



Lechtenberg returns as Volcanoes host Hotshots

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BY BRIAN T. SMITH, Columbian staff writer

Fifteen days removed from their best-played game of the season, a 105-100 victory over the Lewis County Raptors on May 5, the Vancouver Volcanoes will look to build on their recent improvement when they face off against the Central Oregon Hotshots at 5 p.m. tonight at Mountain View High School.

Volcanoes coach John Phillips continued to tinker with the Vancouver roster during the break, adding two new players. Phillips said he plans to start Jerod Perry, a 5-foot-11 point guard who attended Trevecca Nazarene in Nashville, Tenn., against the Hotshots.

Perry, a native of Aurora, Colo., was selected second-team TranSouth Athletic Conference in 2005-06 while playing for Trevecca Nazarene, a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics school.

"He's fast, athletic and very solid in his all-around game," Phillips said. "Plus, for a small guy, he can really dunk. He's got ups and has no problem taking the ball to the hoop."

The Volcanoes (3-8) signed another Perry, as well.

Garland Perry, a 6-5, 220-pound forward, is a product of Warner Pacific in Portland. Perry began the year with the Raptors, and scored 25 points against the Volcanoes when the teams met earlier in the season.

"We know what he can do because we saw it firsthand," Phillips said. "He's a big, bruising kid, and he goes after the ball. He'll help give us the inside presence we've been lacking."

Phillips hopes the addition of the two Perrys will offset the departure of guard Darren Cooper, forward Tyler Hollist and center Nick Fusare.

Cooper, a University of Portland product who was leading the Volcanoes in scoring, recently signed a contract to play basketball in Germany. Hollist and Fusare left the team because of personal reasons.

Phillips said Vancouver spent the past week attempting to smooth out its offense and improve its transition defense.

The Hotshots (5-5) are a run-and-gun team with players who shoot and then shoot again.

Central Oregon's Brandon Earlandson (24.0 points a game), Cliff White (22.7) and Arthur Lewis (22.7) rank in the top 20 in the IBL in scoring.

Look for Vancouver to counter the Hotshots' persistent outside shooting by slowing down the game and pounding the ball inside to forwards Abdou Sane and Brian Zamore.

Meanwhile, the return of guard and 3-point specialist Brad Lechtenberg to the Volcanoes' lineup should give Vancouver the outside shooting it has sorely lacked in the past few games.

The Volcanoes are last in the IBL in scoring.

Lechtenberg last played on April 1, a 125-97 home loss to the Portland Chinooks. He suffered a deep thigh bruise in the game and has been out of the Volcanoes' lineup since.

"He's the best pure shooter in the league, in my opinion," Phillips said. "I can't wait to get him back on the court."

Lechtenberg will come off the bench against the Hotshots as Phillips attempts to ease him back into action.

"He's still not 100 percent, but he's as close as he's been since he went out," Phillips said. Forward Alex Hartman (Concordia), guard Porter Troupe, Sane, and Zamore are expected to round out the Volcanoes' starting five.