put bodies in the seats, even when he's sitting down.

A standing-room-only crowd packed the Dodge City Civic Center on Sunday night to watch the Hall of Famer make his professional head coaching debut with the United States Basketball League's Oklahoma Storm.

Abdul-Jabbar's first win will have to wait. The Storm blew a 14-point second-half advantage against the Dodge City Legend, then rallied for a late lead before losing 98-97 on Tim Pledger's two free throws with 7.5 seconds left.

"I didn't like the outcome, but my guys worked hard and tried to pay attention," said Abdul-Jabbar, the NBA's career scoring leader. "We just made some men-

tal mistakes."

"I don't know if any of you ever saw Coach Wooden coach, but he tried to do all of his coaching before the game," Abdul-Jabbar said. "That's my goal, but I have a long way to go before I reach those heights."

"I love this game, he said. "It's been good to me, and I think I have some things I can give back to it."

NFL Detroit Lions Pick Harrington

(AP) - Former Oregon football quarterback and Central Catholic High School standout Joey Harrington arrived in Detroit Sunday afternoon to check out his new city.



Joey Harrington

Harrington was drafted by the Detroit Lions at the Number Three pick Satur-

day.

He showed up in Detroit with his family and played nine holes of golf.

At a press conference, Harrington passed out bumper stickers that read "Orygun" to poke fun at the Midwestern pronunciation of his home state and alma mater.

He also told reporters he will compete for the starting job against the Lions' current quarterback Mike McMahon.

Harrington said he will be disappointed if he is not on the field opening day.

Harrington also said he would keep the name "Joey" even after Lions president Matt Millen said it didn't seem like a good name for an NFL quarterback in a blue-collar city.

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China's 7-foot-5 Star To Enter NBA Draft

(AP) Yao Ming, a 7-foot-5 center from China, has been cleared to enter the NBA draft.

His current club, the Shanghai Sharks, made the announcement after Yao helped it win its first Chinese Basketball Association championship Friday.

"We want him to go to a team that has a chance to play in the playoffs in the NBA in two or three seasons. I think that will be good for his development," Sharks general manager Li Yaomin told China's official Xinhua News Agency.

Yao has been projected as an NBA lottery pick, possibly No. 1 overall.

"It's exciting," NBA commissioner David Stern said Sunday night before the Detroit-Toronto game. "As a league, to see world-class players coming into our league from Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and Asia is an exciting thing for our league."

"And to think that there will be a generation that will grow up watching their countrymen play in the NBA, I think speaks well for our growth and development. I think it makes the competition in our league extraordinary tough, and it raises the level greatly," Stern said.

China's tallest player Yao Ming stands 7 feet 5 inches. (AP photo)

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Indian Mascots Boycott Urged

(AP) — A group has collected signatures from about half the law students at the University of Oregon, asking the school's athletics department to boycott games against teams with American Indian mascots.

The Sport and Entertainment Law Forum is also asking UO student athletes to pledge never to accept an offer from professional teams that use American Indian nicknames, such as the Washington Redskins.

Frank Silva, a UO law student and member of the forum, said he hopes a majority of his class of about 500 will sign before the resolution is submitted to UO President Dave Frohnmayer for consideration.

"It's a statement of solidarity from our school," Silva said. If successful at the UO, Silva hopes to begin circulating the resolution nationally and to put pressure on universities and even professional teams to drop the names.