



'Pip' the people's choice, Volcanoes' inaugural all-star

Friday, June 24, 2005

By **TIM PYLE**, Columbian staff writer

The stamp of approval came from the man himself, from the man Kevin "Pip" Bloodsaw is nicknamed after.

"His brother and I used to hang out all the time," Bloodsaw said of Scottie Pippen. "We used to go out to Scottie's house when he was in Portland, and he actually started calling me 'Pip.' It was pretty weird."

Bloodsaw's similarities to the ex-NBA great, don't end at a nickname.

Both grew up in rural Arkansas, both played college basketball in Conway, Ark., and both possess all-around skills that fill up a box score.

Plus, "we're related in some kind of weird way," said Bloodsaw, a 6-foot-4, 175-pound wing who leads the Vancouver Volcanoes into their final home game of the season against Seattle tonight at 7:30 at Skyview High School. "We're like 10th cousins or something. It probably doesn't even count."

A native of Dardanelle, Ark., Bloodsaw got the nickname when he was in his first year of college basketball at Central Baptist, a junior college in Conway, where Pippen played for Central Arkansas.

"My grandma gave it to me," said Bloodsaw, who finished his college career by being named all-conference at the University of the Ozarks, an NAIA school in Clarksville, Ark. "The Bulls were the big thing back then. And she said, 'You know, your game is exactly like Scottie Pippen's.' "

The versatility of Bloodsaw's game has helped make him the Volcanoes' all-star in this, the International Basketball League's debut season. The all-star game will be played July 9, immediately following the championship game in either Battle Creek, Mich., or Dayton, Ohio.

"He has officially been selected," said Mikal Duilio, the IBL commissioner and Vancouver majority owner. "In the toughest games, in the toughest moments, Pip plays his best. ... He's the guy that closes the gap for us."

Bloodsaw, 32, averages 15.2 points per game, but his biggest contributions come via steals, offensive rebounds and other hustle plays.

"He's proved to be probably our most valuable player in a lot of ways," coach Dave Waldow said. "He's so active. ... He's scoring, and then he's up pressuring, trying to steal the inbounds pass. He's just all over the place."

His style of play has made Bloodsaw a fan favorite. Following Volcanoes home games, he is often flooded with autograph requests from children, who approach with statements like "Pip, you're my favorite player!"

"That's one of the best feelings," said Bloodsaw, who is a lender for a Portland mortgage company by day and has an 11-month-old son, Titus, with wife Lesley. "I do it for them, for the kids. They're the innocent ones. They're honest; they tell the truth. ... When I hear them say something like that it makes me feel like what I'm doing is worth it."

Bloodsaw has played professionally in Mexico and in summer pro-ams in Sacramento and Portland that featured many NBA stars. He counts Sacramento Kings forward Corliss Williamson, another Arkansasan, as a close friend.

Bloodsaw also is a model for Sports Unlimited, appearing in commercials for companies like Copeland Sports and catalogs for Nike and Adidas, among others.

Despite all that, Bloodsaw took the initial news that he would be a reserve in the IBL without hesitation. He simply went to work, and soon found himself in the starting lineup.

"At the beginning, they pretty much told me that I'd probably be coming off the bench and playing eight minutes a game," said Bloodsaw, who has lived in Portland since 2000. "I've started off coming off the bench in a lot of places, and I've eventually worked my way into the starting lineup in every situation. ... But it's not about whether you start the game; it's about how you finish it. No matter my role, I try to change the game when I'm on the court."

Teammate Eric Dunn said Bloodsaw accomplishes that goal.

"He's like a little Energizer bunny," Dunn said. "And I've realized that's definitely a characteristic of leadership. It's something that guys can feed off. I've found myself saying, in some of the games recently, 'Let's match Pip's intensity.' He gives us a kick-start."

Added Duilio, "He describes himself as kind of this role player that fills whatever roles are out there that need filling. In fact, he plays like Scottie Pippen. Maybe that's why he's got the nickname."

That is affirmative, and "Pip" has been approved.

The Columbian Publishing Co. copyright & permissions rules

All materials appearing in The Columbian are protected by copyright as a collective work or compilation under U.S. copyright and other laws and are the property of The Columbian Publishing Company or the party credited as the provider of the content. You may not copy, reproduce,

distribute, publish, display, perform, modify, create derivative works, transmit, or in any way exploit any such content, nor may you distribute any part of this content over any network, including a local area network, sell or offer it for sale, or use such content to construct any kind of database. However you may download from columbian.com such content for your own personal, noncommercial use but only if you make only one machine readable copy and/or one print copy. You may not alter or remove any copyright or other notice from copies of the content. Copying or storing any content except as provided above is expressly prohibited without prior written permission of the copyright holder identified in the individual content's copyright notice.

To obtain permission to photocopy content of The Columbian, contact Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923; FAX (978) 750-4470, or www.copyright.com. All other requests for permission should be directed via email to archives@columbian.com.