

LAS VEGAS

Sentinel Voice Sports

CHICAGO AND PORTLAND COULD BE ON COLLISION COURSE

JAZZ ADVANCE TO SEMIS AFTER TOUGH SERIES WITH CLIPPERS

By W.G. Ramirez

Utah's 40th victory in 44 home games, this season, couldn't come any sooner. The surprising L.A. Clippers made their presence known by opening up a 15-point first half lead only to lose their spread after missing nine of its first 10 shots in the fourth quarter.

The Jazz avoided yet another embarrassing first-round series while owning the home court advantage by defeating the Clippers 98-89 this past Monday evening in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Clippers, down 2-games-to-0, had deadlocked the series with two straight victories and looked as if they'd advance to round two after holding a 52-40 lead, at halftime, in Game 5.

Karl Malone scored 15 second-half points and Jeff Malone led all scorers with 25 points in



KARL MALONE

leading the Jazz to victory. Utah now faces Seattle in the Western Conference semi-finals which began Wednesday evening at press time.

The other Western Conference semi-final pits top-seeded Portland against the Phoenix Suns. The Suns are coming off a six-day layoff after sweeping their first-round series against San Antonio. The last time Phoenix had a long layoff, during the 1992 All-Star Break, they went 1-5, including two losses to Portland.

The Trailblazers are coming off a 3-1 series victory over the L.A. Lakers, (see related story p. 14). Portland captured Game 1, 113-111 Tuesday evening.

The New York Knicks haven't beaten the Chicago Bulls in 14

games over two years but insist they'll be ready for the defending NBA Champions in their best-of-7 series that also began Tuesday evening. The Knicks defeated Chicago, 94-89, ending the Bulls' 5 game winning streak that dates back to the regular season.

Game 2 is scheduled for this evening with weekend games Saturday and Sunday at New York. The four games in six days should favor the Bulls because the Knicks are coming off of a very emotionally and physically draining series against Detroit. The last time the Knicks defeated the Bulls, before Tuesday evening, was January 15, 1990, at New York.

Boston and Cleveland complete the other half of the East-

ern Conference's version of the Final Four.

The series is currently tied at 1-1 with Game 3 scheduled for Friday evening, in Boston. The winner of the series could be considered Chicago's only real threat in defending their title. The Celtics and Cavaliers are the #2 and #3 seed in the Eastern Conference respectively. Boston won the Atlantic Division, yet Cleveland still held a better record than the Celtics as they placed second to Chicago in the Central Division.

Although the Bulls lost Game 1 to New York, it would seem that the defending champs and Portland are on a collision course to meet each other in the NBA Finals.

The Trailblazers should've

never lost Game 3 to L.A. as they demonstrated in Game 4. Portland's only menace in the Western Conference could be the Jazz, yet the way Utah struggled against the Clippers, how will they react facing the dominating 'Blazers'?

★★★★★

PLAYOFF LEADERS as of (5-05-92)

Scoring	
Michael Jordan, Chicago	45.0
Karl Malone, Utah	29.8
Reggie Miller, Indiana	27.0
Rebounds	
Shawn Kemp, Seattle	16.3
Detlef Schrempf, Indiana	13.0
Buck Williams, Portland	12.3
Assists	
John Stockton, Utah	16.0
Kevin Johnson, Phoenix	15.7
John Bagley, Boston	10.8

BLAZERS DISPOSE OF LAKERS AT T&M

By W.G. Ramirez

The NBA made a sweet return to Las Vegas' Thomas and Mack Center, this past Sunday, as the T&M was called upon to host Game 4 of the Los Angeles-Portland series due to civil unrest in South Central Los Angeles.

Tickets went on sale Friday afternoon, at 4p.m., while UNLV

Sports Information Director Joe Hawk handled all the media credentials via the L.A. Lakers.

Hawk did an outstanding job by making sure the local media was a part of, what could be, one of the biggest games ever played at the T&M.

The Trailblazers, who defeated the Lakers 102-76, advanced to the second round by

stinging L.A. with a devastating defense.

"Basically, what we did, was make the players, for L.A., that aren't used to handling the ball, handle it," explained 'Blazer guard Clyde Drexler, who led all scorers with 26 points.

After a particularly close 1st quarter, Portland used a 17-4 spurt to open up a 43-27 lead in the 2nd quarter. The Trailblazers led 49-33 at the half.

Los Angeles' 33 first half points set a new franchise record, breaking the old mark of 34 points, for the lowest number of points scored by a Portland opponent in one half.

By the looks of things, midway through the 3rd quarter, Portland had Game 4 all tucked away in their grasp.

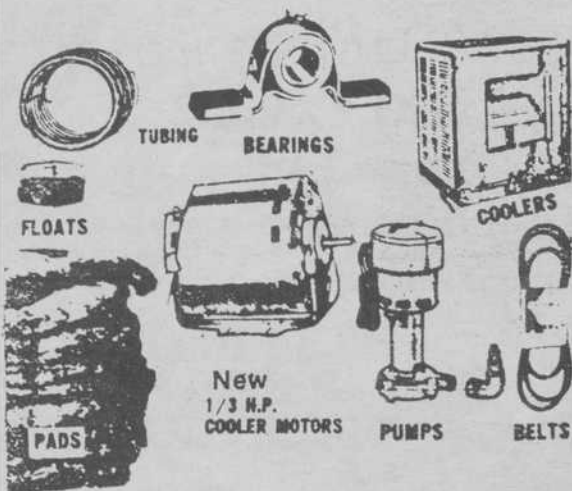
Spectacular slam-dunks before and throughout the game is what ignited the 15,478 fans that were in attendance. Drexler, Kevin Duckworth and Cliff



CLYDE DREXLER LED ALL SCORERS WITH 26 POINTS

(See Blazers, Page 17)

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