

NBA Hawks hold off Trail Blazers

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND — Paul Millsap had 23 points and nine rebounds, and the Atlanta Hawks survived a late rally by Portland to defeat the Trail Blazers 104-98 on Wednesday night.

Kent Bazemore also had 23 points for the Hawks, who have won three straight overall and four straight against the Blazers.

CJ McCollum had 28 points for Portland, which trailed by as many as 13 points in the first half but came all the way to grab an 84-79 lead after Meyers Leonard's 3-pointer with 8:10 left.

Kyle Korver wrestled back the lead for the Hawks with his first 3-pointer of the game, before Millsap's 3-pointer and Al Horford's jumper stretched Atlanta's lead to 98-92 with 1:53 left. Portland couldn't catch up.

Damian Lillard had 18 points for the Blazers, who went 9 for 31 from 3-point range.

Atlanta opened a 33-20 lead on Mike Scott's jumper in the second quarter, but Portland pulled within one at 43-42 after Lillard's long jumper. Atlanta had a 48-43

lead at the break. The Hawks increased their advantage to 66-56 midway through the third, but the Blazers kept hanging around, closing to 74-72 on McCollum's 19-foot jumper.

Lillard hit a 3-pointer and a free throw to tie it at 79 with 9:42 to go. He followed with a running layup that gave Portland its first lead since the first quarter.

TIP-INS

Hawks: With the win, coach Mike Budenholzer tied Bob Weiss for eighth on Hawks' career wins list with 124. ... The game opened a four-city road trip for the Hawks.

Trail Blazers: McCollum has now scored 20 or more points in 20 games this season. ... The Blazers played the music video for Lillard's newly released song "Bigger Than Us."

VANITY PLATES

The Trail Blazers unveiled Oregon's new Trail Blazers license plate, which will be available to drivers this spring. Proceeds from the \$40 surcharge for the plates will be distributed to youth-oriented nonprofits across Oregon. Gov. Kate Brown was on hand for the unveiling.

UP NEXT

Hawks: Visit Sacramento on Thursday night.
Trail Blazers: Host the Lakers on Saturday night.



Atlanta Hawks guard Jeff Teague, left, shoots next to Portland Trail Blazers center Mason Plumlee, right, during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2016.

AP Photo/Craig Mitchellheller

CRC BOYS: The Dalles and Hood River uninspiring in non-league play

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show up to play every single night."

As far as the total team identity, Tedder said it's not fully shaped but is right on the cusp of coming to fruition.

"We've had to fill the void of losing a big man in (graduated CRC Player of the Year) Wes (Persinger)," he said. "We're learning to play with more guards and guard-type players, learning how to play more forward style. We're just hard-nosed, tough guys that play good defense, force turnovers and can make shots."

But what will it take for the Bucks to keep the CRC crown this year?

"Just need to gel more as a team on offense and defense," junior Caden

Smith said. "We need to be more fluent in our offensive game and half court sets, also need to be able to stick with people on defense better."

Defense has been an issue for the Buckaroos this season, averaging 55.8 points against — and scoring 55.9 per game. The Bucks have especially struggled against taller teams, where they get overmatched down low.

But Tedder says that his team just needs to stay focused and their goal of a conference title can be reached.

"The defense is going to be the No. 1 thing to focus on night-in and night-out," he said. "You only have nine games against three teams. It's tough to stay focused and beat a team three times, but these guys are resilient and ready for the challenge."

"It's a new season, we're 0-0 and these guys have to be ready to play."

The Bulldogs on the other hand, begin conference play a little disappointed with how the non-league slate played out, as head coach Dave Ego believes his team underachieved a bit.

"I was a little disappointed," he said. "I think we should've at least been 11-4. We just gotta be able to score."

Hermiston currently has the most wins and most points scored (900) in the four-team league. A couple weeks ago in an upset win over No. 5 Summit, Hermiston reconfigured its lineup to start five guards: Austin Naillon, Chance Flores, Andrew James, Dayshawn Neal and Hunter Walls.

Then senior forward Tre

Neal broke his hand against Nunsyde (WA) last week, forcing the Bulldogs to adopt that small, running strategy full-time. Neal's loss figures to be a big one for Hermiston, as the senior grabbed 80 offensive rebounds in 15 games.

"His offensive boards helped us out a lot," junior Chance Flores said. "We got Preston (Peterson) though. He's real tall. He's been putting in work. I think he'll do good for us this season."

Part of the reason Neal grabbed so many offensive boards — outside of his tenacity and strength — is Hermiston's poor shooting in its first 15 outings. According to Ego's stats, the Bulldogs are shooting just 35 percent from the floor as a team.

But what Neal's absence does give Hermiston is some versatility. By going small,

Hermiston has effectively told teams they want to run. Though Neal is a good athlete, Peterson runs the floor better and his presence is more conducive to a fast-breaking style.

"(Peterson) can get out and run," Flores said. "That's not something we were able to do with Tre."

The Bucks and Bulldogs' counterparts in the CRC are The Dalles and Hood River — both of whom had rough non-league slates.

The Dalles enters league play with a 3-11 record but has allowed a staggering 1,090 points so far (77.8 per game) while scoring just 751 themselves (53.6 per game). Hood River is in a similar situation, finishing 1-11 in its non-league slate — with its lone win coming on Dec. 5 at home against Columbia,

a small Washington school based in White Salmon. Since then, Hood River has dropped 10 straight with six of them coming by double digits.

As one of the three four-team leagues in the OSAA, each squad will play each other three times over the next few weeks, something that can be a good experience and a tiring one.

"It's a lot different because you get to learn that much more about a team playing them a third time," he said. "So sometimes it helps you knowing your opponent more, but sometimes it would be nice to play someone else, too."

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CRC GIRLS: Pendleton starting to gel as team looks for return to state playoffs

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13 spots higher than the next team from the CRC (No. 19 The Dalles).

But despite the gap seemingly being a gulf, head coach Steve Hoffert doesn't sense any complacency from his rather young group.

"We've got out of it what we wanted to get out of it, basically," he said.

Hoffert called that early-season schedule the toughest he's seen in his 26 years of coaching. He also said he thinks Hermiston could've been 14-1 heading into CRC play.

"I couldn't have asked for a better result," he said. "I'm very pleased with what we did. We're very anxious and excited to get into league and trying to make a run at

another title."

The one thing about the 2015-16 edition of the Bulldogs that has Hoffert excited is the amount of depth he has at his disposal. Outside of the everyday starting lineup of Jansen Edmiston, Sara Ramirez, Maddy Juul, Raleigh Andreason and Kynzee Padilla are role players Kiana Heehn, Shaelynn Gilbert and Hayden Meyers, each of which has found a niche.

"I have all the confidence in the world to put any of (the top eight) girls out there in any conference game or any game in the state tournament."

That depth and versatility — any of the starting five can play four or five spots on the floor — only gives more reason to think Hermiston

can dominate the CRC like it has over the course of the league's existence.

"It's been better in prior years," Edmiston said of the league, "but I don't see any problem with us winning the CRC this year."

For CRC rival Pendleton, the Buckaroos limped through most of their non-league schedule, struggling to overcome the loss of four all-league players from the previous season.

Pendleton started off the year with six straight losses by an average margin of 14.5 points, but have begun trending in the upward direction as of late, winning five of its last eight games and feeling good heading into conference play.

"We're kind of excited,"

said Pendleton senior Shelby Greb. "I think we're starting to come together as one. We kind of struggled with that in the beginning but that's like with any team, so I think we're all excited to start the (CRC) season off."

Pendleton has found success with the emergence of more scoring options, becoming more and more of a total team effort as the season rolls along.

"We used to kind of work on individual stuff and couldn't figure out how to play as one," Greb said, "and I think that's become a really key unit for us as a team."

Junior Haley Greb and sophomore Kalan McGlothlan have solidified themselves as key components to Pendleton's offense, but

players such as sophomores Lauren Richards, Rylee Gentner and Shelby Greb have all seen their roles increase and scoring increase as the season has gone along.

But even with the increased success, the Buckaroos still have a steep hill to climb in CRC play with Hermiston and The Dalles — who play each other on Friday — holding some separation at the top.

The Dalles Riverhawks come into conference play with an 8-6 overall record as winners of three of their last five games. The Riverhawks finished just one game back of Pendleton in the CRC last season, and look poised to make the postseason this year.

But with all that being said, it's not stopping Greb

and the Buckaroos from staying focused with the 'new' season approaching. "Just like any team, we always want to win," she said. "Of course we're always looking at first place ... so we'll see."

The fourth CRC team is the Hood River Eagles who come into play with a 3-10 record and losers of eight of their last 10 games. Hood River ended up winless in CRC play last season, and will be motivated to end that streak on Friday night in Pendleton.

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SCOREBOARD

Local slate					Friday					Saturday					Sunday									
PREP BOYS BASKETBALL					Northwest Christian at Eastern Oregon, 7:30 p.m.					Blue Mountain at Yakima Valley, 8 p.m.					Blue Mountain at Wenatchee Valley, 4 p.m.					Corban at Eastern Oregon, 7:30 p.m.				
Today					Irrigon at Culver, 4:30 p.m.					Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 4:30 p.m.					Heppner at Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.					Nixyaawii at Joseph, 6:30 p.m.				
Friday					Pendleton at Hood River, 7 p.m.					The Dalles at Hermiston, 7 p.m.					Ione at South Wasco, 7:30 p.m.					Sherman at Arlington, 7:30 p.m.				
Saturday					Dufur at Condon/Wheeler, 7:30 p.m.					Pine Eagle at Helix, 7:30 p.m.					Condon/Wheeler at Sherman, 3:30 p.m.					Baker at Mac-Hi, 4:30 p.m.				
Today					Nixyaawii at Wallowa, 5:30 p.m.					Helix at Echo, 5:30 p.m.					Arlington at Dufur, 5:30 p.m.					Horizon Christian at Ione, 5:30 p.m.				
PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL					Northwest Christian at Eastern Oregon, 5:30 p.m.					Blue Mountain at Yakima Valley, 6 p.m.					Corban at Eastern Oregon, 5:30 p.m.					Blue Mountain at Wenatchee Valley, 2 p.m.				
Today					Baker at Mac-Hi, 4:30 p.m.					Nixyaawii at Wallowa, 5:30 p.m.					Helix at Echo, 5:30 p.m.					Arlington at Dufur, 5:30 p.m.				
Friday					Hermiston at Reser's TOC (Corvallis), 9 a.m.					Heppner at Pilot Rock, 7:30 p.m.					Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.					Sherman at Arlington, 6 p.m.				
Saturday					Hermiston at Reser's TOC (Corvallis), 9 a.m.					Mac-Hi, Echo at Parma Tournament, 5 p.m.					Pendleton, Hermiston at Hood River, 10 a.m.					COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL				
Friday					Hermiston at Reser's TOC (Corvallis), 9 a.m.					Mac-Hi, Echo at Parma Tournament, 5 p.m.					Pendleton, Hermiston at Hood River, 10 a.m.					COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL				
Saturday					Hermiston at Reser's TOC (Corvallis), 9 a.m.					Mac-Hi, Echo at Parma Tournament, 5 p.m.					Pendleton, Hermiston at Hood River, 10 a.m.					COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL				
Sunday					Hermiston at Reser's TOC (Corvallis), 9 a.m.					Mac-Hi, Echo at Parma Tournament, 5 p.m.					Pendleton, Hermiston at Hood River, 10 a.m.					COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL				

Southeast Division					Central Division					Northwest Division					Pacific Division						
Atlanta	26	17	605	—	Cleveland	29	11	725	—	Oklahoma City	32	12	727	—	San Antonio	36	6	857	—		
Miami	23	20	535	3	Chicago	24	17	585	5	Utah	18	24	429	13	Dallas	25	19	568	12		
Washington	20	21	488	5	Indiana	23	19	548	7	Portland	19	26	422	13	Memphis	24	19	558	12		
Orlando	20	21	488	5	Detroit	23	19	548	7	Denver	16	26	381	15	Houston	22	22	500	15		
Charlotte	19	23	452	6	Milwaukee	19	25	432	12	New Orleans	14	27	341	21	Phoenix	13	30	302	26		
WESTERN CONFERENCE					Southwest Division					Northwest Division					Pacific Division						
Southwest Division					Northwest Division					Pacific Division					Northwest Division						
San Antonio	36	6	857	—	Oklahoma City	32	12	727	—	Golden State	39	4	907	—	San Antonio	36	6	857	—		
Dallas	25	19	568	12	Utah	18	24	429	13	L.A. Clippers	27	14	659	11	Dallas	25	19	568	12		
Memphis	24	19	558	12	Portland	19	26	422	13	Sacramento	18	23	439	20	Washington 106, Miami 87						
Houston	22	22	500	15	Denver	16	26	381	15	Phoenix	13	30	302	26	Philadelphia 96, Orlando 87						
New Orleans	14	27	341	21	Minnesota	13	31	295	19	L.A. Lakers	9	35	205	30	Washington 106, Miami 87						
Eastern Oregon League (3A)					Big Sky League (1A)					Women's Top 25					Wednesday						
Umatilla	3-0	14-4	837	595	10	Con./Whe. 4-1	13-2	671	485	5	1. UConn (17-0) beat UCF 106-51. Next: at SMU, Saturday.	5. Maryland (17-2) beat Wisconsin 90-65. Next: vs. No. 21 Michigan State, Saturday.					6. Texas (17-1) beat TCU 65-58. Next: vs. No. 19 Oklahoma, Saturday.				
Vale	2-1	10-6	670	611	13	Arlington 4-1	11-5	683	492	23	15. South Florida (12-5) lost to Memphis 88-87, OT. Next: at UCF, Sunday.					19. Oklahoma (13-4) beat Texas Tech 92-53. Next: at No. 6 Texas, Saturday.					
Nyssa	1-2	10-7	719	617	18	Ione 4-1	7-6	562	568	21	Thursday's Games					Men's Top 25					
Riverside	0-3	3-12	448	642	31	Sherman 3-2	3-9	394	598	44	Detroit 23, 19, 548, 7					2. North Carolina (17-2) beat Wake Forest 83-68. Next: at Virginia Tech, Sunday.					
Columbia Basin Conference (2A)					Old Oregon League (1A)					Wednesday					Wednesday						
Wes.-McE. 4-0	7-8	654	600	17	Dufur 1-4	2-11	455	612	47	1. UConn (17-0) beat UCF 106-51. Next: at SMU, Saturday.					4. Villanova (17-2) beat Seton Hall 72-71. Next: vs. No. 16 Providence, Saturday.						
Pilot Rock 3-1	12-6	842	703	9	Mitchell 0-5	3-11	415	559	59	2. North Carolina (17-2) beat Wake Forest 83-68. Next: at Virginia Tech, Sunday.					6. West Virginia (15-3) lost to Texas 56-49. Next: at Texas Tech, Saturday.						
Stanfield 2-2	6-8	529	515	28	Big Sky League (1A)					Thursday's Games					11. Michigan State (16-4) lost to Nebraska 72-71. Next: vs. No. 7 Maryland, Saturday.						
Irrigon 2-2	6-8	529	515	28	Con./Whe. 4-1	13-2	671	485	5	Detroit 23, 19, 548, 7					13. Baylor (15-3) beat Kansas State 79-72. 20T. Next: vs. No. 1 Oklahoma, Saturday.						
Culver 1-3	9-7	620	524	24	Arlington 4-1	11-5	683	492	23	Milwaukee 19, 25, 432, 12					15. Miami (14-3) beat Boston College 67-53. Next: vs. Wake Forest, Saturday.						
Heppner 0-4	2-13	399	635	39	Ione 4-1	7-6	562	568	21	WESTERN CONFERENCE					17. Louisville (15-3) beat Florida State 84-65. Next: at Georgia Tech, Saturday.						
Eastern Oregon League (3A)					Big Sky League (1A)					Southwest Division					Central Division						
Nyssa 3-0	8-10	890	894	15	Sherman 3-2	3-9	394	598	44	San Antonio 36	6	857	—	St. Louis 2	18	5	49	123	135		
Riverside 2-1	6-10	690	696	27	S.Wasco 2-3	7-7	438	521	25	Dallas 25	19	568	12	Colorado 2	17	11	49	113	105		
Umatilla 1-2	9-9	905	928	23	Horizon Chr.2-3	5-8	383	543	33	Memphis 24	19	558	12	Anaheim 44	19	18	7	45	88	105	
Eastern Oregon League (3A)	Big Sky League (1A)					Women's Top 25					Wednesday					Wednesday					
Nyssa 3-0	8-10	890	894	15	Dufur 1-4	2-11	455	612	47	1. UConn (17-0) beat UCF 106-51. Next: at SMU, Saturday.					4. Villanova (17-2) beat Seton Hall 72-71. Next: vs. No. 16 Providence, Saturday.						
Riverside 2-1	6-10	690	696	27	Mitchell 0-5	3-11	415	559	59	5. Maryland (17-2) beat Wisconsin 90-65. Next: vs. No. 21 Michigan State, Saturday.					6. Texas (17-1) beat TCU 65-58. Next: vs. No. 19 Oklahoma, Saturday.						
Umatilla 1-2	9-9	905	928	23	Old Oregon League (1A)					Thursday's Games					11. Michigan State (16-4) lost to Nebraska 72-71. Next: vs. No. 7 Maryland, Saturday.						
Eastern Oregon League (3A)	Big Sky League (1A)					Women's Top 25					Wednesday					Wednesday					
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