

Slam dunk is first basket

Drexler launches pro career

United Press International
PORTLAND, Ore. — With a rim-shaking slam dunk, Portland small forward Clyde Drexler launched his professional career and christened an NBA chapter of "Phi Slama Jama."

Drexler, the Trail Blazers' top draft pick out of Houston, made his NBA debut Sunday night in Portland's 148-122 exhibition rout of Denver. In 13 minutes, the 6-7 rookie scored nine points, grabbed five rebounds, blocked a shot, dished off three assists and shed some light on why Portland assistant coach Morris "Bucky" Buckwalter calls him, "The best open court player we've ever had."

Drexler, who signed a five-year contract Friday worth a reported \$1 million, hadn't been with the Blazers since he worked out with the club during the Los Angeles Summer League July 29 through Aug. 13.

Once in a Portland game uniform, though, it didn't take him long to make his presence known.

He entered the game with 8:03 left in the first half and Portland leading comfortably, 52-26. Just 1:49 later, he rammed home a stuff shot similar to those that made Houston's "Phi Slama Jama fraternity" famous.

Portland guard Jeff Lamp knocked the ball away from Nuggets guard Howard Carter at midcourt and slapped it to Drexler. "The Glide" dribbled unmolested toward the basket, soared into the air, pumped once and made his first professional shot a certainty by firing a two-handed slam through the hoop.

"That was a pretty good dunk," he laughed after the game. "It was a good feeling."

Drexler hit 4-of-5 field goals and his only free throw despite

having trouble at times fitting into the flow of Portland's patterned offense. However, late in the game he threw a mid-air move at Denver defenders in a show of above-the-rim skill.

Driving from the top of the key, Drexler soared for another dunk and found his path to the basket blocked. He twisted around a defensive wall and finger-rolled a layin off the glass and into the net.

His evening wasn't perfect. He committed two turnovers and a pair of fouls. Drexler said he foresees improvement as he learns his role with the Blazers.

"I don't think I played as well as they expect me to," he said. "I think a practice will do me a world of good."

Portland Coach Jack Ramsay said it will take time for Drexler to fit into the Blazers' system.

"I don't think conditioning is a problem," Ramsay said. "I think he's in good physical condition. But it will take him time to get into the flow of our system."

Despite playing just three years of college ball, Drexler was the first Houston player to score 1,000 points, snag 900 rebounds and earn 300 assists in a career. He passed up his senior season to turn pro.

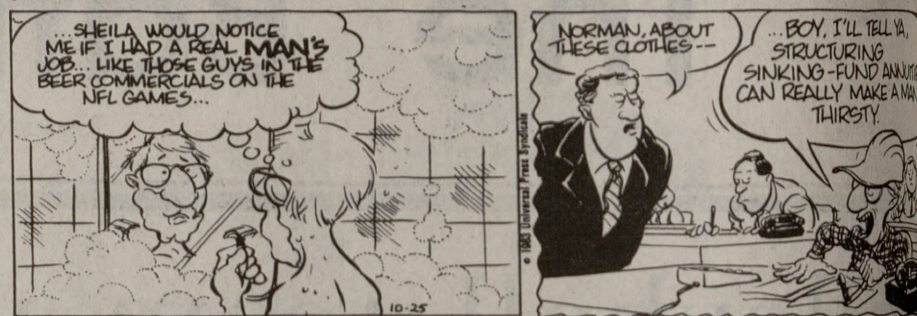
The rap on Drexler by NBA scouts is he allegedly has no outside shot. Blazers General Manager Stu Inman said he envisions Drexler making the springer part of his repertoire.

"Maybe Clyde's biggest adjustment will be learning to be free and confident in taking the 15-foot jump shot," Inman said. "But he should make that adjustment within a couple of months."

"He has the potential to be a very good all-around player. It's a matter of how quickly he assimilates principles of the Blazer system as to how productive he will be initially."

TANK McNAMARA

By Jeff Millar & Bill Ho



Cowboys say loss to LA will be tough to forget

United Press International
DALLAS — Still owning a one-game division lead and having played an emotional but unsuccessful game against the Los Angeles Raiders, the Dallas Cowboys now must try to put their first loss of the season somewhere in the back of their memory bank and get on with the second half of the season.

Some of the Cowboys admit it will not be easy.

"This loss is not going to hurt us momentum-wise," said Dallas quarterback Danny White. "Hopefully."

The Cowboys fell to the Raiders Sunday night, 40-38, in just another of the frantic, free-scoring games the National Football League has offered this year.

"The key was whoever was going to be able to score last and they did," said White. "But we are 7-1 and in good position. We can't let this be a psychological thing or have a defeatist attitude. We played a great team. There are a lot of positive things from this that we can go on to improve on."

Dallas' first loss of the year comes just as the Cowboys embark on a three-game road trip which will take the team to New York (for the Giants), Philadelphia and San Diego.

"We're just halfway through the season," said Cowboys coach Tom Landry. "We've got eight more games to go and we've just got to pick it up and go with it next week. You can't worry about this one. It is over."

"Every game now is tough. You've just got to step up there and play the game."

Some of the players' loss would simply add to the team's incentive level.

"It just motivates us to get the ball and hopefully another shot at the Raiders who caught his first touch pass of the year in the game," said receiver Butch Johnson. "We're still the best in the league. We were just trying to be better than we were. We didn't have as much pressure as they (the Raiders) did."

"We're a proud football team," added defensive end Bill Martin. "Sometimes a loss like this does real good things for a football team."

The Dallas defense recorded the most first downs given up by the Cowboys this year and Los Angeles offense equaled the team record of 32 first downs at Philadelphia.

The 219 rushing yards the most given up by the Cowboys this year and Los Angeles quarterback Marc Wilson more passes (49) than any has ever thrown at Dallas.

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