

Blazers win draft lottery

SECAUCUS, N.J. (AP) - The Portland Trail Blazers beat the odds and won the right to settle the Greg Oden-Kevin Durant debate.

With just a 5.3 percent chance of winning the No. 1 pick, the Blazers won the NBA's draft lottery, earning the right to draft a potential franchise player from what's considered to be an excellent class.

Represented by Rookie of the Year Brandon Roy, the Blazers got a head start on landing next year's top rookie. They will almost certainly choose between Oden, the Ohio State center, or Durant, Texas' high-scoring forward.

"They're going to help us right away," Roy said. "They can come into the NBA right away and play. I'm just excited about sitting back and knowing our general manager has the choice of drafting either Kevin Durant or Greg Oden. Either one, you can't go wrong. So I'm excited we have the opportunity to choose between the two."

The 7-foot Oden is the likely top pick, because dominant centers are harder to find. But general manager Kevin Pritchard said he wants to talk to both players, saying the interview last year with Roy was a determining factor in wanting him.

Regardless of who goes No. 1, both players are likely headed to the Northwest, as Seattle also moved up into the second spot. Atlanta got the third pick — and needed it. Falling out of the top three would have meant sending the pick to Phoenix.

The lottery determined the top three spots, with the rest of the teams going in reverse order of a team's finish.

Memphis and Boston, which had the worst records in the league and the best chance of landing in the top two, slipped to fourth and fifth, respectively.

Milwaukee will go sixth, followed by Minnesota, Charlotte and Chicago, which had the rights to New York's pick through the Eddy Curry trade.

Sacramento goes 10th, followed by the Hawks, Philadelphia, New Orleans and the Los Angeles Clippers.

With Oden and Durant highlighting a draft that includes the core of Florida's consecutive NCAA championship teams, the June 28 draft in New York is expected

to be one of the NBA's best in years.

"Tonight we're looking at what's probably going to be the deepest draft in a couple of decades," Commissioner David Stern said earlier.

Portland had a great draft night in 2006, landing Roy and LaMarcus Aldridge through trades. They won't need a deal this time thanks to some lottery luck.

The SuperSonics will get a player that in many other years would have gone No. 1, and maybe whichever player it is can help save the NBA in Seattle. The Sonics haven't been able to get a new arena and aren't guaranteed to be in Seattle past next season.

The Hawks were the other big winner in the lottery. Moving up one spot saved them from having to send their pick to the Suns as a result of the Joe Johnson trade. And Atlanta also picked up Indiana's pick, No. 11, from the Al Harrington deal since the Pacers stayed put.

"This gives us a chance to look at what we really need as far as helping us progress as a franchise," Hawks vice president and former star Dominique Wilness said. "This is big for us. Everybody wants the No. 1, No. 2 picks. But any time you get in the top three picks, this is monumental for us."

The presence of the two freshmen superstars added more hype than usual to this year's lottery. There were nearly 100 media credential requests, far more than usual.

It also led to speculation that some teams didn't try their best to win games, hoping to improve their chances of landing a top-two pick. Because of all the tanking talk, Stern said he wants NBA owners to look at the lottery this summer to see if a new system is needed.

But the losing didn't pay off. The Grizzlies had a 25 percent chance of winning No. 1 after finishing with the league's worst record, but they will pick fourth in Jerry West's last draft with the team.

"It's about as disappointing as you could ever hope for," West said. "It's like pitching pennies. It's grossly unfair to the team, but I've said it before, I don't think the lottery is fair. I never liked it. I don't think it's a good system at all, period."

"There have been a lot of picks in the lottery that have

(failed). There are two in the lottery this year that are not going to fail. There are two superstars in the draft. I think for the teams fortunate enough to get them, the fortunes of their franchises have changed forever."

Ten years after missing out on Tim Duncan, Boston had more lottery heartbreak, falling from the No. 2 spot. The Celtics, one of the teams most suspected of not always trying to win, sent former star and current broadcaster Tommy Heinsohn to the lot-
(See NBA, Page 11)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

GLOVES AND BUNS

Supporters and players of the Community Little League came out to help raise funds for the upcoming baseball season out at Doolittle Park on Saturday. Currently exhibition games are being played at the park with the regular season starting soon.

- Purpose • KUUMBA - Creativity • IMANI - Faith • UMOJA - Unity • KUJICHAGULIA

BLACK POWER

A SHOW THAT WILL INFORM, STIMULATE, AND EDUCATE YOU...

BLACK POWER

A SHOW BUILT AROUND THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF KWANZAA...

BLACK POWER

A SHOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR...

FRIDAY 9AM
ON KCEP-88.1

BLACK POWER

A HALF-HOUR OF SPIRITED AND THOUGHT PROVOKING DIALOGUE...


TODAY'S HOT TOPICS

BLACK POWER

TUNE IN AND CALL IN!

702.647.3688
702.647.2145 FAX

E-MAIL: BLKPWR4US@YAHOO.COM
WWW.POWER88LV.COM



Hosted by
RAMON SAVOY

BLACK POWER

• KUJICHAGULIA - Self-Determination • UJIMA - Collective Work & Responsibility

UMOJA - Unity • KUJICHAGULIA - Self-Determination • UJIMA - Collective Work & Responsibility • UJAMAA - Cooperative Economics • NIA

Self-Determination • UJIMA - Collective Work & Responsibility • UJAMAA - Cooperative Economics • NIA - Purpose • KUUMBA - Creativity