

SPORTS

Blazers on Tear; Beat Pacers

Team takes off
on best start since
1998-99 season

(AP) — After Portland had withstood a late barrage from the Indiana Pacers and Paul George, the Trail Blazers gathered at midcourt and raised their hands together.

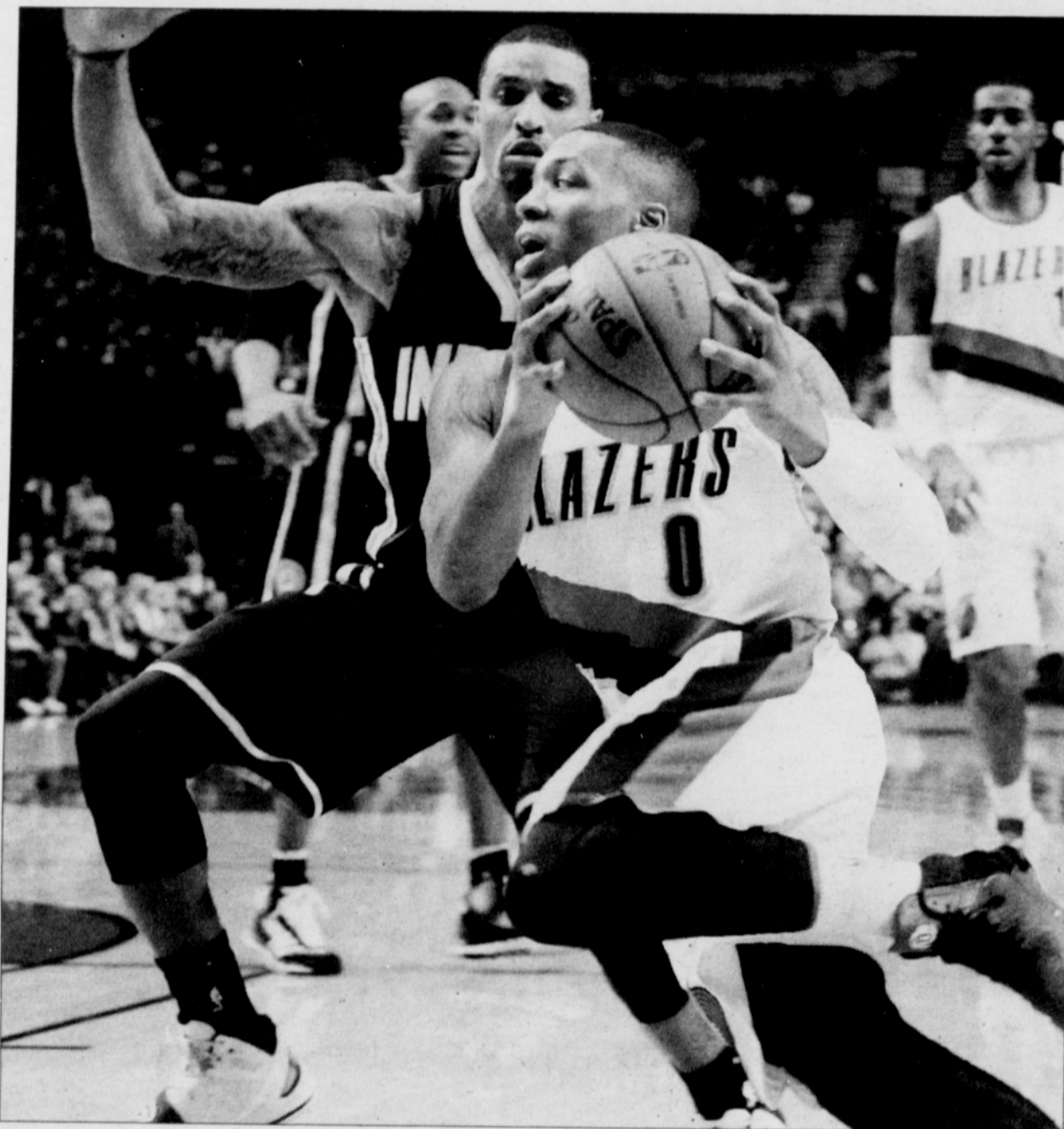
It might be early in the season, but this was a statement win for the Blazers.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 28 points and 10 rebounds and Portland downed Indiana 106-102 Monday night in the Rose Quarter's Moda Center, snapping the Pacers' seven-game winning streak. Damian Lillard added 26.

"It was a tough one, and we knew it was going to be a tough one going in," Lillard said. "They're a good team, they only had one loss. But we're a good team too, and we wanted to prove that."

Paul George had a career-high 43 points for Pacers (16-2), who own the NBA's best record.

The Blazers pulled in front early in the fourth quarter, but the Pacers kept it close and George hit consecutive 3-



Trail Blazer guard Damian Lillard drives on Indiana Pacers guard George Hill during the first half of Monday's NBA game in Portland. (AP Photo/Don Ryan)

pointers that narrowed it to 98-96 with 1:37 left. Lillard answered with a 3-pointer and Nicolas Batum made a pair of free throws for the Blazers before George hit another 3-pointer that got Indiana within 103-99 with 21 seconds to go.

Lillard hit free throws and George made yet another 3 with 10 seconds left to make it 105-102, but the Pacers couldn't get closer. Portland (15-3) is off to its best start since the 1998-99 season.

"I really wanted to get this win," said George, one of just four Indiana players to score 43 or more points in a game since 2000. "I was trying to will us into the game."

Both teams were playing the second of a back-to-back. The Blazers beat the short-handed Los Angeles Lakers 114-108, snapping a seven-game losing streak to the Lakers at the Staples Center.

The Pacers (16-2) were coming off a 105-100 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday to open a five-game road trip.

It was Aldridge's 14th game this season with 20 or more points. The two-time All-Star has eight double-doubles this season.

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Stotts Coach of the Month

Portland Trail Blazers Head Coach Terry Stotts was named the NBA Western Conference Coach of the Month for November, it was announced Monday by the NBA.

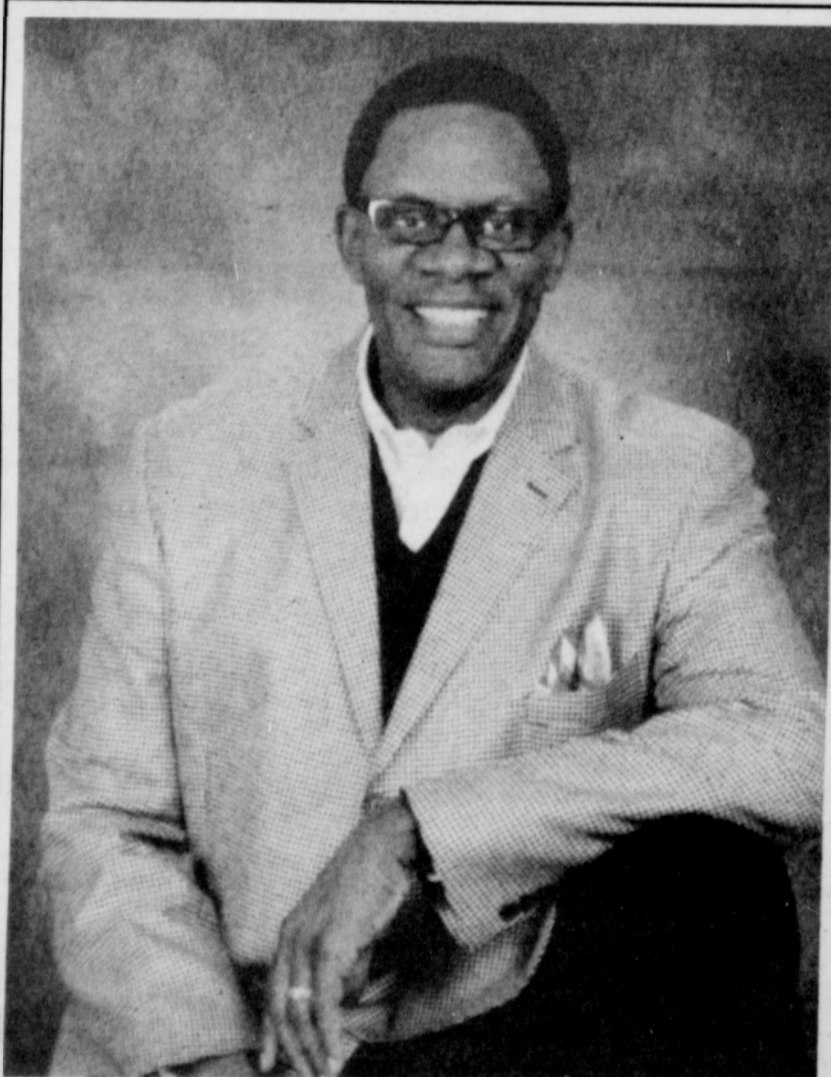
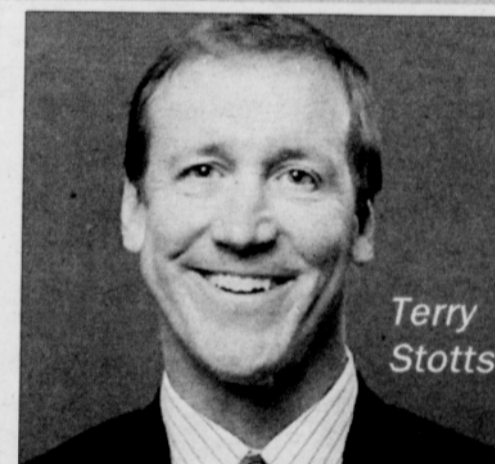
The Trail Blazers' 13 wins in the month tied a franchise best, and the

team's four-game sweep of a road trip from Nov. 15-20 marked the first 4-0 trip since January 2003.

At 15-3, Portland currently sits atop the Northwest Division. The Trail Blazers are averaging 104.6 points (fifth in the NBA), 44.9 re-

bounds (eighth) and 23.1 assists (ninth) per game.

Stotts becomes the sixth coach in team history to take home the honor, joining Jack Ramsay, Mike Schuler, Rick Adelman (3), Mike Dunleavy (2) and Nate McMillan (3).



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

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