

Sports

Stotts ends 9-year run as Trail Blazers' head coach

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND—No team in the NBA has a longer active streak of postseason appearances than the Portland Trail Blazers, who have gotten there in each of the last eight seasons.

That wasn't enough to save Terry Stotts, and Portland will have a new coach next season.

The Trail Blazers and Stotts parted ways Friday, ending a nine-year run that saw the team good enough to get to the playoffs — but not good enough to get past the first round in four of the last five seasons.

"I have the utmost respect for Terry and what he has accomplished these past nine seasons," Blazers President Neil Olshey said. "This was a difficult decision on both a personal and professional level but it's in the best interest of the franchise to move in another direction."

"Terry will always hold a special place in the Trail Blazer family and the Portland community. We relied on the integrity, professionalism and consistency he brought to the job every day and we wish he and Jan nothing but the best."

It was being termed as a mutual decision. The move was made one day after Portland's season ended with a six-game, first-round ouster at the hands of the Denver Nuggets, a defeat that had Blazers guard Damian Lillard taking to social media after the game to indicate his frustration.

"Just like at the end of every year, we are all evaluated," Stotts said after the season finale against Denver and as speculation about his status immediately started to grow. "We will see what happens."

It didn't take long to get an answer.

Stotts, 63, was the NBA's fourth longest-tenured coach in his current job behind only San Antonio's Gregg Popovich, Miami's Erik Spoelstra and Dallas' Rick Carlisle. He went 402-318 in his nine regular seasons in Portland, with the eight playoff berths, and led the team to the Western Conference finals in 2019 — where the Blazers were swept by Golden State.

Well-liked throughout the league, Stotts was an assistant under Carlisle with the Mavericks for four years before taking over the Blazers. One of his most memorable seasons in Portland came in 2015-16, when the Blazers overachieved and went to the conference semifinals — despite losing starters LaMarcus Aldridge, Nic Batum,



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian

Trail Blazers head coach Terry Stotts takes in the final moments of Portland's series-ending loss to the Denver Nuggets in Game 6 of their first-round NBA playoffs matchup at Moda Center on Thursday, June 3, 2021.

"Terry will always hold a special place in the Trail Blazer family and the Portland community."

— Neil Olshey, Portland Trail Blazers president

Wesley Matthews and Robin Lopez in the offseason.

Rumors about Stotts' future with the Blazers began swirling last month, but the team's elimination by Denver sealed his fate. He had one year left on his contract in Portland.

The new coach, whoever it is, will certainly be lured by the chance to work with one of the game's dynamic scorers in Lillard.

But Lillard fueled speculation about his own future in Portland following the elimination loss to the Nuggets. He posted a photo of himself in street clothes at the Moda Center. The caption that he added quoted the late rapper and activist Nipsey Hussle.

"How long should I stay dedicated?" he wrote. "How long til opportunity meet preparation?"

If he stays, Lillard will no doubt have input into who the Blazers choose to be their new coach.

Portland finished the regular season 42-30 and earned the sixth seed in the Western Conference. The team was riding momentum, having won 10 of its final 12 regular-season games.

The Blazers were also healthy, with both big man Jusuf Nurkic and guard CJ McCollum back from extended absences because of injuries.

But once again, the playoff trip was brief.

Lillard averaged a league-best 34.3 points and 10.2 assists in the playoffs, after averaging 28.8 points and 7.5 assists during the regular season.

He had 55 points, including a playoff record 12 3-pointers and 10 assists in Game 5 against the Nuggets, but Portland still lost, 147-140 in double overtime. "We've got to keep fight-

ing, keep working and keep coming back to battle," Lillard said. "Regardless of how it ended, we are always going to have our heads held high, have class. They won, congratulations to them, but it's back to the drawing board to us."

A four-time All-Star, Lillard just wrapped up his ninth NBA season. The closest he's come to a title was that quick trip to the West finals in 2019.

"We didn't win a championship, so obviously where we are now isn't good enough," he said.

Nurkic, who averaged 11.5 points and nine rebounds but missed time with a fractured right wrist, has one year left on his contract — but only \$4 million is guaranteed. He didn't sound committed to returning next season, explaining it had to be the "right situation."

But when asked what the right situation would be, Nurkic replied: "I don't know. But it's not this."

McCollum, Lillard's backcourt teammate, averaged 21.3 points this season, his best since joining the league in 2013. But he missed games with a fractured foot.

Ten-time All-Star Carmelo Anthony, who filled a key role off the bench for Portland this season, will be an unrestricted free agent, along with Enes Kanter. Norman Powell has a player option for next season.

Stotts said he was proud of what Portland was able to accomplish, given the injuries and disruptions caused by the coronavirus.

"What we did with CJ and Nurk missing games, I was proud of that," Stotts said. "At the end of the season, to do what we did was pretty impressive."

In the end, it just wasn't impressive enough.

Umatilla County deputy drowns in Minam River

■ Deputy Jason Post, 34, started his career in 2010

East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office identified Jason Post as the deputy who drowned Saturday, June 5, while on the Minam River in Wallowa County.

Post was 34 and leaves behind a wife and baby girl.

The sheriff's office in a press release reported Post and three other adults were thrown from a raft in an accident.

"Deputy Jason Post did not reach shore and his body was found shortly afterward," according to the sheriff's office.

Post began his career in 2010 as a reserve officer for the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and in 2013 was hired as a full-time patrol deputy. He was a field training officer and a mentor to many officers.

"He was well respected and loved throughout the entire law enforcement community," the press release stated.

Umatilla County Parole and Probation in mid-April hired Post as a probation officer.

"He was known for his devotion to his family," according to the press release, "and he was very open about making the career change so he could focus on family and spend more time with them."

Umatilla County sheriff's deputies and other law enforcement agencies escorted Post's body from the Loveland Funeral Chapel in La Grande, to home in Pendleton, where local law enforcement and first responders gathered to honor him.

"Thank you for the overwhelming support that was demonstrated by so many of our extended law enforcement family



Umatilla County Sheriff's Office/Contributed Photo

Jason Post served as a Umatilla County sheriff's deputy starting in 2013 and in April 2021 transitioned to a probation officer for the county. The sheriff's office reported Post died Saturday, June 5, 2021, in a rafting accident on the Minam River in Wallowa County.

yesterday as we brought him home," the sheriff's office stated. "We express our deepest condolences to his entire family. We are your family and our hearts are broken."

Umatilla County sheriff's Lt. Sterrin Ward on June 7 reported staff from the sheriff's office and parole and probation met that morning for a debrief of the events from the weekend.

"The family and agency are beginning the process of planning for a ceremony, but at this time no finalized announcements have been made," Ward reported.

The Wallowa County Sheriff's Office Umatilla County Sheriff's Office or other law enforcement agencies have yet to provide details on the accident that led to Post's death.

Serving Baker and Surrounding Counties

We offer landscape curbing and full service specialty and decorative concrete installation.

541-519-5268

STONE ELITE
LANDSCAPING & IRRIGATION

stone.elitesprinklerland@gmail.com CCB#231936 LCB# 9809



Time has come...

hit the trail with a set of the best!

Tires LES SCHWAB

We've got what you want!

Come see our full line of ATV/UTV tires and wheels

Lew Brothers Tire Service

541-523-3679

210 Bridge St. Baker City, OR

TENNIS

Serena loses, Roger Federer withdraws from French Open

By Jerome Pugmire
AP Sports Writer

PARIS — Serena Williams turns 40 in September. Roger Federer hits that milestone the month before. No one knows how many more French Open appearances each will make, and this year's tournament ended for both on Sunday, June 6.

Williams fell way behind and could not put together a comeback against a much younger and less-experienced opponent in the fourth round at Roland Garros, losing 6-3, 7-5 to Elena Rybakina — who wasn't even born when the American made her tournament debut in 1998.

Asked whether that might have been her last match at the clay-court major, Williams responded: "Yeah, I'm definitely not thinking about it at all. I'm definitely thinking just about

other things, but not about that."

Her defeat came hours after Federer withdrew, saying he needed to let his body recover ahead of Wimbledon after a long third-round victory that ended at nearly 1 a.m. on Sunday.

Wimbledon — which Federer has won eight times and Williams seven — begins June 28.

"I'm kind of excited to switch surfaces," Williams said. "Historically I have done pretty well on grass."

She has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles; Federer has won 20. They are two of the sport's greatest and most popular players, so it was quite a blow to the tournament, its TV partners and tennis fans to see both gone from the French Open field one after the other — and a week after Naomi Osaka pulled out, citing a need for a mental health break.