

# SPORTS / METRO

## Board Chops Spring Sports

### Damon Stoudamire donation helps but more fundraising is needed

BY WYNDE DYER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A generous gift of \$250,000 from Portland Trail Blazer Damon Stoudamire may not be enough to save spring sports at Portland Public Schools if the Portland Interscholastic League cannot raise another \$300,000.

With the exception of African American school board member Derry Jackson, all members of the Portland Public School present on Thursday night voted to support \$2.4 million in budget cuts outlined by Superintendent Jim Scherzinger.

"I don't always agree with Derry," said Monica Dixon, the mother of a Benson High School Senior. "But I always respect him because he will listen. The others, they aren't even trying to listen."

On Monday, Dec. 9 all school board members but Jackson walked out of a meeting when the public began booing a proposal. So Thursday's special meeting with 45 minutes of public commentary gave students, parents, teachers and concerned community members a glimpse of hope.

But in the end, left on the chopping board, along with spring sports funding was the Outdoor School, a wilderness science program for sixth graders, two-top level administrative jobs, 20 other jobs and a round of early retirements.

"In all my years I never thought I'd see this happen," said Yvonne Shaw, who's daughter Oris is on the state champion

track team at Benson. "When a state suffers budget cuts the schools are the first things to go. The students, who should be the future, should be the last to suffer."

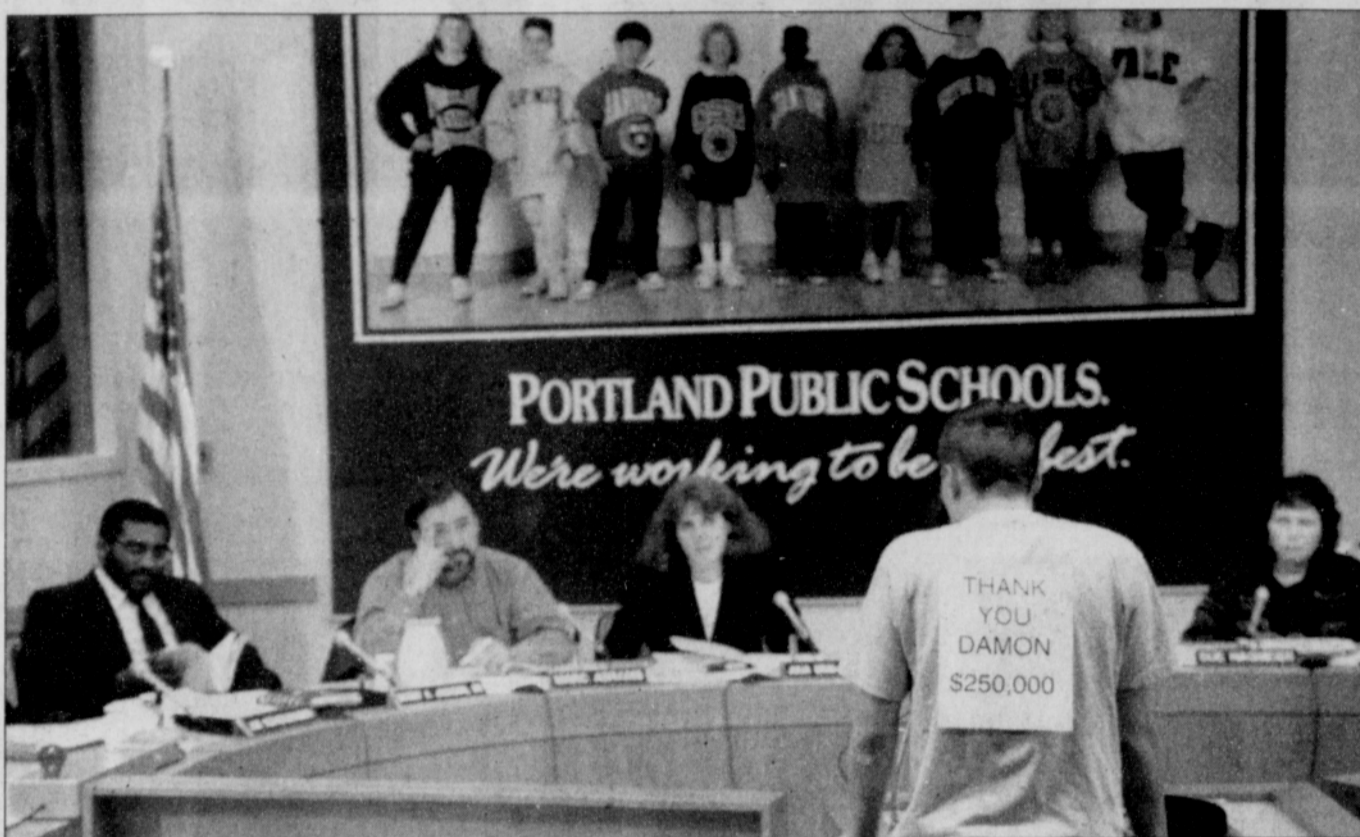
Shaw said she put her faith back in the public school system and took her daughter out of private school in fourth grade. It was a big family decision, she said, and now they are wondering if it was the wrong one.

Oris, a junior, suffered a stress fracture in her leg last year and could not compete in track and field. She hoped this season would be her come back



*In all my years I never thought I'd see this happen.*

—Yvonne Shaw, parent of a Benson High School junior



Danny Van Voorhis, a junior at Franklin High School, wears a sign on his back thanking Portland native and NBA guard Damon Stoudamire for his \$250,000 donation to keep spring sports funding.

PHOTOS BY WYNDE DYER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

I can't think of any reasons to go to Portland Public Schools right now."

Harrison's daughter, Camelle Taylor, now a freshman on scholarship at PSU who took fifth in state for sprinting while at Jefferson, said sports are sometimes the only chance low-income students have to make it financially in college. She said not everybody can get scholarships for academics alone and she fears the elimination of spring sports will have a negative impact on women's athletic involvement.

"Women already don't play many sports," Taylor said. "Half of the sports they do play are in the spring."

When Karis Stoudamire presented her cousin's pledge to the board she asked them to take notice of the role sports have played in the success of so many athletes.

"Damon wouldn't be where he is today without sports," she said. "When I told him what was going on he said, 'What if they had cut winter sports when I was in high school?'"

The board graciously accepted the pledge and thanked the Stoudamire family for providing what chairwoman Karla Wenzel called "a catalyst for students to see their dreams take shape."

Some are optimistic that schools will be able to raise the additional \$300,000 to keep spring sports, but the future for Outdoor School looks bleak.



Jefferson High School graduate Camelle Taylor and her father Ronnye Harrison listen to public comment Thursday at a Portland Public School Board meeting that cut spring sports. Taylor said she would not have received a scholarship to Portland State University if she had not played spring sports.

Unless donors can raise more than \$400,000 in outside funding, Outdoor School will end in the spring.

Several Outdoor School youth counselors stressed the importance of the program for its ability to teach sixth graders to get to know nature along with other students of different races, religions and lifestyles.

Former Outdoor School staff member Briggie Thomas said she moved to Portland 10 years ago because Portland was a city that cared about natural diversity and human diversity.

"All of these things that Portland cares about are what kids learn in this program," Briggie said. "Please save Outdoor School."

### Harrington 'Fine' After Irregular Heartbeat

(AP)—Lions rookie quarterback and former Central Catholic standout Joey Harrington will miss the rest of the season because of an irregular heartbeat.

Harrington, the No. 3 overall draft pick out of Oregon, left Sunday's game against Tampa Bay with the heart problem and was taken to the hospital for tests and observation. Doctors said Harrington's heartbeat returned to a normal rhythm before he was hospitalized. Lions coach Marty Mornhinweg said the ailment is not career-threatening.

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The Peninsula Little League of Portland is now accepting applications for Board members, Committee members, managers, and coaches to oversee the 2003 baseball and softball season.

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