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SPORTS

Monson a victim of circumstance

□ Disaster season was beyond his control, and it did him in

By Jayson Jacoby
Emerald Sports Reporter

Analysis

Who's the only basketball coach ever to lose his job as a result of three foot injuries, a million-dollar NBA contract and a bag of nails?

It might be Don Monson. Oregon's nine-year head coach was fired March 17 with two years left on his contract. Although athletic director Bill Byrne said his decision was based partially on "trends" he had seen developing the past few years, there is little doubt that Monson's 6-21 record this season — and the resulting drop in attendance and other forms of public support for the program — were the main causes of his downfall.

After all, there was little or no talk about the safety of Monson's job after last year's disappointing 13-15 mark. The Ducks went to the National Invitational Tournament just two years ago.

But what about that bag of nails?

The bag in question was the one that hit Oregon center Bob Fife — a junior with two years of Pacific-10 Conference experience under his belt — on the head while he was working in a hardware store last summer. Fife said the blow, which caused a minor concussion, kept him from eating for sever-

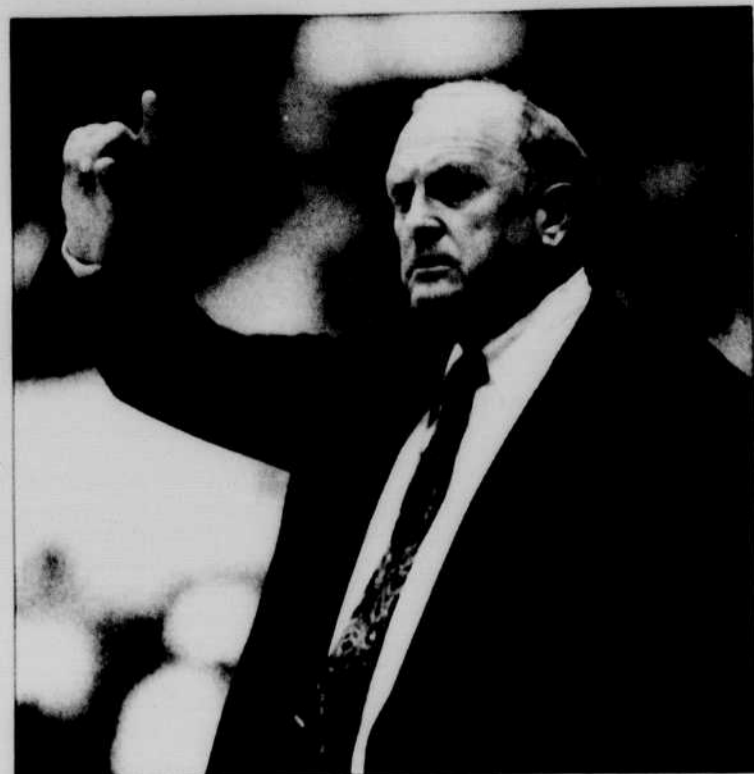


Photo by Sean Poston

Ousted basketball coach Don Monson had to face more than his share of player injuries and the loss of star guard Terrell Brandon.

al days and melted off the weight he was supposed to have put on in preparation for his third season.

Fife came into fall practice at about the same weight as the end of the season in 1991. He wanted to redshirt, and having little choice but to comply, Monson had lost his starting big man.

Fife, along with Terrell Brandon, would have been Oregon's most experienced returnee. But Brandon, the Ducks' do-everything man the past two years and the Pac-10 Player of the

Year in 1991, was the 11th pick in the NBA draft.

Even with his two top returning players gone, Monson had put together a team of freshmen, sophomores and junior college transfers that endured an embarrassing 78-39 loss at Montana in the season opener to post a 4-2 start.

Unfortunately, Oregon played its best basketball of the season at the Daiwa Ball, which was held in Japan during Christmas vacation. The Ducks

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NICARAGUA

Two Years After the Elections: A Sandinista Update

A PRESENTATION BY NICARAGUAN CONGRESSMAN
RAY HOOKER



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