

NBA Trail Blazers trade up to get Gonzaga's Zach Collins

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Portland Trail Blazers traded up to get another big man.

Portland, which had three first-round picks going into Thursday night's NBA draft, dealt the No. 15 and No. 20 picks to the Sacramento Kings for the No. 10 pick, center Zach Collins out of Gonzaga.

The 7-footer, who played off the bench in his lone season with the Bulldogs, averaged 10 points, 5.9 rebounds and 1.8 blocks per game.

Collins, 19, was Gonzaga's first one-and-done player. For the draft in New York, he paid homage to his hometown with a blazer lining and shoes decorated with "Las Vegas" prints.

He found out about the trade "about 30 seconds" before he took the stage and donned a Kings hat, he said.

In return for Collins, Sacramento got the draft rights to small forward Justin Jackson out of North Carolina, the 15th overall pick, and Duke forward Harry Giles, the 20th.

Portland also took 6-foot-9 forward Caleb Swanigan out of Purdue with the 26th pick. The Big Ten Player of the Year averaged 18.5 points and 12.5 rebounds last season as a sophomore.

Collins said he can play at either the four or the five. He could be used in tandem with Jusuf Nurkic, a 6-foot-11 center who joined Portland in a February trade with Denver.

Portland also has 7-footer Meyers Leonard, a four-year veteran of the team.

Collins didn't mince words when it comes to what he thinks he can accomplish in his first year: "I don't see why I can't be Rookie of the Year."

Portland went 41-41 last season before getting ousted by the Golden State Warriors in the first round of the playoffs. It was the fourth straight year that the Blazers advanced to the postseason.

But upon his arrival, Nurkic developed chemistry with backcourt duo Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum, going on to average 15.2 points, 10.4 rebounds and 1.9 blocks in 20 games with the Blazers. Portland was 14-5 with Nurkic in the starting lineup.

The Blazers' winningest starting lineup included Lillard, McCollum, Nurkic and forwards Noah Vonleh and Maurice Harkless.

"To be honest, I just know that they're a tough team and they don't really back down from anybody," Collins said. "And those are traits I grew up with and are part of my game as well. Just that, in itself, I can fit in almost perfectly there."

OREGON DUCKS DRAFTED

Former Oregon Ducks Jordan Bell, Tyler Dorsey, and Dillon Brooks all heard their names called in the second round on Thursday. Bell went 38th overall to Chicago and then was traded to Golden State, Dorsey went 41st overall to Atlanta, and Brooks went 45th overall to Houston.



Collins

ALL-EO SECOND TEAM

Pitchers

- **Skylar Wightman, jr., Riverside** — 162 K, 126 IP -- .667 avg., 10 HR, 59 RBI, .837 OBP, 1.270 SLG
- **Julissa Almaguer, jr. Hermiston** — 8-11, 2.31 ERA, 58 K -- .309 avg.
- **Kenzie Gonzales, sr., Echo** — 7-4, 3.43 ERA, 63 K -- .442 avg., 20 R, 20 RBI

Catcher

- **Sydney Peal, sr., Weston-McEwen** — .406 avg., 16 R, 19 RBI, 2 HR, 10 CS

Infield

- **Jada Burns, jr., Irrigon** — 1st team all-Special District 1
- **Sara Weinke, jr., Pilot Rock** — .526 avg., 7 HR, 7 2B, 25 R, 43 RBI, .897 SLG
- **Rylee Gentner, jr. Pendleton** — 2nd team all-Columbia River Conference.
- **Hannah McCarty, sr., Echo** — .433 avg., .627 SLG, 25 R, 22 RBI, 7 2B.

Outfield

- **Amie Coffman, soph., Weston-McEwen** — .362 avg., 21 RBI, 21 R.
- **Courtney Cain, soph., Weston-McEwen** — .423 avg., 3 HR, 17 RBI, 28 R, .704 SLG.
- **Onna DeLoach, sr., Heppner** — .333 avg., 1st team all-Special District 6

Utility

- **Aspen Garton, soph., Pendleton** — 1st team all-Columbia River Conference
- **Ellery Jones, sr., Hermiston** — .389 avg., .528 SLG, 18 R
- **Brooke Smiley, sr., Mac-Hi** — .348 avg., 17 R, 16 RBI, .551 SLG.

ALL-EO HONORABLE MENTION

Pitchers

- **Mya Chapman, Irrigon, jr.** — 2nd team all-Special District 1
- **Kayla Gilman, Irrigon, sr.** — 2nd team all-Special District 1
- **Dakota Durfey, Heppner, soph.** — 9-10, 67 K, 88 2/3 IP
- **Alyssa Ray, Echo, jr.** — 5-6, 77K, 63 2/3 IP.
- **McKenna Stallings, Mac-Hi, fr.** — 5-2, 3.05 ERA, 37 K, 43 IP
- **Sydney Earls, Mac-Hi, soph.** — 3-3, 2.86 ERA.

Catcher

- **Bailee Noland, Hermiston, fr.** — .300 avg., 2 HR, 12 R, 22 caught stealing
- **Kila Solomon, Pendleton, soph.** — 2nd team all-Columbia River Conference

Infield

- **Sydney Richwine, Mac-Hi, sr.** — .338 avg., 22 R, 18 RBI, 1st team all-GOL.
- **Sadie Hasbell, Riverside, sr.** — .536 avg., 1 HR, 10 2B, 45 RBI, .737 OBP.
- **Sydney Stefani, Hermiston, soph.** — .333 avg., 20 R, 26 SB.
- **Morgan Correa, Heppner, jr.** — .418 avg., .552 SLG, .716 OBP, 35 R, 13 RBI.
- **Monique Montoya, Echo, jr.** — .487 avg., .711 avg., 35 RBI, 28 R, 17 2B.
- **Jacey Wilson, Pilot Rock, sr.** — .364 avg., .467 OBP, 27 RBI, 28 R.
- **Charmayne Bennett, Weston-McEwen, jr.** — .297 avg., 7 HR, 25 R, 25 RBI.

Outfield

- **Kendra Hart, Echo, fr.** — .519 avg., .667 SLG.
- **Ema Combes, Irrigon, fr.** — 1st team all-Special District 1.
- **Maddie Parker, Pendleton, sr.** — All-Columbia River Conference honorable mention.
- **Graci Bullock, Mac-Hi, fr.** — .319 avg., 13 R.

Utility

- **Codi Hewlett, Echo, fr.** — .319 avg., 27 R.

ALL-EO: Richards ready for 2017, says "We're going to get a state title"

Continued from 1B

all-time campaigns for a Pendleton pitcher.

Her 229 strikeouts in 157 innings pitched puts her No. 1 in the school record book for strikeouts in a single season, and per an inning (1.46). She surpassed Alex Hillmick's 2010 season (171, 1.43) in both categories.

"I kind of knew going into the season that I was wanting to go for the strikeout record, so I kind of kept track of that on my own. Just set that goal," Richards said.

"That's something she kept to herself for awhile," Cary said. "She's a pretty quiet player really. She sets her goals and she sets them high, but she keeps them to herself and goes after them on her own.

"As a coaching staff we figured out pretty quick that she was well on her way."

After striking out 145 batters while splitting time with then-senior Kiersten Murphy in 2016, Richards had already shown a solid command of the strike zone, but her ability to mow down batters at a record pace wasn't something Cary had anticipated.

"We knew she was a good pitcher, and we knew she would be successful because she has been a great ground-ball pitcher, and really moves the ball around well," he said. "But she picked up a lot of velocity from this season to last season. The extra strikeouts were an added bonus."

Richards also planted her flag high atop the Buckaroo leaderboard for wins, oppo-

nents' batting average (OBA) and earned run average (ERA). Her 21 wins is No. 2 all-time, her .156 OBA is fourth, and her 1.25 ERA ranks 12th.

"My coaches, pitching coaches and teammates, I couldn't have got here without them, for sure," Richards said. "They just help me so much and I don't think they get enough credit for it. What I do in the circle, they're definitely a huge part of it and I wouldn't have had as much success as I had without them."

Richards also pitched nine shutouts, but for as much as she coveted the strikeout record, she said she doesn't really like to use stats as a measuring stick.

"I mean, stats are fun to look at, but I don't think it

defines the type of athlete you are, or player," Richards said. "I think sports goes far beyond stats and it takes a lot more to be a good athlete."

And she's absolutely right, because as impressive as her numbers were, it was her ability to continually come through for the Bucks in clutch situations that really made Richards stand out amongst her peers.

She said her competitive streak is the result of being the youngest in a household that has already produced two Division I college athletes.

"I still get stories from my grandparents and parents. I hate losing, and I hated losing when I was a child," she said. "They always had to let me win in whiffle ball or any game we played." She said she still can't

live down the time when, as a 6-year-old, simply getting tagged out in a backyard game was enough to induce a meltdown, "so now they let me round the bases."

There's nobody giving her a free pass these days, though, and Richards has proven herself capable of earning her bases with a .394 batting average that came with nine doubles and 24 runs scored.

Richards also earns her stats in the time she puts in outside what she does with the Buckaroos.

"She leads by example, there's nobody that outworks her, that's for sure," Cary said. "She's pitching or hitting with her dad on days and times that we don't have practice. Sometimes they're hitting on the field before

school starts.

"She has a true competitive desire to be the best. ... In fact, she probably works too much at some points, and we have to tell her to take a day off. It's hard to get her to take a day off. You've got to love a kid that just goes out and works and works."

Richards has remained true to form since the season's end, and is already playing in tournaments and lining up camps to attend this summer.

She said a repeat run at the strikeout record isn't on her agenda, though.

"I think my whole team is determined, and I'm already working on new things I can bring," she said. "I'm definitely coming ready for next year, we're going to get a state title."

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