

Lillard should be All-Star Game starter

As the midway point of the National Basketball Association's season approaches, the rumblings about the All-Star Game starting lineups broke through on television and social media.

To no surprise we see LeBron James (17th time), Stephen Curry (7th) and Kevin Durant (11th) among the starters.

And once again, Damian Lillard was left out of the starting lineup.

That the Portland Trail Blazers' star wasn't among the starters is disappointing, but not surprising.

Since entering the league in 2012, Lillard has been the face of the Trail Blazers franchise, racking up awards and recognitions, helping lead Portland to the playoffs in all but his first year, and making five All-Star Game appearances. Lillard's career stats stand at 24.5 points, 6.6 assists and 4.2 rebounds per game. He's on his way to a Hall of Fame career.

So where is my argument then?

All-Star voting is completely backward. Fans' votes determine the starting lineups, a system designed to make the event more interactive for viewers.

And it means Lillard has to compete with players with huge fan bases, such as Curry



COREY KIRK

and the Slovenian star Luka Doncic.

Lillard missed being named an All-Star Game starter by roughly half a million votes.

Yet Lillard's colleagues, and the reporters who cover the NBA, recognize his elite status. According to the NBA Public Relations, Lillard is ranked as the second best Western Conference guard. Though Curry and Doncic both deserve to be in the game, Lillard averages more points per game (29.8) than Doncic (28.8). He averages more assists (7.9) than Curry (6.2). Not only that, Doncic openly admitted to the media that he was surprised he was chosen to start over Lillard.

"I was surprised to be a starter to be honest," Doncic said of his selection. "I know Lillard deserved it maybe more than me."

Though Doncic's modesty is charming, I don't want to take away from those who are selected to play. I just want Lillard to get the full recognition he has earned with his play.

The NBA should let fans determine the All-Star players who aren't starters.

If that system were in place, Lillard would likely be starting



Harry How/Getty Images-TNS

The Portland Trail Blazers' Damian Lillard (0) scores on a layup past the Los Angeles Lakers' Alex Caruso (4), Montrezl Harrell (15) and Dennis Schroder (17) at Staples Center in Los Angeles on Friday, Feb. 26.

in the backcourt for the West team with Steph, and Doncic would come off the bench.

I'm impressed that Lillard, despite being overlooked once again, remains unaffected by the slight.

"I've always been a person that would get the shorter end of the stick, that's kind of like my story," Lillard told KOIN-TV reporter AJ

McCord. "That's just been the battle for me my whole career."

Although it's a great honor to be named an NBA all-star, whether you're a starter or a reserve, Lillard's consistently superior performance is indisputable.

He deserves to be on the court, not the bench, when the All-Star Game tips off.

OREGON VS. OREGON STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Beavers upset 14th-ranked Ducks, 88-77

EUGENE (AP) — Aleah Goodman scored 20 points, leading six into double figures as a deep and balanced Oregon State offense knocked off No. 14 Oregon 88-77 in the annual rivalry game on Sunday, Feb. 28.

The game was a regular-season finale for both teams, who await seeding into the conference tournament

March 3-7 in Las Vegas.

Goodman scored on breakaways, on stepbacks and added a pair of 3-pointers for good measure. Sasha Goforth added 17 points for Oregon State (9-6, 7-6 Pacific-12 Conference), making 9 of 9 free throws. Ellie Mack and Taya Corosdale each scored 14; Corosdale hitting 4 of 5 from beyond the arc. Taylor Jones scored

11 and Talia von Oelhoffen 10 for the Beavers, who shot 50% for the game (27 of 54) with 11 3-pointers.

Sedona Prince paced the Ducks (13-7, 10-7) with 22 points on 9 of 15 shooting, but scored only four in nine minutes after halftime. Taylor Mikesell and Erin Boley each added 16 points and Nyara Sabally 13 with 10 rebounds for Oregon.

OREGON STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Beavers get rare Bay Area sweep

STANFORD, Calif. (AP) — Jarod Lucas scored a career-high 26 points to lead Oregon State to a 73-62 victory over Stanford on Saturday, Feb. 27.

The Beavers (13-11, 9-9 Pac-12) took the lead for good with about 14 minutes to play and led 65-54 with 3:11 remaining when Lucas hit a deep 3-pointer from the center of the arc.

Oregon State swept both Stanford and California on the road for the first time since the 2008-09 season, while the Cardinal (14-11, 10-9) had not lost to Oregon State and Oregon at home in the same season since 1985-86.

Ethan Thompson had 13 points for the Beavers. Warith Alatishe added 10 points and eight rebounds.

Ziaire Williams scored 14 points off the bench to lead Stanford. Lukas Kisunas matched his career best with 12 points and Spencer Jones had 10. The Cardinal had a 10-point lead in the first half, but the Beavers closed on a 14-5 run to cut the deficit to 34-33 at the break.

Oscar da Silva, the Cardinal's leading scorer and rebounder, missed his second straight game due to a lower extremity injury.

OREGON MEN'S BASKETBALL

Ducks top California

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — LJ Figueroa had 20 points, a career-high 14 rebounds and five steals, Eugene Omoruyi scored 21 points and Oregon beat California 74-63 on Saturday, Feb. 27.

Oregon scored the first four points of the game and led the rest of the way. Figueroa, Omoruyi and Chris Duarte combined for 38 second-half points, while Oregon held Cal to 36. Figueroa had 15 points after the break, Duarte added 13 and Omoruyi 10 as Oregon shot 56%.

Figueroa scored the final seven points of a game-changing 11-0 run for a 63-45 lead with 7:34 left. Omoruyi had the other four points — all from the line.

Duarte finished with 17 points for Oregon (16-5, 11-4 Pac-12 Conference), which only got four points from its bench. Oregon turned 11 Cal turnovers into 27 points, including 18 in the second half.

The Ducks have won seven of their last eight games with a 72-58 loss to No. 19 USC.

Ryan Betley scored 13 points, and Andre Kelly and Matt Bradley each added 12 for Cal (8-19, 3-17), which lost its fourth straight game to close the regular season. Jarred Hyder had 10 points.



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