

## DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at [dearabby.com](http://dearabby.com) or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



**Dear Abby:** I'm in my late 20s, married and happily child-free. My best friend recently became pregnant, and I am having a hard time with it. I don't enjoy children, and it feels like I am losing my best friend. All she wants to talk about is the baby. I've tried hinting that I'll be here when she and her husband need a break from being "Mom and Dad," but she continues to talk on and on about the all-consuming baby.

I know this is a big change and a huge part of her life, but I also know she has plenty of other support for this child. I would hope she realizes that I do not care for children or wish to be around them. How can I let her know — without offending her — that the last thing I want to hear about are diapers and prams?

— *Child-Free in Wisconsin*

**Dear Child-Free:** I am sorry you feel so negative about the topics of babies and children, because your intolerance will eventually isolate you from friends and peers. If you voice what you are thinking, you will alienate your best friend, who is rightly thrilled to be embarking on the adventure of parenthood.

Because her talk about babies, diapers and the process she's going through affects you like nails on a chalkboard, limit the conversations and visits you have with her. Do NOT write her off, however, because it is possible that in time she will be reaching out to you, craving conversation that goes beyond the playpen.

**Dear Abby:** As the pandemic has forced many to work remotely, I feel certain I'm not the only person with this dilemma. I have been working from home since last March. My fiancé, on

the other hand, has a manual labor job in a skilled trade. Abby, it seems like every other day he picks a fight with me because he thinks I should have the house clean, chores done and dinner cooked when he returns from work, despite the fact that I have been working at my job all day.

He equates my being home to me being able to take care of all the chores. He criticizes me and calls me lazy and other names all the time. Regardless of what he thinks, I have a demanding job in an IT field, which is no less demanding because I'm home. It involves numerous conference calls all day.

I have an opportunity now where some of us can come back to the office, but because I have an autoimmune disease, I'm hesitant. Should I go back to the office to keep the peace or remain working from home, which I actually enjoy? I have talked to him about this repeatedly, and it not only doesn't seem to be getting any better, it's getting worse. Your thoughts?

— *Telecommuting in Florida*

**Dear Telecommuting:** Your physical health must come first. If returning to the office will endanger your health, you must stay home and protect it.

Your mental health comes next. Your fiancé appears to be having a chauvinistic fever dream in which he has been transported back to the 1950s. For the last quarter of a century — and more — men have been helping their partners with the "chores" he's harassing you about. If he can't dig deep and find it in his heart to chip in, then for the sake of your health and your sanity, PLEASE rethink this engagement, because it is unhealthy.

## NBA

## Where do Blazers go from here after another loss to a Western Conference contender?

BY AARON FENTRESS

The Oregonian

The Portland Trail Blazers look less and less like a title contender every time they face a team with legitimate title aspirations.

Tuesday night provided yet another example. The Blazers had a chance to get their second win this season against an elite Western Conference team, but fell flat during a 133-116 defeat at the Los Angeles Clippers.

It all began with the Blazers' cotton soft defense allowing 47 points in the first quarter and then continuing to bleed points into the second quarter. Granted, the Clippers shot the ball extremely well, making 72% of their shots in the first quarter including 7 of 11 threes. But their hot shooting wasn't the only issue.

"I wasn't as much concerned with how they shot the ball at the beginning," Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "After that, I thought the first 16 minutes was, frankly, a little embarrassing."

The Blazers (30-20) trailed 62-36 with 8:35 remaining in the second quarter. This after two games ago losing 127-109 at home to Milwaukee (32-18). Between those two games, the Blazers hammered the Oklahoma City Thunder (20-30), by the score of 133-85 on Saturday.

And there you have the Blazers' season in a nutshell. They can look dominant against weak to solid teams, yet wilt against contenders. Portland is now 1-7 versus the top five teams in the Western Conference and 3-10 against NBA teams with 30 wins or more. That includes two victories over Philadelphia (35-16).

The Blazers are still awaiting the Jusuf Nurkic who was dominant at the NBA bubble last summer to arrive this season. Since his return from



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

Los Angeles Clippers' Marcus Morris Sr. (8) battles Portland Trail Blazers' C.J. McCollum (3) for a rebound Tuesday night in Los Angeles.

a broken wrist on March 26, Nurkic has been on a minutes restriction. He missed Tuesday's game with knee inflammation. So, it could be argued that the Blazers are still not whole. But a more astute question at this point is: Will they ever be, and if so, would it truly matter?

The Blazers have issues that Nurkic won't fix. He is a better defender than Enes Kanter, but not enough to single-handedly transform the 29th-rated defense into one capable of ranking in the top half of the league in the second half of the season, as Stotts had hoped.

Especially when the Blazers are sacrificing size by running with a three-guard lineup of Damian Lillard, CJ McCollum and Norman Powell. Stotts pointed out that he couldn't complain about the team's offense on Tuesday against the Clippers (34-18). The Blazers trailed 73-66 at halftime after roaring back to make it a game. But defensively this team might never be able to match up well against teams with greater length.

One positive from Tuesday was the Blazers' fight. They in fact got to within 84-82 in the third quarter.

"To cut it to two on the road against a team like that was a pretty impressive effort," Stotts said. "So, that part of it was very encouraging."

What's discouraging is how the good teams are finding ways to disrupt Lillard. The Clippers went after him Tuesday and he finished with 11 points on 2-of-14 shooting. The byproduct was more shots for Powell, who scored 32 points. McCollum scored 24.

"I think that's what's so special about me being on this team, any given night that three-guard lineup can go off and provide an offensive spark, depending on how the game flow is going," Powell said.

But the Blazers aren't going to win very many games with Lillard scoring 11 points. In fact, they are 2-4 this season when he scores under 20 points, and both wins were blowout victories against weak teams, Sacramento in February and the Thunder on Saturday.

"I know he gets frustrated by not having clean looks and being double-teamed, and people taking the ball out of his hands," Stotts said. "Because of that, Norman had a very good night. CJ had a very good night. But my biggest concern

is that it's very frustrating for Dame. Even though the team is scoring, he wants to be involved, and it's up to me to help him get quality shots, and it's up to the team to help him when teams are doing that."

Powell said the Blazers can use him or McCollum to bring the ball up more often to allow Lillard to run off screens to get open for shots.

"I can make plays off the bounce for myself and other guys, when the defense collapses and kick it out, finding guys," Powell said.

Still, as Stotts said, they can't complain too much about the offense overall. The main problem remains the defense. The communication, dedication, commitment and desire that have been talked about over and over this season don't appear ready to magically materialize. If all of that wasn't there on Friday against the Bucks, or Tuesday against the Clippers, why would it show up later?

According to Powell, Lillard called out the team in the second quarter for not being physical enough and allowing the Clippers to take advantage of them. His words led to the Blazers making the game closer before halftime. Powell added that it shouldn't take the star player to motivate the team to play better.

"We've got to have that mindset at the start of the game," Powell said.

That's been said numerous times by several Blazers players this season, yet the same problems seem to pop up. Stotts said execution, effort and communication were issues on Tuesday.

"It's something that we continue to talk about, it's something that we definitely have to get better as individuals and as a team," Powell said. "Defense isn't just two guys on the ball. It's everybody helping one another and communicating."

YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★ AVERAGE | ★★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021:** Daring, enterprising and generous, your desire for intellectual stimulation will be fulfilled. This year, you travel more for business and pleasure, satisfying restless urges. Your job or volunteer activities could go through changes, which will make you reassess your goals. Friends can give you helpful advice, but make your own decisions. If single, dating sites give you confidence. If attached, spontaneous getaways are a must. LEO makes you feel optimistic.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**

★★★★ Part of you wants to curl up and retreat into dreamland. Take your time getting ready to face the day. Surprising communication lifts you up. You'll feel like yourself in no time at all. Tonight: Look for something you misplaced.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**

★★★★ Join an online group that addresses a secret passion. Drum up confidence to join in the conversation. A frustrating moment may cause you to vent. Find a friend who can calm you down. Tonight: Tea party with aromatic blends.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**

★★★★ Starting a side business could cross your mind. Throw around ideas with an experienced friend. Offering consulting services might be a good place to start. Let people know what you are good at doing. Tonight: Reminisce with an old classmate.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**

★★★★ Prepare for a serious talk. Confrontation is not your cup of tea, so be friendly and tactful. Remember to cancel magazine subscriptions before your free trial ends. Travel plans may fall into place. Tonight: Satisfy your sweet tooth, but don't overdo it.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**

★★★ Be discriminating when visiting websites or reading blogs about financial planning. Avoid get-rich-quick schemes that will cost you more than you earn. You may be too trusting. Misinformation could steer you wrong. Tonight: Unwind on the sofa.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**

★★★★ Don't wait for someone to make the first move. Take a risk and ask for what you need. Those you love will jump at the chance to help. A romantic interlude could take you by surprise. Tonight: Heavenly foot massage.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**

★★★★ Turn over a new leaf. Send your bad habits packing. Avoid fad diets or quick weight-loss plans. Calm down nervous energy that makes you fearful. Think positive thoughts, and actions will follow. Tonight: Dance to retro disco music.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

★★★ Talking to kids and grandkids will bring a smile to your face. If there are no children around, go to a park where you will hear playful laughter. Sometimes you find joy in the most surprising places. Tonight: Shop for sales.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

★★★★ Maintain that balance between work and family despite continual challenges. Enthusiasm for being of service may cause you to lose track of time. Tell people to alert you so you can come up for air. Tonight: Complete unfinished business.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

★★★★ Your ability to juggle activities will only go so far. Be honest about how much multitasking you can do. An online gathering may get your creative juices flowing. Explore your writing abilities in new mediums. Tonight: Reach out to someone you love.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

★★★★ Be practical, but do not deprive yourself. Purchase an item that will make you happy but will not break the bank. Avoid overpriced items and obvious rip-offs. Search for enticing bargains and one-day sales. Tonight: Rehearse a speech or presentation.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

★★★ You will be noticed today by people you want to impress. Take extra time to present the best look possible. Show someone your appreciation. A gift or offer to take them out is always welcome. Tonight: Improve your fitness routine.

## Ducks

Continued from A5

The four Oregon players who opted out are at peace with their decisions, as is Deon Moore Lenoir, who opted out and chose to return when the season was restored.

But that didn't make it easy for them to sit out last fall or remove their frustration with the manner in which the Pac-12 went about handling the pandemic last summer compared to its peers across the Power 5, FBS and AAU.

"When it came down to it in August we were told the season was canceled, we were super frustrated as seniors," Breeze said. "I could tell the whole Oregon coaching staff was frustrated because they did every type of process we could to make it to where we could play but then the Pac-12 still for whatever dumb reason, they decided to call off the season."

"We said our goodbyes; we were hugging the coaches, hugging the players. Us seniors, we thought we were never going to play for Oregon ever again. I moved out of my apartment, moved back to Lake Oswego, was living with my parents, getting ready to start training and getting ready for the NFL process. Mentally I was checked out and then five weeks later I get a phone call like, 'Hey you got to be here tomorrow; we got practice tomorrow, we got a game in four weeks so you got to be here to start training.' It was such short notice and that's really what it came down to."

Breeze will be one of the more fascinating cases to watch in this year's draft. He closed the 2019 season on a tear and earned Rose Bowl Defensive MVP honors. Had he played in a full 2020 season, there's a chance he's no less than an all-Pac-12 performer. But teams will have minimal game tape and some impressive measurables from pro day to base his evaluation.

There's also finite game film for Jevon Holland, though he's widely projected as a second- or third-round pick. Having played both free safety and nickel and served as the pri-



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian file

Oregon's Jevon Holland (8) during a game against California in Eugene in October 2019. Holland opted out of the 2020 season and is expected to be selected in the 2021 NFL draft.

mary punt returner for the Ducks, Holland offers a lot of versatility for a safety.

"I knew what I was capable of and the level of play that I

*"There was no regrets for me personally. I felt like the decision that I made was the right decision. I missed being around my boys."*

— Former Oregon Ducks cornerback Thomas Graham

have, especially throughout the last couple of years and feel like I put in the work," Holland said. "When the situation came to be I decided to go with the opt-out. It wasn't really a gamble. I wasn't gambling anything. I knew the outcome was going to be what I was going to put down and I went out and I did that."

Of Oregon's players who opted out, Graham has by far the most film to go off of. He was a three-year starter and improved each season. The cornerback also played in the Senior Bowl to give a more current showing of his talents on the field in lieu of the season.

"There was no regrets for me personally," Graham said. "I felt like the decision that I made was the right decision. I missed being around my boys."

It was a little difficult because I missed playing with them."

Shedding a few pounds and running the 40 in the mid-4.4s will help Graham's cause.

Lenoir was the only Oregon player to opt out and then back in to last season. His production fell, with 30 tackles and an interception in seven games last season, but it was due more to teams avoiding throwing in his direction.

The outside corner felt he became a smarter player by coming back for another season.

"I feel like my IQ gradually went up with me coming back and having the experience that I was able to gain from coach (Rod) Chance," Lenoir said. "It made me want to be more of a leader, knowing I was one of the oldest guys coming back."



Oregon Values and Beliefs Center

We want your voice to be a part of the conversations shaping Oregon's future.

Share your opinion. Earn money. Join the OVBC Panel.

[panel.oregonvbc.org](http://panel.oregonvbc.org)