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Making a home stand
Portland looks to recover from close losses in S...

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Western Conference finals do not resume until Friday, and the Portland Trail Blazers will need every minute of the layoff to repair their psyche. "I think it is the toughest loss that we've had all season," Damon Stoudamire said.



DUNLEAVY

Portland coach Gregg Popovich says the momentum of the miracle comeback from an 18-point third-quarter deficit probably will not last until the weekend. "If we were coming back and playing tomorrow it would be huge," he said. "But Friday is like 2 1/2 weeks from now. Nobody will even be able to remember this game."

The Spurs' eight-game playoff winning streak will be tested in the noisy Rose Garden, where the Blazers lost just three times during the regular season and are 5-0 in the playoffs. Still, Portland must win four out of five, including at least one in the Alamodome, to advance to the finals. "I don't see why we can't," Greg Anthony said. "We're a real confident basketball team. We're a real talented basketball team."

NBA playoff schedule

Table with NBA playoff schedule: Friday, June 4 (San Antonio at Portland, 9 p.m.), Saturday, June 5 (Indiana at New York, 6:30 p.m.), Sunday, June 6 (San Antonio at Portland, 6:30 p.m.), Monday, June 7 (Indiana at New York, 9 p.m.), Tuesday, June 8 (Portland at San Antonio, 9 p.m. (if necessary)), Wednesday, June 9 (New York at Indiana, 9 p.m. (if necessary)), Friday, June 11 (Indiana at New York, 10 p.m. (if necessary)), San Antonio at Portland, 10 p.m. (if necessary), Sunday, June 13 (New York at Indiana, 7 p.m. (if necessary)), Portland at San Antonio, 7 p.m. (if necessary).

both games, but people seem not give us credit," Spurs coach Mario Elie said. "They thought what Portland did wrong, the Lakers did wrong. I want to hear what the Spurs right."

Agassi romps in French semis

PARIS (AP) — Two years ago, Andre Agassi considered retirement. Two weeks ago, he almost pulled out of the French Open. Now he stands within two victories of what he calls "the greatest thing I could achieve" — winning a Grand Slam title that has escaped the grasp of his rival, Pete Sampras, and that defied the likes of Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe. Agassi barely broke a sweat in reaching the semifinals Wednesday as he mercifully put injured qualifier Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay out of his misery 6-2, 6-2, 6-0 in 72 minutes. The ever-changing Agassi — he started the tournament sporting a goatee, came out clean-shaven for the second round and grew a full beard by the quarters — played his most punishing tennis yet. He yielded only four points in the first four games, nine points in the whole third set. "He killed me on the court," Filippini, who had not lost a set in the first four rounds, said. "I had no chance. It's not nice to get booed on center court."



French: No. 1 Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the second round champion, in straight sets in the second round and former No. 1 Marcelo Rios in four sets in the quarters. The women's semifinals will feature three players who own a combined total of 11 French titles, though the favorite to win it all is the player who has none — No. 1 Martina Hingis. Hingis, like Agassi, will be seeking to complete a career Grand Slam as she goes into the quarterfinals against defending and three-time champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario. Hingis breezed through the quarterfinals as she beat another Austrian qualifier Barbara Schwartz 6-2, 6-1. While Sanchez-Vicario beat another Austrian, Sylvia Plischke, 6-2, 6-4. Five-time French Open champion Steffi Graf will meet her longtime rival, Monica Seles, in the quarterfinals. Graf advanced with a 6-1, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3 victory over No. 2 Lindsay Davenport. Seles beat Conchita Martinez 6-1, 6-4. None of those women's semifinalists is a former champion. But when it comes to the men, Agassi's opponent is a former champion. Agassi almost did not show up for the French Open in the middle of the World Tennis Cup the week before because of a chronic right shoulder injury. "I was probably a day away from not coming," Agassi said. "Had my shoulder kept me from playing the ball another day, I would have felt it was wrong. There would have been too many things against me to try to really pull it off."

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Umpire's use of replay criticized

NEW YORK (AP) — Baseball told umpires to keep their eyes on the ball, not the videotape. Umpire Frank Pulli's decision to view a replay and change a home run to a double in Florida's 5-2 loss to St. Louis was wrong, NL president Len Coleman said Tuesday. Commissioner Bud Selig and AL president Gene Budig immediately echoed that view. "Use of the video replay is not an acceptable practice," Coleman said. "Part of the beauty of baseball is that it is imperfect. Players make errors. Managers are constantly second-guessed. But the game is played and determined by two teams between the white lines." Baseball, the NBA, NCAA football and soccer do not allow officials to use replays, while the NHL permits it to determine goals and NCAA basketball allows it in a few specific instances. The NFL had replay from 1986-91 and reinstated it on a limited basis last March after several game-turning calls that replays showed were incorrect. "Traditionally, baseball has relied on the eyes of the umpires as opposed to any artificial devices for its judgments," Coleman said. "I fully support this policy. Occasionally, how-

ever, the umpires too will make mistakes; that is also part of the game." Floyd originally said his drive Monday was a homer because it bounced off the facade behind the left-field scoreboard in Miami. "Use of the video replay is not an acceptable practice. Part of the beauty of baseball is that it is imperfect." — Len Coleman National League president

camera near the Marlins dugout. After consulting replay, Pulli changed the call back to a double. Coleman said Pulli, who is 28 years old and second in seniority among NL umpires, was "in good faith" but made a mistake. Coleman did not rule Florida's written protest. Because the Marlins would have gained only one more run if the play had been ruled a homer, it is unlikely the protest will be upheld. Floyd, speaking in Miami before Tuesday night's game, agreed with Coleman's decision. He said allowing replays will lead to more arguments. "You set yourself up for it to happen again, and you're going to have tons of people that are going to be angry with you," he said. "I'm kind of a traditionalist, and I'd rather see it in baseball."