

**SPORTS/METRO**

**Local Athletes Compete in Track**

Grant Sophomore Ronnie Perry tests his form and concentration in the 100 meter high hurdles last week at a track meet on the Marshall High School campus.

PHOTO BY DAVID GIEZYNG/  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



**Stiles Fired Up for WNBA Season**

(AP)—Jackie Stiles sat on an aluminum bleacher, fidgeting. Her right leg tapped so quickly against the metal bench that the whole thing squeaked and shook.



Jackie Stiles

After months of injury and inactivity, Stiles was eager to take part in the Portland Fire's first practice Monday. And she also made an extraordinary admission, for her: that her full-bore tenacity might have done more harm than good — to her and the team — last season.

"I feel a lot responsible for what happened to us at the end last year," Stiles said. "I probably overdid it, but it was a tough adjustment. The way I gain confidence is from my work ethic, but sometimes that can hurt me."

Stiles, 23, was the WNBA's rookie of the year last season, started in all 32 games and averaged 14.9 points. But she developed a sore right wrist, her shooting wrist, and late in the season broke her left wrist and didn't even know it until a month later.

The more she wore down, the more her team struggled. Portland started 8-4, but lost 17 of its last 20.

Stiles had surgery in September, and around that time doctors discovered the fracture in her left wrist. It had already mended, so it was left alone. Stiles had to wear a cast on her right arm for six weeks, though. She also had surgery earlier this year to remove an

ovarian cyst.

Stiles, the gym rat, nearly went nuts. The young woman who forced herself take 1,000 jump shots before calling it a day while growing up in Clafin, Kan., was so weak once the cast came off, she couldn't even get the ball near the rim.

"That was a very humbling experience," she said. "It kind of felt like I was almost starting over again."

Over the last few weeks, however, Stiles has been practicing and lifting weights more than seven hours a day. She says she's back at full strength, and is even thankful that her ailments forced her to take a break from the game after playing nearly 15 months straight.

"If I wouldn't have had the surgeries, I wouldn't have stopped," she said. "It forced me to lay off, to get rested. It also showed me how much I love the game of basketball and how hard it is to be away from it."

Coach Linda Hargrove said Stiles is slowly learning that she can't push herself as hard as she wants.

"We're trying to get her to think in terms of a 10-year career. She always thinks about tomorrow," Hargrove said.

**Blazers Forced Into Summer Retirement**

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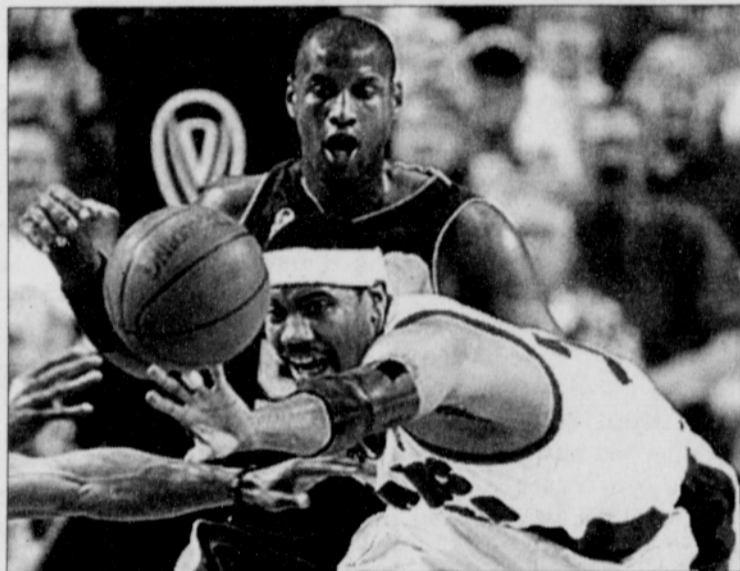
hard. I figured Pip would fake to Kobe and try to deny me the rock."

The Blazers had one last chance, but Pippen's inbound pass went over Wallace's head, and Horry rebounded with 0.9 seconds left.

Pippen took the blame for his defense on Horry's basket. "I didn't get out to Horry, basically, and it cost us the ballgame," Pippen said.

Portland was in the game not only because the Lakers shot 41 percent in the second half, but also because the Blazers played terrific defense on O'Neal for a change.

He finished with 21 points, but



Portland's Rasheed Wallace tries to deny an entry pass into the Lakers' Samaki Walker. (AP photo)

"So I was trying to keep my guys involved."

Wallace had 20 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Blazers, and Bonzi Wells added 19 points.

Portland kept it close despite going more than five minutes without a basket in the fourth. Wallace's short turnaround jumper ended the drought, giving the Blazers an 80-78 lead with 5:34 to play. It was anyone's game until the final minute.

"We had our chances this whole series, especially tonight," said Portland center Dale Davis, who fouled out for the second time in the series. He was ejected from the other game. "There's no way that we shouldn't have won that game, but we didn't."

Portland fell to 2-9 in playoff series against the Lakers, who have eliminated the Blazers five times in the last six years. "I'm just sick right now, emotionally, physically," Wells said. "We played our hearts out. Everybody came out here and left it all on the court, but they're the champs. And we're just like all the rest of the teams in the league. We're just fighting for second."

he went into the fourth shooting just 1-for-5 from the field. Portland used a combination of defenders on O'Neal to deny him the ball, but he started getting free in the final period, when he was 4-of-6. He actually did most of his damage from the free-throw line, making 11 of 16. He also had 11 rebounds and seven assists.

"Reading the paper, I knew they were going to throw everybody at me, even Paul Allen," O'Neal said.



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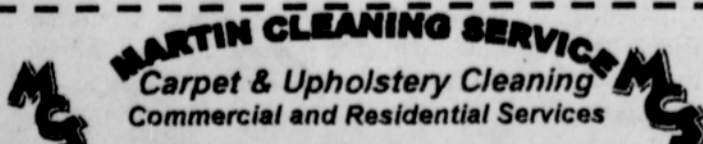
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**Violations Send Strawberry to Prison**

(AP) — Darryl Strawberry was sentenced to 18 months in prison Monday for violating his probation.

Retired Judge Ralph Steinberg ordered Strawberry to serve prison time from his original sentence on a 1999 conviction on drug and solicitation of prostitution charges.

The 40-year-old former major league slugger fought previous attempts by the state to send him to prison and was sent to drug treatment instead, but he has violated his probation six times.

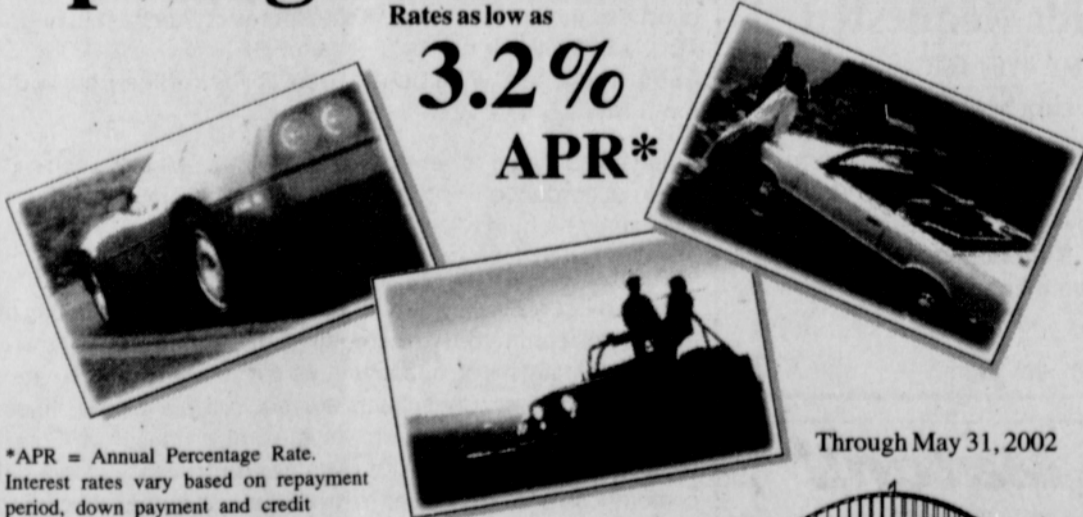
The latest violation involved breaking the rules of the drug treatment center by smoking, having sex with a resident and trading baseballs for cigarettes.

Strawberry was on World Series championship teams with the New York Mets in 1986 and the New York Yankees in 1996 and 1999. Along with his legal problems, he has been treated for colon and stomach cancer. Strawberry has not used drugs for more than a year, his attorney said.

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