

## SPORTS

## Knees Betray Oden Once Again

Franchise player  
out for the season

(AP) — For the third time in four years, Greg Oden's knees have betrayed him.

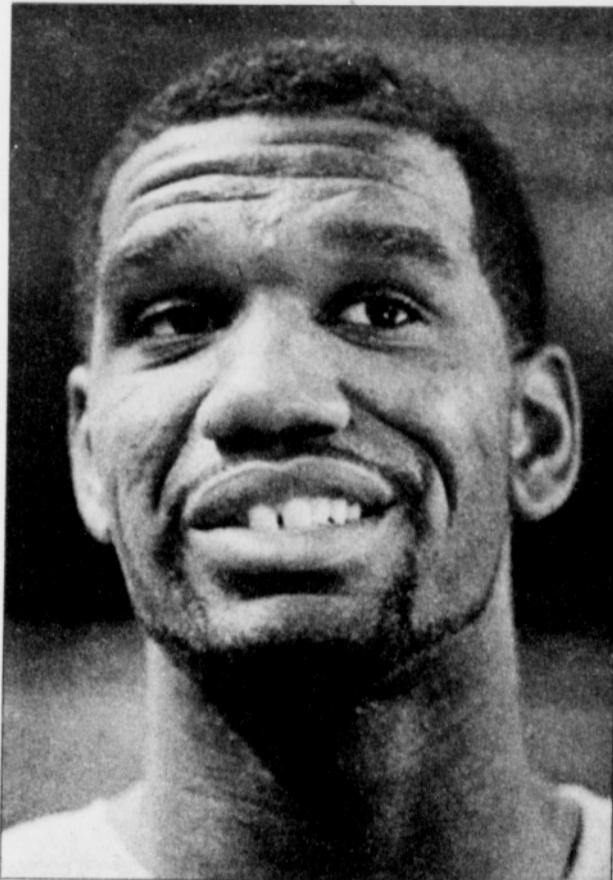
The Portland Trail Blazers last week announced that Oden, the No. 1 pick in the 2007 draft, will miss the season because of microfracture surgery on his left knee. The operation was performed Friday in Colorado.

Oden's rookie year was postponed because of similar surgery on his right knee, and last season he broke his left kneecap early in December and again required surgery.

He was still rehabbing when the latest problem was discovered.

"As you can expect, this young man is devastated about not having the opportunity to play this season, being so close to getting back on the floor and just all of a sudden, this situation comes up and it's like, here we go again for him," Portland coach Nate McMillan said.

Blazers trainer Jay Jensen said the latest problem with Oden's knee became apparent about two weeks ago when he experienced some pain and fluid in the joint. Soon there-



Greg Oden

after, an MRI revealed the damage.

"We sat there and it was like we'd been kicked in the stomach," Jensen said, choking up. "It felt like hearing someone close to us had died."

The 22-year-old Oden has often has been

compared to former Portland center Sam Bowie, whom the Blazers famously selected in front of Michael Jordan in the 1984 draft. The Blazers picked Oden instead of Kevin Durant, who went to the Oklahoma City franchise and has blossomed into one of the NBA's best players.

Another Portland big man, Bill Walton, was selected by the Blazers with the No. 1 pick in the 1974 draft, but he was dogged by a broken nose, foot, wrist and leg over his first two seasons before helping the team to the NBA championship in 1977.

Oden has seemingly been cursed since shortly before his rookie season, when trouble in his right knee prompted surgery the first time.

He showed promise the next season when he played in 61 games, averaging 8.9 points and seven rebounds.

But he really began to blossom last season when he became a starter and was averaging 11.7 points, 8.8 rebounds and 2.4 blocks in that role. Then he was hurt in a game against Houston, crashing to the floor with his kneecap visibly contorted.

Oden had just started easing into practices when the latest knee issue was discovered. He has played in only 82 games during

his NBA career, missing 176.

Jensen said it was unclear what caused the latest damage.

The Blazers announced last month they would not offer Oden a contract extension. He was the first No. 1 pick since Kwame Brown not to get one at the end of his rookie contract.

Oden will be a restricted free agent next summer and Portland will be able to match any offers for him.

Portland's problems at center are not limited to Oden.

For the past several years the Blazers have relied on veteran Joel Przybilla, but he also was injured last December and required knee surgery. The Blazers have since started veteran forward Marcus Camby in the middle.

At the start of this season, Jeff Pendergraph, who was backing up Camby, injured his knee and required season-ending surgery. The Blazers signed six-year veteran Fabricio Oberto, but he retired from the NBA just five games into the season because of a preexisting heart condition.

The good news for the Blazers is that Przybilla already has returned to practice and has said he expects to be back by Thanksgiving.

## Four Blazers on All-Star Ballot

Four Portland Trail Blazers are featured on the 2011 NBA All-Star Ballot, including guards Andre Miller and Brandon Roy, forward LaMarcus Aldridge and center Marcus Camby.

A three-time NBA All-Star, Roy would join Clyde Drexler (eight appearances) and Sidney Wicks (four) as the only Trail Blazers with four

All-Star appearances.

Miller is seeking his first All-Star appearance while ranking 10th in the NBA in assists per game. Aldridge is averaging 17.5 points, 7.8 rebounds and 2.2 assists per game in his fifth pro season and Camby ranks second among Western Conference centers with 10.9 rebounds per game.

There are several ways fans can cast their votes for the 2011 NBA All-Star Game, including at each NBA arena; on NBA.com; and through mobile phones by texting the player's last name to 6-9-6-2-2 ("MYNBA") or by visiting m.nba.com on any wireless carrier.

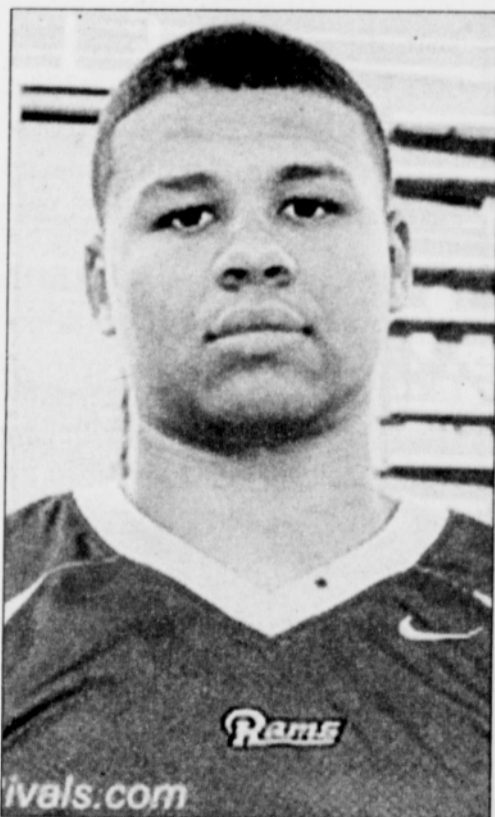
## Lineman Named to Army Bowl

Joins elite  
group of  
student-athletes

Brennan Scarlett, a defensive lineman at Central Catholic High School in southeast Portland has been selected to play in the 2011 U.S. Army All-American Bowl, joining an elite group of student-athletes.

The annual East vs. West matchup will be played on Saturday, Jan. 8 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas and televised live on NBC featuring the nation's top 90 high school football players.

"Brennan is a talented athlete whose exemplary leadership and teamwork qualities have made him a



Brennan Scarlett

standout Central Catholic," said Col. Derik Crotts, director of Strategic Communications, Marketing and Outreach, U.S. Army Accessions Command. "The strength, dedication, leadership and teamwork skills necessary to succeed on the football field are the same qualities mirrored in Army Strong Soldiers. We are proud to honor all of our U.S. Army All-American Bowl players and congratulate them on their selection."

As a result of Scarlett's selection, his head coach Steve Pyne is also invited to travel to San Antonio and attend the U.S. Army Coaches Academy, an elite three-day learning experience featuring NFL and NCAA coaches, as well as participate in game-week activities.

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