



JOHN CANZANO

COMMENTARY

Can this youth put the fire in Randolph?

The star pupil arrived in North Portland on Thursday by TriMet bus, then walked the remaining five blocks to Open Meadow School with a black backpack hanging off his shoulders.

His former middle school teachers will tell you that Prometheus McMurphy, now 17, liked to fight at school. The instructors at Lincoln High

Inside

The Blazers introduce Jamaal Magloire, who says he is the type of player who will pay the price to help his team win | **D3**

School who taught him three years ago will tell you he showed up so infrequently freshman year that they stopped calling his name at roll

call. The kid himself will tell you that he's been suspended, expelled and finally, scared by his parents, who discovered he was skipping school and told him, "You're going to end up on the streets, jobless and homeless."

Oh, yes. There was a Trail Blazers news conference Thursday at which the team introduced its newest player. It's why McMurphy showed up at the private, nonprofit, alternative school.

So Portland, meet Jamaal Magloire. Jamaal, meet Portland.

Now, everyone, please meet the 5-foot-7 backup point guard for the Open Meadow Goats. McMurphy, the dropout who dropped back in at this special little school, will earn his diploma next June. Then, he'll attend a university and study business, and

if you're looking for significance in Magloire's arrival, maybe it's the scrawny teen with the backpack who holds the biggest message today.

With everyone looking at Magloire, asking him about a scarcity of minutes in the front court and his no-nonsense approach, it's easy to miss what he represents to the Blazers. But McMurphy makes you see it. It's focus. It's rededication. It's what happens when you're looking over your shoulder, and feeling a little unsettled about what's chasing you.

I'm talking about Zach Randolph now.

If you had been to the schoolhouse, you would have heard Magloire talk about being able to play two positions — power forward and center — next season. You would have seen the conviction in his eyes when he talked about getting on the court. Then, you would have looked beside him and have seen McMurphy, who probably should be hired by the Blazers to serve as a mentor for Randolph next season.

Consider that Randolph had issues last season revolving around a defective alarm clock, the defective front gate of his driveway and his general ability to get to practices, pregame shootarounds and team-picture day on time. And with Magloire around, serving as a viable threat to Randolph's job security, the bet here is that the various mechanical devices on Randolph's nightstand and in his driveway will perform better next season.

There is a real possibility with the 6-foot-11 Magloire giving chase, that Randolph will go Prometheus on us. And there's nobody inside or outside the organization who wouldn't love to see this already good trade have those kinds of residual effects.

In Greek mythology, Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to the mortals. If you've ever been to New York and stood at Rockefeller Center, there's a brilliant golden statue honoring Prometheus there. But the Prometheus who buses to school from Parkrose, the one who came close to being named regular-old boring "Nathan" by his parents, ends up representing all of the good that can come when you're jolted back into focus.

"I used to not enjoy school," McMurphy said. "I'd hang out at Pioneer (Courthouse) Square all day. Or blow off school and go to the pizza parlor, but all that changed."

McMurphy was selected by Open Meadow administrators to meet Magloire and give a tour of the building. Three years ago, the Goats won only one basketball game — by forfeit. Last season, the Goats won

Canzano: Magloire can put Randolph on the bench

Continued from Page D1

the alternative-school league championship.

Magloire, in the final year of his contract, practices and plays as if

there is nothing else after it. He views himself as "dirty," in a good way, because he's willing to do what's necessary to win. And for that, Magloire ends up as the kind of player coach Nate McMillan will fall in love with.

Randolph has a guaranteed NBA maximum contract that will pay him \$84 million. His season averages in points (18) and rebounds (eight) in 2005-06 were both lows in the three seasons he's been a Blazers starter. He even showed up to one game last season wearing a \$9,000 diamond-studded mouthpiece.

As good as Randolph wants to be, he knuckled down last season like a man who figured, "Hey, what are they going to do, bench me?"

Well, yes. Now the Blazers have that option.

After the introduction of Magloire, McMurphy gave the newest Blazers player and team President Steve Patterson a tour of the three-story schoolhouse, built in 1907 by Simon Benson. The student pointed to one room and said, "Here's where we talk about issues like the Israel-Palestine conflict."

Then, McMurphy guided the

men to the top floor, where students were told to write their autobiographies last year. It's here where Magloire pulled McMurphy aside and whispered something to him.

Said Magloire: "The sky's the limit, kid."

Hear that, Z-Bo?

John Canzano: 503-294-5065;
JohnCanzano@aol.com; to read his
Web log, go to [www.oregonlive.com/
canzano](http://www.oregonlive.com/canzano)

Catch him on the radio on "The Bald-Faced Truth," KFX (1080), weekdays at 5:25 p.m.