

SPORTS

Blazers 'Stand by' Billups Hire

New coach introduced amid criticism

(AP) — The Portland Trail Blazers went into damage-control mode while introducing Chauncey Billups as their new coach last week, amid questions about how they selected him over more experienced candidates and how sexual assault allegations were lodged against him nearly a quarter-century ago.

Billups never faced charges related to those allegations that came out in 1997 and settled out of court with the accuser three years later. He addressed that chapter Tuesday, though when he was asked to elaborate on some of those comments the Trail Blazers refused to let him answer.

Neil Olshey, the team's president of basketball operations, said the team hired an independent firm to look into the sexual assault allegations and determined that nothing nonconsensual had occurred.

"We stand by Chauncey, everyone in the organization, and be-

lieve he's the right choice to be our head coach, and the right choice to be the kind of ambassador in the Portland community everybody here has become accustomed to," Olshey said.

Billups, a five-time NBA All-Star over a 17-year playing career, has never been a head coach. He has served as an assistant with the Los Angeles Clippers for the past season.

The 44-year-old Billups spoke broadly about the concerns from the 1997 allegations, saying "there's not a day that goes by" in which he doesn't think about the impact any decision can have on someone's life.

"I learned at a very young age — as a player, and not only a player but a young man, a young adult — that every decision, has consequences," Billups said. "And that's led to some really, really healthy, but tough conversations that I've had to have with my wife, who was my girlfriend at the

time in 1997, and my daughters about what actually happened, and about what they may have to read about me in the news and then the media."

When a reporter asked Billups to elaborate, a moderator said the question had already been answered and called on another reporter.

The Blazers settled on Billups after an interview process where several people -- San Antonio Spurs assistant Becky Hammon among them -- were talked to about the job. Others known to have been on Portland's list were Brooklyn assistant Mike D'Antoni and Los Angeles Lakers assistant Jason Kidd, who withdrew his name from consideration.

Over the course of his career, Billups played for Boston, Toronto, Denver, Minnesota, Detroit, New York and the Clippers. Known as "Mr. Big Shot," he was MVP of the 2004 NBA Finals after leading the Pistons to a title.



Chauncey Billups talks to media Tuesday after being announced as the head coach of the Portland Trail Blazers at the team's practice facility in Tualatin. (AP photo)



north by northeast
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Black Health Matters

North by Northeast Community Health Center is the only clinic in Oregon devoted to African American health. We provide welcoming, high quality health care to adults who have Oregon Health Plan. Since 2006, our priority has been to serve the local African American community and to reduce the deadly effects of high blood pressure and diabetes. We are accepting new patients, and if you're uninsured, we can help you get covered!

To make an appointment or learn about our services, contact us:
www.nxneclinic.org
(503) 287-4932
714 NE Alberta Street
Portland, Oregon 97211

We want to see our community stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please:

-  Protect yourself and others by getting the COVID-19 vaccine when you are eligible. Visit covidvaccine.oregon.gov for more information.
-  Wear your mask.
-  Keep 6 feet of distance from people who do not live with you in your home.

Portland Native to Coach Celtics

Former Portland native and Portland State University basketball star Ime Udoka has become the first PSU player ever to be named Head Coach in the NBA, named last week to coach the Boston Celtics.

Udoka, an alum of Portland's Jefferson High School, ended up playing seven seasons in the NBA. He started 75 games for the Portland Trailblazers in 2006-07.

The 43-year old was an assis-

tant coach for seven seasons with the San Antonio Spurs, an assistant with the Philadelphia 76ers for one year, and this past season with the Brooklyn Nets. He won an NBA Championship as an assistant with the Spurs in 2013-14. Udoka was also an assistant for the 2018 USA Basketball Men's National Team.

"It's an honor to be a part of the historic Celtics franchise," said Udoka. "I look forward to getting started right away."



Ime Udoka reacts during an NBA basketball game back in 2015 while serving as the assistant coach for the San Antonio Spurs. (AP file photo)