

# Blazers lose third straight

By Michael Kelly  
Associated Press

DENVER — Nikola Jokic had 41 points and Jamal Murray celebrated his 24th birthday by scoring 19 of his 24 in the fourth quarter to lead the Denver Nuggets over the Portland Trail Blazers 111-106 on Tuesday night.

Damian Lillard had 20 of his 25 points in the second half and added 13 assists but it wasn't enough for the Blazers, who were coming off a 32-point loss Monday night in Phoenix. They have dropped three straight after a six-game winning streak.

"It's frustrating just because we want to win games," Lillard said. "It's as

high as you can get when you're having success. Sometimes you come out on the losing side. We were playing at a high level for a long stretch of games. It's not easy to sustain that level."

Lillard had only five points at halftime but the Blazers rallied from 12 down to tie it at the break behind Carmelo Anthony's big second quarter. Anthony hit six of eight shots and two of his three 3-point attempts, scoring 16 of his 19 first-half points in the period. He finished with 24.

"We rode Melo in the second quarter," Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "I thought he was outstanding in the second quarter. The game

slowed down in the second half and their two best players played great. Murray had an outstanding fourth quarter when it counted."

Jokic had 23 points in the first half and 12 more in the third quarter to help Denver forge a tie heading into the final 12 minutes.

Murray, held in check for the first three quarters, ended the night with a big fourth. He hit six of his next seven shots and three from deep, putting Denver ahead 93-90 with a step-back 3 with 5:59 left.

Murray then made a layup off a bounce pass from Jokic and a turnaround jumper in the lane that gave the Nuggets a 99-92 lead.

Murray also hit four free throws in the final 10 seconds to answer 3-pointers from Lillard and Anthony.

## TIP-INS

- Trail Blazers: Portland has lost three straight for the first time this season.
- Nuggets: Denver was still without Gary Harris (adductor), P.J. Dozier (hamstring), Paul Millsap (left knee strain) and JaMychal Green (right shoulder)

## UP NEXT

- Trail Blazers: At the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday night.
- Nuggets: Host the Washington Wizards tonight.

## FOOTBALL

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"We have some things in mind in terms of football things we need to do, we may need to go under center a little bit, kind of re-work some of our offensive packages," Ramos said.

Van Arsdall actually sees the snow as an advantage.

"We are out here practicing in the snow, having snowball fights, sledding for conditioning," he said. "I think it brings us together and makes us better."

### An abbreviated season

Ramos acknowledges that the truncated schedule does pose a significant challenge for the Baker coaching staff.

"Since we lost some of the lead up preparation we've had to kind of rush through things, we have thrown a lot at the kids lately," Ramos said. "Our older guys are good with it, because they are veterans and they are ready to go. Our younger guys right now, we may be going a little too fast for them right now. We are going to have to be creative on how we structure our practices going forward."

One of those veterans is senior

*"I want to have a great season, go undefeated and have a great time enjoying the last year of football."*

— Gabe Gambleton,  
Baker senior quarterback

Gabe Gambleton, a quarterback and slotback.

He said he's eager to start playing, and to compete alongside his teammates one last time.

"I want to have a great season, go undefeated and have a great time enjoying the last year of football," Gambleton said.

Bloomer, a running back and linebacker, believes the Bulldogs have a good chance to win all their games.

"I think this year we could go undefeated pretty easily, and I think it will probably happen," Bloomer said.

Although football is back on the schedule, fans won't be allowed to attend, at least to start.

Buell Gonzales Jr., the Baker School District's athletic director, said on Tuesday, Feb. 23, that he hopes to reassess the situation once the season starts to see if it's possible to have at least limited attendance.

Gonzales said the district has to comply with Oregon Health Authority (OHA) regulations.

So long as Baker County is at the lowest of the four risk levels — which it will be at least through March 11 — up to 300 people, including players and coaches, could be present for any outdoor sporting event.

If the county dropped to the moderate level, the capacity would be halved, to 150 people.

In the interim, Gonzales said, the school district will livestream all home sporting events.

"Our community has always supported and followed us well, supported us well and traveled well," Ramos said. "We plan on streaming games, and have people available to watch, whatever we can do to have our fans and our parents be there and be supportive as much as possible."

But regardless of who's sitting in the grandstand, Gambleton said he's eager just to play again.

"I can't wait to get under Friday night lights," Gambleton said.

Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Senior quarterback  
Gabe Gambleton



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