

Men

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replace everything he does."

Smith suffered the injury four minutes into Oregon's 80-77 win over USC on Saturday night. He went up to defend a shot by USC's Brian Scalabrino and was accidentally hit by an elbow from teammate Freddie Jones. He suffered a mild concussion on the play and watched the rest of the game from 20 feet behind the Oregon bench.

Kent noted, however, that it may have been a positive that the injury occurred early on as opposed to toward the end of the game.

"If there's a good thing about this injury is the fact that it happened in the first four minutes of the game," Kent said. "We were able to weather it in a very tough ball game, and we feel confident that we can do it again."

With Smith and his 15.3 points per game benched, the pressure to pick up the slack falls on juniors Flo Hartenstein, Bryan Bracey and Julius Hicks, as well as sophomore Chris Christofferson.

"There's no way we'll be able to replace him," Kent said. "We just have to do the best job that we can at minimizing what we lose. I think we're a very flexible team."

Smith ends an impressive run of 58 successive starts and 114 consecutive appearances — excluding his 1996-97 red-shirt season.

"He's obviously feeling down," Kent said. "He's someone that wanted to play, and here are these last three games at Mac Court and with the magnitude of the games. And he can't participate. Hopefully these guys will rally around him and make sure these games are not his last games, and give him an oppor-

tunity to play in the postseason." "A.D. is a big part of this team, and we're really going to miss him," Jones said. "But I think everybody is willing to step up and do an extra part."

Kent with a 'T'??

At the 7:56 mark of the first half in Saturday's win, an uncommon occurrence took place. A Darius Wright fast-break 360-windmill jam? No. A Flo Hartenstein three-pointer from the top of the key? No.

What did occur was just as rare, however, as Kent was issued a technical foul. It was Kent's first "T" as Oregon head coach and only his second ever in his nine-year head coaching career.

Kent has always been one to talk frequently with the referees during games, but he seems to speak in a way that lets him get his point across without offending anyone.

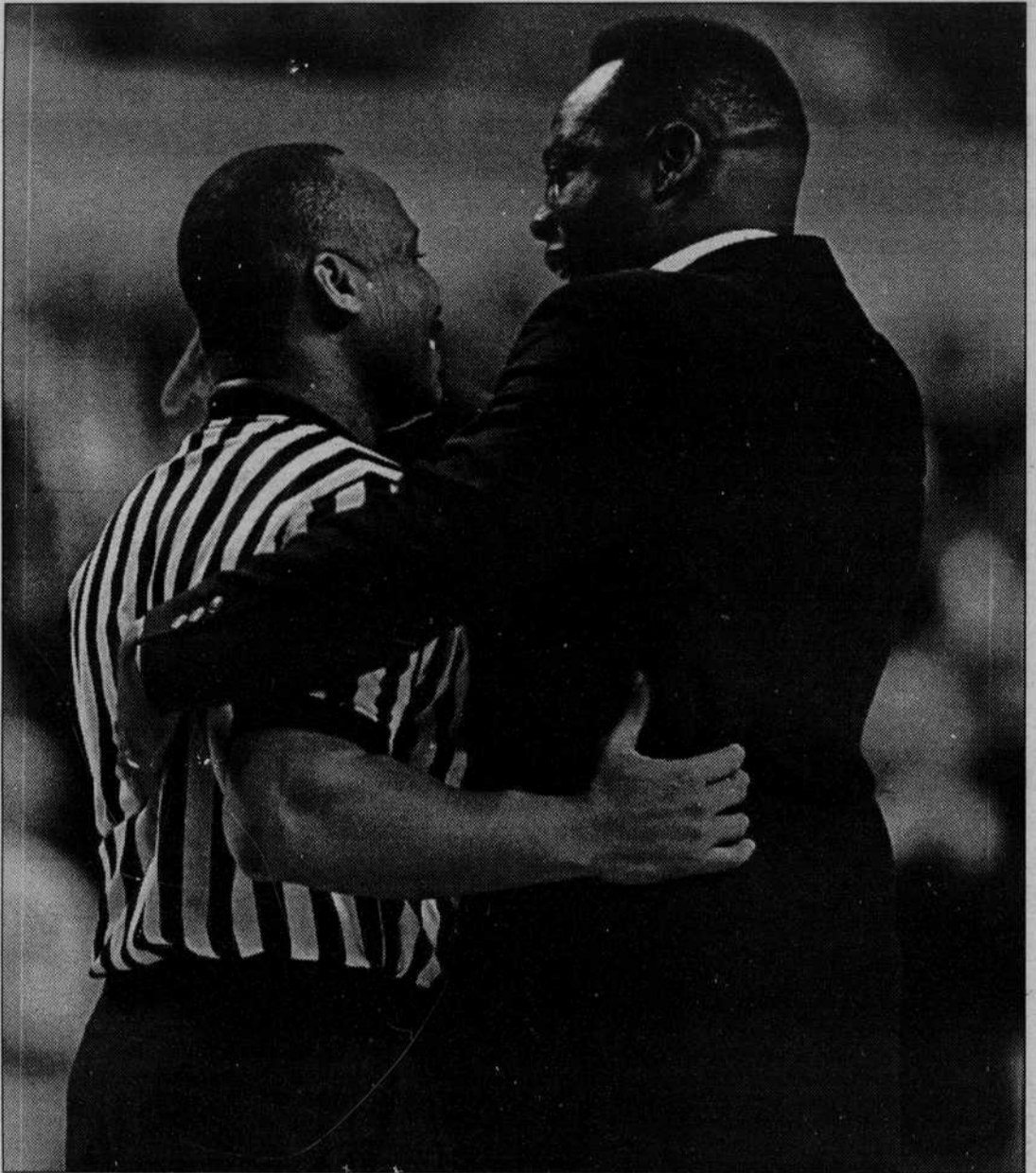
"He did kind of surprise me a bit," Jones said. "He's usually really cool with the refs. It was at a point in the game where I guess he felt that we needed that for our team. In fact, it sparked a little run for us."

Another setback for DJ

Junior guard David Jackson sat on the bench all of last season during his red-shirt year. He then played the first three games of the season before missing 15 due to arthroscopic knee surgery.

He came back to play in seven straight games, but he experienced yet another setback last Thursday when he suffered a deep thigh bruise in the UCLA loss. The injury forced him to sit out of the USC game.

"I know how painful it is," Jones said. "... But I think he's doing pretty well. We're going to need him Thursday so hopefully he'll be there for us."



Oregon head coach Ernie Kent surprised many when he was issued only the second technical of his career on Feb. 26.

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