

NBA

No more surprises, Blazers want to build on success

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Last season the Trail Blazers were all about defying expectations. This season they want to build on them.

“We did great things last year, now it’s time to prove it up,” guard Damian Lillard said. “It’s time to show that what we did — that’s who we are, that’s what we’re capable of as a team, and we can do better.”

On Monday, the Blazers had their first official gathering, although many players stuck around Portland to work out during the summer. The team also took a bonding trip to San Diego earlier this month.

Portland went 44-38 last season despite losing four starters to free agency the previous summer. The team got the fifth seed in the Western Conference, then beat the injury-depleted Los Angeles Clippers in the first round.

The Blazers ran into the Western Conference champion Warriors in the second round. After dropping the first two games in Oakland, California, Portland won the third at home and lost the

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— **Damian Lillard**, Trail Blazers guard

fourth in overtime. Golden State closed out the series with a nail-biter in Oakland.

“We don’t have a reason to be complacent about last year. We didn’t win a championship,” Lillard said. “The team was put together, and we come together to win it all. Sure, we did some good things last year, but we didn’t do what we’re here for.”

Lillard averaged a career-high 25.1 points in the regular season, becoming the third Portland player ever to average more than 25. He also averaged 6.8 assists.

Backcourt teammate CJ McCollum averaged 20.8 points in his first year as a starter, giving the Blazers their first backcourt duo with an average of 20 or more points



AP Photo/Steve Dykes

Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard (0) poses for a photograph during NBA basketball media day in Portland, Ore., Monday, Sept. 26, 2016.

apiece in a single season. He was named the league’s Most Improved Player.

This summer, McCollum signed a four-year contract extension worth \$106 million that will keep him with the Blazers through the 2020-21 season.

McCollum’s deal was part of a busy offseason as the Blazers sought to secure their young prospects and create depth.

Forward Meyers Leonard is staying in Portland with a four-year, \$41 million deal signed in the offseason. Still rehabbing from shoulder surgery in March, Leonard said he should be able to participate in 5-on-5 drills by Oct. 8, although he may not be in game shape.

Maurice Harkless, who filled a key role when Leonard was injured, also signed a four-year contract

with the Blazers worth a reported \$40 million. Over Portland’s final 11 games, Harkless averaged 12 points and 6.5 rebounds.

The Blazers also brought back Allen Crabbe, a restricted free agent, matching a four-year, \$75 million offer from the Brooklyn Nets. Other returnees for the Blazers include Al-Farouq Aminu and Mason Plumlee.

Portland signed free agent

forward Festus Ezeli and wing Evan Turner and traded to get guard Shabazz Napier and rookie forward Jake Layman.

Turner agreed to a four-year, \$70 million contract at the start of the NBA’s free agency period. Last year with the Celtics, the 6-foot-7 wing averaged 10.5 points, 4.9 rebounds and 4.4 assists as Boston’s sixth man.

“I thought it would be advantageous to my game,” Turner said about signing with the Blazers. “Portland is a hot spot right now, players keep getting better and better.”

Ezeli, who played last season for the Warriors and averaged seven points and 5.6 assists, had a procedure on his left knee in August and was ruled out for at least six weeks. He said Monday he has been cleared to run.

Ezeli was able to go with the team to San Diego, a now-annual trip to bring the players together and work out. The trip south was started by Lillard and McCollum in 2015.

“I always knew they were cool guys and they had good chemistry,” Ezeli said. “But I didn’t know the team was this tight.”

BRIEFLY

Buckaroo Boosters hosting tailgater

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Buckaroos will finally play their home opener on Friday night, but beforehand the Buckaroo Boosters are throwing a free tailgate party.

The Fall Tailgater will start on Friday at 5 p.m. at Roy Raley Park, where the first 300 people can get free hot dogs and beverages. Tailgaters can also meet all of the Pendleton fall sports athletes before the football game against Redmond starts at 7 p.m. next door to the park at the Round-Up grounds.

BMCC hosting alumni baseball game on Saturday

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Timberwolves are hosting an alumni baseball game on Saturday afternoon, and the public are welcome to attend.

The Timberwolves have a commitment from 10 alumni so far to take on the 2016-2017 Timberwolf squad for an exhibition game, including Spencer Cordeiro (2016 alumnus), Alex Storaci, Theo Winter, Cody Pedroza, and Chris Henke to name a few. Baker himself will also be playing.

The game starts at 1 p.m. at the BMCC baseball field and is free to attend.

— East Oregonian

PREPS: Helix volleyball gets comeback win over Echo

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Eagles on Tuesday. “(Hood River is) an extremely talented team,” Pendleton coach Jeremy Talbot said. “Felt my guys gave about everything they had despite the result.”

Pendleton (1-4-1, 0-1 CRC) will next travel to Mac-Hi on Thursday for a 4 p.m. start.

VOLEYBALL

HOOD RIVER 3, PENDLETON 0 — At Hood River, down a starter the Buckaroos had to try out a new lineup in Tuesday’s Columbia River Conference match and got off to a rocky start before losing in straight sets 25-7, 25-18, 25-21.

Pendleton coach Amanda Lapp said the absence of senior Haley Greb (medical) couldn’t be blamed for the lopsided outcome, though, and the Bucks (3-8, 0-4 CRC) struggled with their serving and defense.

Pendleton’s next game is Thursday when it hosts The Dalles at 6:30 p.m.

THE DALLES 3, HERMISTON 0 — At Hermiston, a rash of unforced errors kept the Bulldogs from finding their rhythm in a Columbia River Conference loss on Tuesday with scores of 25-12, 25-20, 22-25, 25-20.

Hermiston coach Elise Fleming said The Dalles (3-6, 2-2 CRC) wasn’t overpowering, but found its edge with consistency.

Baylee Powers paced the Hermiston (5-7, 2-2) defense with 18 digs while Clarissa Nitz added 18 assists. Maddy Juul had a team-high six kills and Sophia Streeter added five.

Hermiston’s next game is Thursday at Hood River at 6:30 p.m.

WESTON-MCEWEN 3, HEPPNER 0 — At Heppner, great serving and few passing

errors lifted the TigerScots in Columbia Basin Conference action on Tuesday with scores of 25-13, 25-15, 25-16.

Weston-McEwen (14-9, 2-1 CBC) was led at the service line by Alyssa Finifrock, who went 13 for 13 with three aces to go with her seven kills. Bryce Thul and Sara von Borstel also had three aces, and Ali Schroeder added two.

Sarah Finifrock had a team-high 11 kills, Von Borstel led them with 13 digs and Schroeder had 17 assists.

PILOT ROCK 3, UMATILLA 0 — At Pilot Rock, the Rockets grabbed a non-league sweep with wins of 25-12, 25-15, 25-17 over Umatilla.

Rhyanne Oates paced a strong serving night for Pilot Rock (11-6, 2-1 CBC) with nine aces, Siobahn Holman had 15 assists and Kayla Diest had a team-high six kills.

Rachel Willingham and Tehya Ostrom added five kills each.

Pilot Rock hosts Weston-McEwen on Thursday at 5 p.m. Umatilla will host Nyssa at 5 p.m.

LA GRANDE 3, MAC-HI 0 — At La Grande, the Pioneers were ready for La Grande’s tips at the net, but couldn’t do enough in other areas to get a Greater Oregon League win on Tuesday with scores of 14-25, 13-25, 13-25.

Brittany Wells led Mac-Hi (1-8, 0-2 GOL) with 26 digs, and Delaney Karrels finished with six assists.

The Pioneers will play at Ontario at noon on Saturday.

HELIX 3, ECHO 2 — At Helix, the Grizzlies talked about needing to win Tuesday’s Old Oregon League match to remain in the postseason hunt, and refused to accept defeat after falling behind two game to one.

Helix rallied in the last two games to take the match 25-20, 24-26, 12-25, 25-21, 15-13.

Sadie Wilson led Helix (12-5, 3-2 OOL) with 14 kills, Ari Krol was 25-of-27 serving with three aces and Kailey Mize had five blocks.

Helix plays at Cove on Thursday at 5 p.m. Echo will host Wallowa on Friday at 4 p.m.

CULVER 3, STANFIELD 0 — At Stanfield, strong net play kept the Tigers in the game but it wasn’t enough to overcome the Bulldogs in Columbia Basin Conference play on Tuesday. Culver won 25-15, 25-18, 25-10.

Brittin Braithwaite had a team-high five blocks and four kills, Kendra Hart added two blocks and three kills and Kenzie Gonzales had a block.

Stanfield will host Heppner on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

MARINERS: Hernandez ties season highs for hits and runs

Continued from 1B

Houston starter Mike Fiers allowed eight hits and four runs in five innings. Rookie Jandel Gustave (1-0) yielded no hits and no runs with one walk in 1 1/3 innings for his first career win.

Hernandez tied season highs by allowing 10 hits and eight runs, four of them earned, in 5 2/3 innings. It was his second straight tough start in Houston after he yielded five hits and eight runs in a third of an inning

of a 10-0 loss on June 12, 2015, to tie the shortest start of his career. He also struggled against Houston at home earlier this month when he allowed nine hits and six runs in 4 1/3 inning of a 6-0 loss to the Astros on Sept. 16.

The Astros trailed 4-2 entering the sixth before Jose Altuve and Carlos Correa hit consecutive singles with no outs. Yuli Gurriel grounded into a force out that scored Altuve and left Correa out at second. Shortstop Ketel Marte made an error

on the play that allowed Gurriel to reach first. Tony Kemp drew a walk before pinch-hitter Alex Bregman’s RBI single tied it.

Jake Marisnick then reached on an error by Lind before Springer and Gonzalez drove in two runs each.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Astros: Bregman’s pinch hit in the seventh was his first action since leaving a game on Sept. 14 with a right hamstring injury. He was replaced by a pinch-runner

after his hit.

UP NEXT

Mariners: James Paxton (5-7, 3.72) is scheduled to start for Seattle on Wednesday. Paxton allowed five hits and one run while striking out nine in seven innings for a win over Minnesota in his last start.

Astros: Doug Fister (12-12, 4.42) will pitch for Houston on Wednesday. Fister has had a tough time lately, losing his last four decisions with the Astros dropping each of the last six games he’s started.

SCOREBOARD

Local Slate

PREP FOOTBALL									
Friday									
Hermiston at Hood River, 7 p.m.									
Redmond at Pendleton, 7 p.m.									
Burns at Umatilla, 7 p.m.									
Riverside at Irrigon, 7 p.m.									
Arlington at Ione, 7 p.m.									
Wallowa at Echo, 7 p.m.									
Weston-McEwen at Heppner, 7 p.m.									
Culver at Stanfield, 7 p.m.									
Enterprise at Pilot Rock, 7 p.m.									
PREP VOLLEYBALL									
Thursday									
Weston-McEwen at Pilot Rock, 5 p.m.									
Heppner at Stanfield, 5 p.m.									
Horizon Christian at Arlington, 5 p.m.									
South Wasco at Ione, 5 p.m.									
Helix at Cove, 5 p.m.									
The Dalles at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.									
Hermiston at Hood River, 6:30 p.m.									
Friday									
Burns at Irrigon, 4 p.m.									
Wallowa at Echo, 4 p.m.									
Vale at Riverside, 5 p.m.									
Arlington at Ione, 5 p.m.									
Nyssa at Umatilla, 6:30 p.m.									
Saturday									
Hermiston, Pendleton at Westview Tournament, 8:30 a.m.									
Pine Eagle at Helix, 10 a.m.									
Ontario at Mac-Hi, Noon									
Nyssa at Riverside, Noon									
Vale at Irrigon, Noon									
Ione at Condon/Wheeler, 1 p.m.									
Burns at Umatilla, 1 p.m.									
Joseph at Echo, 1 p.m.									
Nyssa at Irrigon, 4 p.m.									
Burns at Riverside, 5 p.m.									
Vale at Umatilla, 5:30 p.m.									
PREP BOYS SOCCER									
Thursday									
Pendleton at Mac-Hi, 4 p.m.									
Saturday									
Umatilla at Irrigon, 1 p.m.									
Riverside at City Christian, 1 p.m.									
PREP GIRLS SOCCER									
Thursday									
Mac-Hi at Pendleton, 4 p.m.									
Riverside at Portland Christian, 4:15 p.m.									
Umatilla at De La Salle, 4:15 p.m.									
Saturday									
Mac-Hi at Baker, 2 p.m.									
PREP CROSS COUNTRY									
Thursday									
Hermiston, Umatilla at Hermiston (River-front), 4:45 p.m.									
Friday									
Mac-Hi, Weston-McEwen, Heppner at Mac-Hi, Noon									
Stanfield at Bend, 2 p.m.									
COLLEGE FOOTBALL									

Saturday

Eastern Oregon at MSU-Northern, 5 p.m.

COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

Today

Blue Mountain at Walla Walla, 6 p.m.

Friday

Columbia Basin at Blue Mountain, 6 p.m.

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 7 p.m.

Saturday

Eastern Oregon at Southern Oregon, 5 p.m.

COLLEGE MEN'S SOCCER

Friday

Oregon Tech at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.

Saturday

Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S SOCCER

Today

Columbia Basin at Blue Mountain, 2 p.m.

Friday

Oregon Tech at Eastern Oregon, 3:30 p.m.

Saturday

Blue Mountain at Wenatchee Valley, Noon

Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon, 3:30 p.m.

Prep Standings

VOLLEYBALL

5A Columbia River Conference

	Conf.	Ovr.	SW	SL	Rnk
Hood River	4-0	17-1	41	8	7
Hermiston	2-2	5-7	15	18	16
The Dalles	2-2	3-6	10	19	24
Pendleton	0-4	3-8	17	23	28

4A Greater Oregon League

	Conf.	Ovr.	SW	SL	Rnk
Baker	3-0	16-3	44	13	4
La Grande	2-1	8-7	22	23	14
Ontario	0-2	1-9	15	24	27
Mac-Hi	0-2	1-8	7	21	31

3A Eastern Oregon League

	Conf.	Ovr.	SW	SL	Rnk
Vale	2-0	15-3	39	10	4
Irrigon	2-0	14-7	36	12	12
Burns	1-1	8-6	23	16	11
Riverside	1-1	3-10	13	31	33
Nyssa	0-2	1-7	19	24	29
Umatilla	0-2	1-15	7	37	35

2A Columbia Basin Conference

	Conf.	Ovr.	SW	SL	Rnk
Culver	4-0	14-1	39	8	2
Weston-McEwen	2-1	11-9	39	23	6
Pilot Rock	2-1	11-6	30	17	15
Hoppono	0-3	1-10	27	24	19
Stanfield	0-3	2-9	6	25	28

1A Big Sky League

	Conf.	Ovr.	SW	SL	Rnk
Arlington	7-0	10-1	28	6	4
Dufur	6-1	8-9	24	31	15
South Wasco	5-2	11-3	32	10	13
lone	4-3	6-9	21	27	24