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Sonics, Lakers swap big men

SEATTLE (AP) — The Seattle SuperSonics, seeking immediate help, now have Sam Perkins. The Los Angeles Lakers, planning for the future, own Benoit Benjamin and Doug Christie.

The teams swapped players Monday, with the SuperSonics shipping Benjamin, their little-used, high-priced center, along with unsigned top draft pick Christie to the Lakers for Perkins, a forward-center.

The 7-foot Benjamin was acquired by the Sonics in a trade with the Los Angeles Clippers Feb. 20, 1991. He played 5½ seasons with the Clippers.

For the Sonics, the trade was addition by subtraction. Ben-

jamin wasn't playing much for coach George Karl and the team knew it wasn't going to sign Christie.

"I would like to wish Benoit the best of luck," Sonics president Bob Whitsitt said. "It's unfortunate that it didn't work out for him in this organization."

Lakers general manager Jerry West said he got two good players in Benjamin and Christie and got younger players at the same time.

"We feel this is a good trade for us as for the Sonics," West said. "Benoit is a proven NBA player with solid numbers and is younger than Sam."

The Sonics are expected to insert the 6-9 Perkins into the starting lineup.

Seattle said Perkins would join the team Thursday for practice and play against the Kings Friday night.

"Acquiring Perkins gives us a player who can score in the low post, can pass the ball and can play great post defense," Whitsitt said. "Sam is a two-position player and, most of all, a proven winner. His style of play should fit in with what this team is trying to do."

The Sonics inherit Perkins' six-year, \$19.2 million contract that he signed with the Lakers in August 1990.

FIFE

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"I still can't believe (Green) booted me off the team," Fife said. "I thought I may have been suspended for a couple of games, or maybe the rest of the season. But I didn't think I'd get the boot."

Then, of course, came the ultimate slap in the face.

On the night of Fife's expulsion from the team, Oregon ended a 20-game, Pac-10 losing streak and furthered the irony of the whole situation by starting a mini-winning streak Saturday night with a win over Washington State.

The fact the Ducks are winning without Fife has nothing to do with the fact Fife is gone. It does, however, add to the stigma attached to Fife — the man who gets no respect.

Fife said he is now planning on attending either

the University of California-Riverside or California State-Fullerton, where he will be eligible to play next season.

Fife will leave Oregon, and with it he will leave all the bad jokes and false expectations. Fife will probably never make the NBA. But who's to say that's what he wants?

Fife has never been known for his hard work on the court, and he rarely, if ever, shows any emotion.

It could be that Fife plays basketball because it is what people expect him to do. People expect him to play hoops because of his size, expect him to play hard, and expect him to play well.

The expectations finally wore on ol' "Bullet" Bob.

Dave Charbonneau is the sports editor of the Emerald.

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