NBA

Lillard scores 30, Trail Blazers beat Knicks

By BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Damian Lillard scored 30 points, CJ McCollum had 21 of his 25 in the second half and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the New York Knicks 104-85 on Tuesday night for their sixth straight road victory.

The Blazers followed a fantastic February with a blistering start to March, winning for the 18th time in their last 22 games.

Portland
104

New York
85

Lillard reached the 30-point mark for the eighth time in nine games and had 14, nearly half of them, in the final 4:25 of the first half.

Portland went 9-2 in February for the third-best month in franchise history. Lillard averaged 29.8 points in 11 games last month, fourth in the league, and his seven 30-point games tied with Stephen Curry for most in the NBA.

Nothing changed with the calendar, as the Blazers moved to 3-0 halfway through their road trip.

Carmelo Anthony had 23 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, so hopeless in their 15th loss in 18 games that fans spent much of the fourth quarter chanting for Jimmer Fredette, who is nearing the end of his 10-day contract. The former college player of the year finally got in for the final 3:13 and finished with four points.

Portland won its fourth straight at Madison Square Garden and Terry Stotts improved to 7-1 against the Knicks at Blazers coach.

Portland had a one-point lead when Lillard re-entered with 4:25 left in the first half. He quickly nailed a jumper, two 3-pointers and three free throws, and added another 3 that gave the Blazers a 58-50 lead at the break.

McCollum took over from there, with seven points in the first 3 minutes of the third to push the lead into double figures. He closed the period with two baskets around Allen Crabbe's 3-pointer to make it 85-72 heading to a fourth quarter that was never close.

TIP-INS

Trail Blazers: Stotts was the Western Conference coach of the month for February, tying Rick Adelman and Nate McMillan for the most by a Trail Blazers coach. He previously won the award in December 2014 and November 2013. "My reaction is that generally it's about the players and how well they've been playing and how well the team's doing," Stotts said. "As a coach that's your first thought, and also how appreciative I am of my staff. They do a great job. Players have really gotten better since we've been here and it has a lot to do with what they do with them every day."

AP Photo/Kathy Willens

Portland Trail Blazers guard C.J. McCollum (3) drives between New York Knicks forward Derrick Williams (23), forward Kyle O'Quinn (9) and guard Langston Galloway (2) during the first half of an NBA basketball game at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday in New York.

Knicks: New York had zero assists on its 11 first-quarter baskets. ... Anthony had an embarrassing moment in the first quarter when he tried to dunk in frustration after a whistle for a ball out of bounds, but instead slammed the ball into the rim and ended up falling onto his back near the free-throw line.

VOTE LILLARD

Stotts was asked if Lillard had a case to win West player of the month honors. "Yup. I hope so," Stotts said. "I don't know who makes that decision but certainly there's a case. We wouldn't have had the month without him." The players of the month for February, chosen by the league office, will be announced Thursday afternoon.

SPANISH SHIRTS

The teams wore special warmup shirts reading Los Blazers and Nueva York as part of the NBA's Latin Nights program that runs in March. There will be nine games where a team will wear a special uniform in Spanish, including the Knicks in Nueva York uniforms on March 24 against Chicago.

COLBRAY: 'If I put my effort into it … and it doesn't turn out, that's what's meant to be'

Continued from 1B

is the same. A heart is a heart, an elbow an elbow. From there, it was only a small jump to consider medicine as a career. Delta, Colbray's mother, said suddenly one day he wanted to be an orthopedic surgeon.

"It's athletically related," Colbray said. "Knee replacements, hip replacements, shoulders, elbows, anything like that. The reason I wanted to be a doctor was because — besides the money — that's what my parents said: doctors and lawyers. I don't feel like arguing with people and being in a suit and an office."

He felt that doing anything less than law or medicine was selling himself short.

"I could never think of going to a four-year university and not getting the most out of it," he said. "Why would I go to a four-year university (to do anything less)? To lay around and work in an insurance office? Why would I do that? Why would I waste potential?"

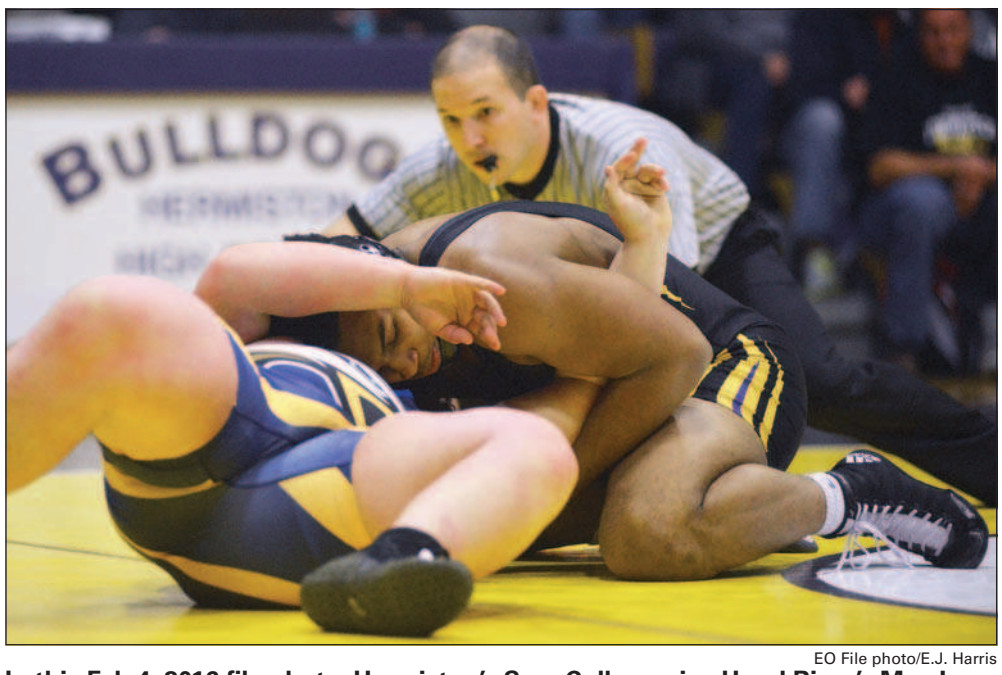
Colbray doesn't want to be a doctor simply because it pays well, though that is a consideration.

"Since he was little he's always excelled (at science)," Delta said. "Not that this says you're not good at science, or that you like science. But he's always had good grades in his science classes. And I thought that that's where it came from. The love of learning about science."

Colbray is not anxious about the challenges of collegiate academics or the rigors of medical school.

"I know that if I weren't prepared and I'm messing around, then I'd be nervous," he said. "I don't stress over things too much. I don't really stress over school."

Perhaps Colbray's academic confidence comes from athletic success. It has taken hard work and determination to become a state and national champion wrestler.



EO File photo/E.J. Harris

In this Feb 4, 2016 file photo, Hermiston's Sam Colbray pins Hood River's Max Lane at a dual meet in Hermiston.

"I know that it's been done before," he said. "It's hard. Wrestling is a job in itself."

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Colbray takes all of his endeavors seriously, including academics.

In his advanced placement English class with Kasia Hoover, Colbray is active in classroom discussions and thinks critically about the material.

Recently, Hoover's class read and discussed George Orwell's classic dystopian novel "1984," and Colbray was as active a member in the class as anyone.

"He's never afraid to say his opinion," Hoover said.

She said Colbray can dig deep into the content and not offer superficial analysis. While discussing "1984," Colbray explored the issue in depth. At the time, they were discussing the parallels between slave-like and anti-individualistic nature of the world in the novel with contemporary events.

"He will pose questions everyone is able to give an opinion on," Hoover said of Colbray acting as a gatekeeper in these discussions. "Sometimes that causes strife or a heated discussion, something I really encourage because it means they're thinking."

Civics teacher Christy was impressed by the way Colbray conducted himself in the classroom.

"Sam as a student is very intellectual," he said. "He has a very good ability to go deep in the issues. For Sam overall, (he) is an excellent student. He has a high expectation in himself in the work that he does and that's portrayed in class as well.

"His ability to articulate his opinion on issues without stepping on people's toes and just stating, 'This is my opinion and this is why' and just being able to go further. Thinking about the higher-level thinking, he's able to analyze and evaluate, and that's a little surprising."

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Colbray is quiet and reserved, but he speaks his mind and is honest and sometimes that rubs people the wrong way. He knows exactly who he is, is comfortable with it and unashamedly likes what he likes.

He and his friends compete in video games on their phones. Colbray doesn't watch TV — a family rule, if you can call it that — so he grew up spending time outside, watching, listening and observing. He appreciates a variety of activities like fishing and hunting trips with Leroy, road trips with Delta, sitting on the porch in the summertime and talking.

Sometimes, he gets lost in wrestling. He loves it so much, Delta said, that sometimes he forgets how much he loves, say, fishing.

"He forgets those things unless he's doing them because of his passion," she said. "He forgets about science and what called his attention to being a doctor, to being a surgeon. Everything in the house is about wrestling. Everything in his room is about wrestling. I think we've instilled in him there's a way to get there. And one way to get there was to get a scholarship."

As much as Colbray enjoys wrestling, as much work as he's put in to the sport, it's just another activity for him, though important. At the state tournament this Saturday between the morning session and finals, Colbray rode a small skateboard across the plaza to where his family was sitting. When asked why he's riding a skateboard hours before he's set to try and win his fourth title, he smiled and said sarcastically, "Trying to get hurt."

Leroy and Delta view wrestling as a means to an end, an opportunity for an education. Leroy knows what happens when athletics are put before academics.

Leroy's experience in college provides the cautionary tale. Leroy, an accomplished high school wrestler in his own right, attended Oregon State with the intention of wrestling. Without giving many details, Leroy said his college career ended with him dropping out because the wrestling thing didn't work out.

"Wrestling (was) a vehicle, for me, to getting an education," Leroy said. "I failed completing my education at Oregon State because I wanted to be a wrestler.

"Sam is an athlete, but he can figure anything out. You leave Sam alone to figure something out, he figures it out better than me without getting frustrated. Just his ability to figure stuff out is uncanny to me. I don't know, I just love him."

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As he sat at his dining table flanked by his parents, Colbray is confident and introspective. He's not nervous about what comes next.

He's also humble. After winning his fourth state title at Veteran's Memorial Coliseum in Portland, he didn't raise four fingers or let out a roar. He shook his opponents' hand, shook the opposing coaches hands, and walked quietly off the mat.

"It's just another match, another day, another wrestling tournament, another consecutive year," he said.

He's made difficult decisions regarding his future. He decided to forgo his senior football season because of head injury concerns, which could have jeopardized his wrestling career.

He knows he's worked hard for what he has already achieved and knows he has to more hard work to come.

"If I put my effort into it and it's hard for me and I use all my resources and it doesn't turn out, that's what's meant to be," he said.

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