

SPORTS



Helpline (Make The Call): 800-923-HELP
 Linea de Ayuda (Spanish): 877-515-7848
 Youthline (Teen Helpline): 877-553-TEEN

Blazers Open Road Trip with Loss

Hurts in tough battle for a playoff spot

(AP)—This was the reason why the Knicks added Vin Baker.

Baker made a jump hook over the outstretched arm of Theo Ratliff, the league's leading shot blocker, with 38 seconds left to give the New York Knicks a three-point lead that held up Monday night in a 92-91 victory over the Portland Trail Blazer.

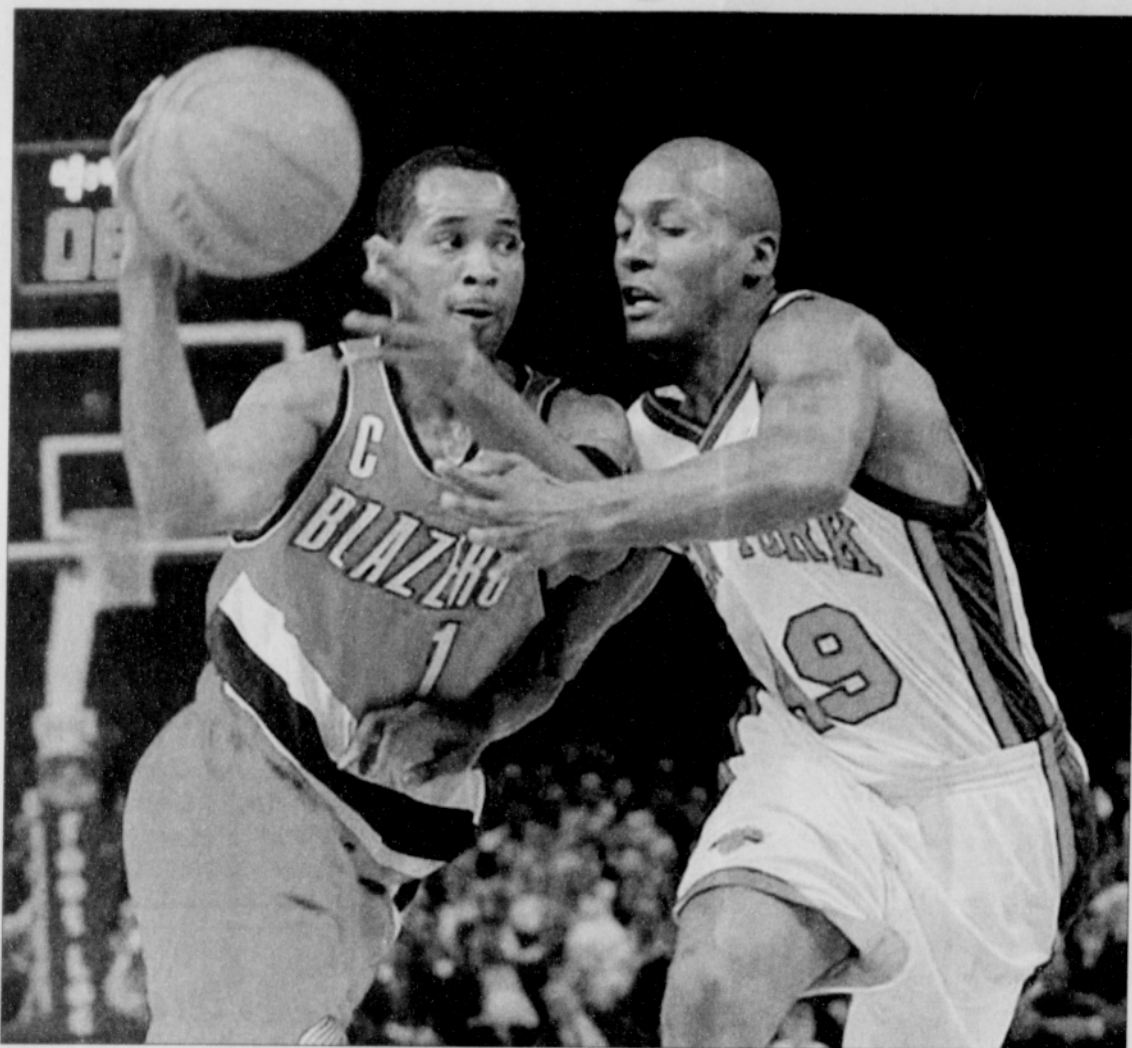
Baker had two nifty low-post moves against Ratliff for baskets in the final 2½ minutes that helped the Knicks to a crucial home win.

Damon Stoudamire had 20 points and Zach Randolph 19 for the Blazers, who began the night in a virtual tie with Utah for eighth place in the West.

Portland had a shot for the win, but Stoudamire missed an off-balance 20-footer at the buzzer. Portland lost for just the third time in 10 games.

The Blazers began a stretch of four straight games against teams in the thick of the Eastern Conference playoff race. A three-game road trip will take them to New York, Boston and Philadelphia before they return home to play New Orleans on Saturday.

"This one hurts," coach Maurice Cheeks said. "It always helps to get the first one because it gives you



Portland Trail Blazers' Derek Anderson drives past New York Knicks' Shandon Anderson Monday at New York's Madison Square Garden. (AP photo)

momentum to get the second one."

Portland was ahead for all but 77 seconds of the first half, and Stoudamire had seven of the Blazers' first 11 points in the third quar-

ter to give Portland a 58-48 lead.

The Blazers would lose tiebreakers to Denver (lost season series) and Utah (worse conference record) if the Blazers finished tied with either

team for eighth place. New York is assured of winning tiebreakers against Miami, Boston, Philadelphia and Toronto and would lose the tiebreaker with Cleveland.



Connecticut's Jessica Moore (left) is embraced by teammate Diana Taurasi, as they celebrate their 66-49 win over Penn State in the NCAA East Regional Championship game in Hartford, Conn. (AP photo)

Fifth Straight Final Four for Connecticut

(AP)—The women's Final Four will have at least one frequent participant, and at least one newcomer. Diana Taurasi scored 27 points and Connecticut blew open the game in the second half to beat Penn State 66-49 on Monday night and earn an unprecedented fifth straight trip to the Final Four. LSU is going for the first time after beating SEC-rival Georgia, 62 to 60.

Barbara Turner matched

Taurasi almost shot for shot in the East Regional final, finishing with 26 points to help the Huskies stay in the running for a third straight title and fourth in five years. Only Tennessee has won three in a row, from 1996-98.

It will be a Connecticut double at the Final Four because the men's team qualified Saturday, making UConn the fifth school to send both teams in the same year.



Oregon guard Luke Jackson heads up court during Oregon's 65-61 victory over Notre Dame and in route to the final four of the National Invitation Tournament. (AP photo)

Ducks Make NIT Final 4 in New York

(AP)—With a chance at its first trip to the NIT championship on the line, the Ducks know exactly what to do: Give the ball to Luke Jackson. After all, he's the one who got them to New York.

Jackson scored 12 of his 14 points in the final 12:12, including the Ducks' final six to help them close out Notre Dame 65-61 Thursday night in an NIT quarterfinal.

"He turned to me with about six

minutes to go in the game and said, 'Give me the ball.' When he says that, we put the ball in his hands because he is a great player," Oregon coach Ernie Kent said.

The Ducks were to play Michigan in the semifinal Tuesday night.

This is Oregon's third trip to the NIT semifinals. The Ducks have never made it to the championship game, and their best finish was third place in 1975.

Spring Practice Opens

The Portland State football team will open spring practice on Wednesday, April 14 in preparation for the 2004 season.

The Vikings will have 14 practices culminating in the annual spring game on Friday, May 7.

Head Coach Tim Walsh welcomes back 39 letter-winners, which represent 15 starters on the team. In all, 75 players are returning to the program, including red shirts. Among 20 new recruits, four will be available to compete in the spring.

Summer Street Jam to Draw Crowd

Blazers Street Jam, the largest 3-on-3 basketball experience in the U.S., is coming to Portland this summer thanks to the Portland Trail Blazers, Special Olympics Oregon and NIKE.

The July 16-18 competition will provide a fun-filled weekend for the whole family with basketball, music, and festivities. All net proceeds will benefit Special Olympics Oregon, a year-round program offering Olympic-style

sports to athletes with mental disabilities.

A projected attendance of 30,000 athletes and spectators is expected to gather for the round robin-style 3-on-3 tournament, slam dunk contest, three-point competition, free NikeGO Kids' Clinic, and appearances by Trail Blazers players and local celebrities.

For tournament details and registration, go online to www.blazersstreetjam.com.

NFL to Keep Instant Replay

(AP)—NFL owners voted to keep instant replay for at least five more seasons, and they added a twist Tuesday: A team successful on two challenges in a game will get a third.

Only once last season did a team

have two successful challenges.

The vote at the NFL meetings was 29-3, with Cincinnati, Kansas City and Indianapolis against the five-year extension on replay.

The owners were given several proposals on instant replay, includ-

ing one that would have made it permanent. They chose to go with the five-year option and the extra challenge.

"It's time for voting on it permanently," competition co-chairman Rich McKay said.

The Portland Observer

presents

The 5th Annual Cory Washington Memorial All-Star Basketball Game

Saturday, April 17, 2004

Doors open at 5 pm

(Admission: \$2 Adults ~ \$1 Youth 12 and over)

Self-Enhancement Inc (SEI)

3920 N. Kirby Avenue

Portland, OR 97227

Main Attraction

Cory Cougars vs Jammin' 95.5 Nike Big Ballers

with special pre-game attraction

The undefeated 6th grade

Portland Disciples vs Oregon City Pioneers

Game Time ~ 6 pm

Proceeds benefit the amateur athletics and education program and the Portland Disciples Basketball Program.

For more information call Mark Washington at 503-288-0033

www.news@portlandobserver.com