

NEWS



Contact:
Bob Wayt
503-614-1218 (direct)
503-686-5134 (cell)

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BLAZERS HONOR THPRD EMPLOYEE WITH TOP COACHING AWARD

Ask Juan Caez about Matt Morrison and what comes to mind first is his nonstop motor.

“Every day he comes in with a dry shirt, and by the time he leaves, he’s the sweatiest guy there,” said Caez, program coordinator at the Tualatin Hills Athletic Center. “There’s no one who works harder or hustles more.”

Then Caez added with a chuckle, “I think I need to get him more shirts.”

That powerful work ethic and enthusiasm for working with kids are key reasons Morrison, a part-time instructor at the Athletic Center, was recently honored by the Portland Trail Blazers and its Rip City Academy as Junior NBA Coach of the Year.

According to the Blazers, the award is given to a youth volunteer basketball coach “who is making a positive impact on children by demonstrating integrity, character and leadership.” Morrison was selected as the best from 13 participating leagues in Oregon and southwest Washington, including THPRD.



Terry Stotts, head coach of the Portland Trail Blazers, presents the Junior NBA Coach of the Year Award to Matt Morrison of THPRD before a recent Blazers home game.

To top it off, he was presented the award by one of his role models: Terry Stotts, head coach of the Blazers. The presentation occurred right before the Portland-New York game on March 6 at the Moda Center.

“What a rush,” Morrison recalled. “There was so much going on and to take in, I wish I could go back in time and relive the moment in slow motion...It gave me chills in a good way.”

Equally sweet was that he was nominated for the award six times by his 8th-grade players and their parents.

One player wrote, “He is the reason I love to play the sport.” A parent added, “He keeps a level head, stays positive and encourages the team to give it 100% through the entire game, even if there is no chance for a win.”

Morrison has been a volunteer coach at THPRD for two seasons. The award – which automatically entered him in the running for national Jr. NBA Coach of the Year – has not surprisingly given him extra incentive to continue.

“What I like best about coaching is seeing smiling faces because they learned or mastered that skill they thought they never could do,” he said. “That makes *me* smile!”

About THPRD

Formed in 1955, THPRD is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning 50 square miles and serving about 240,000 residents in the greater Beaverton area. The district provides year-round recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Offerings include thousands of widely diverse classes, 95 park sites with active recreational amenities, nearly 70 miles of trails, eight swim centers, six recreation centers, and 1,500 acres of natural areas. For more information, visit www.thprd.org or call 503-645-6433.

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