

mark on Spurs as youth movement begins to pay

ers, 15-10, have a .600 percentage. Spurs next play in Houston on Tuesday night, and the Kings are idle until Wednesday night, when they play New Jersey in Kemper Arena.

Last season, the Kings were 7-12 after 19 games on the way to a 30-52 finish that left them out of the playoffs for the first time in three years. Coach Cotton Fitzsimmons spoke often about the "terrible price" the Kings paid to develop young talent, and Saturday night's game was an example of that investment paying dividends.

Mike Woodson led the Kings with 34 points, a career high; Larry Drew had 29 points, equaling a career high, plus 11 assists; and Eddie Johnson had 28 points, including three consecutive crucial baskets late in the game. All

got significant playing time last season they might not have gotten with a better club. Johnson was a rookie then; Woodson and Drew were second-year men coming off "lost" rookie seasons with other clubs.

"A lot of our improvement comes from being a year older," Woodson said. "Last year we were really young. This year we're all a year older and know what it was like losing. Nobody liked it. I know I didn't."

According to Woodson, the Kings play together better this season than last, when Fitzsimmons experimented with different combinations and suffered through half the year with Cliff Robinson, whose selfish play was a disruptive force.

"This year, everything's falling in

the right places," Woodson said. "Last year we clicked at times but not for 48 minutes. This year we've played bad at times, but it seems as though we can pick up the pieces."

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Under Fitzsimmons' system, certain players might be consigned to the end of the bench for days or even weeks. But he always gives them chances for redemption. The latest example is Kevin Loder, who had played just 45 minutes at small forward in 10 games before last Friday night.

When it was decided that Ray Williams couldn't play because of a pinched nerve in his neck, Fitzsimmons decided to start Loder at shoot-

ing guard. Fitzsimmons said he decided not to make the obvious move, starting Woodson, because he prefers using Woodson off the bench.

Woodson, obviously, doesn't press when he comes off the bench. Loder, whose minutes aren't guaranteed, admitted he has a tendency to.

"Any time you come off the bench you want to go out and have a good performance so your minutes will increase," Loder said. "Many times you press yourself into mistakes that decrease your playing time. You put pressure on yourself to do well and increase your minutes."

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The Kings, even though most of their talent is in the backcourt, still

have a small problem: They haven't been able to find a consistent backup for Drew, their only true point guard. Drew has played 40 or more minutes five games in a row.

Until his injury, Williams took a regular turn at the point in a three-guard rotation, even though he had some trouble handling the ball. Rookie Brook Steppe also got some minutes at the position.

Now, however, the search is on. In Friday night's home victory over San Diego, Fitzsimmons let Loder play some at the point. Saturday night, even though Steppe was in the game, Fitzsimmons had Woodson handle the ball.



Jan Housewerth/Staff

Comets and Baltimore's Pat Ercoli that ended in confusion.

Comets say they'll protest Saturday's game

By Randy Covitz
A Member of the Sports Staff

Incensed by several referees' calls in the closing minutes of the Comets' 6-5 loss to Baltimore on Saturday night, Comets officials said they plan to file a protest today with the Major Indoor Soccer League office.

"We'll file the \$500 and send a telegram to the commissioner on Monday morning, saying the referees lost control, and when they lost control, they made decisions that affected the outcome of the game," Comets General Manager Tim Leiweke said.

"The decisions were not the correct decisions in our minds, we question those calls, and we question the outcome of the game and thus protest the game."

Two of the calls — a 2-minute boarding penalty to Mark Frederickson that led to the Blast's game-tying goal with 4 minutes, 5 seconds left and a deliberate kicking call on goalkeeper Enzo DiPede that resulted in the Blast's game-winning penalty kick by Joey Fink with 2:02 left — were judgment

calls, and in most cases, a referee's judgment call is upheld.

But the turning point of the game, and the focus of the greatest controversy, involved a 2-minute penalty assessed to Gino Schiraldi, who was in the penalty box serving a concurrent penalty with Baltimore's Dave MacWilliams at the time Kevin Handlan gave the Comets a 5-4 lead with 5:19 to play.

Schiraldi, who had 10 seconds remaining in his penalty, came onto the floor to join his teammates in congratulating Handlan. But Schiraldi was given an additional 2 minutes by referee Toros Kibritjian for leaving the box, and 10 minutes of confusion followed.

According to Comets Coach Pat McBride, referee Don Wyszynski started to overrule Kibritjian's call, but during the 10 minutes of chaos, he agreed to let it stand.

"What really concerns me is they take that long to make a call," McBride said. "That shows a lack of professionalism."

Joe Machnik, the MISL director of operations and referee-in-chief, observed the game from the stands and said he plans to "watch the tapes very carefully."

"I was not pleased with the overall (calling of the) game ... when something happens to cause that amount of frenzy," he said.

Machnik cited a regulation adopted before the season as the basis for Kibritjian's call against Schiraldi.

"When a player leaves the bench area to participate in a melee of players, he must be ejected, or if he leaves the penalty bench during a stoppage of play to participate in any fashion in dissent or confrontation, he must be ejected," Machnik said.

"The decision was, he did not leave the box to engage in dissent, so was not ejected. But there was a violation."

However, the regulation says nothing about leaving the box to congratulate a teammate, and McBride sees no difference between that and players coming off the bench to congratulate a

teammate, a practice that is common in the league.

"After a goal is scored, you can substitute, and all the players on the field can say they're coming out on the next line," Machnik theorized.

McBride said: "My concern is we just scored an important goal, everyone on the team was out there, the bench empties, and what's the difference (between a player coming off the bench or out of the penalty box)?"

While Schiraldi was sitting out the second penalty, the Blast had a five-on-three advantage as Frederickson was called for charging moments after MacWilliams returned to the floor. Petar Baralic then came up with the equalizer, and 57 seconds later, DiPede was called for deliberately kicking Pat Ercoli in the penalty box, enabling Fink to take the penalty kick.

COMETS NOTES: Greg Makowski's goal that made it 4-4 early in the fourth quarter was the Comets' first short-handed goal of the season.

Coming back in '83 already being pondered at Jewell

By Bill Richardson
A Member of the Sports Staff

McMINNVILLE, Ore. — For line-backer Steve Mattingly and seven other senior starters on the William Jewell College football team, the quest for a national championship had come up short.

The Cardinals' three-year hope of going all the way in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Division II playoffs was dashed Saturday in a 33-15 loss to Linfield College.

"I'm disappointed, but we made it a long way," Mattingly said. "I'm thankful for that and glad to have played with these guys the last three years. We'll bounce back from this like we've bounced back from other losses."

"And while I won't be playing again next year, I'll be in the stands cheering for them."

To return to the playoffs and get another opportunity for their first national football title, Jewell would have to break an NAIA Division II precedent. No Division II team has ever made it to the playoffs four straight years.

The Cardinals' biggest loss will be quarterback Kelly Groom, who has lost only four times in three years as a varsity starter. Jewell also loses its starting tight end, a center, guard, two defensive backs and a defensive lineman.

Occupied by the playoffs for the last month, Jewell Coach Vic Wallace hasn't had much time to think about next year. But Wallace said Saturday that he is considering switching split end Andre Nelson, who will be a senior in the 1983 season, to the quarterback position.

Wallace said Nelson, who has played sparingly at Jewell, was an outstanding quarterback in high school. The Cardinals have used his passing ability on end-around option plays. Making Nelson a stopgap quarterback would enable Wallace to bring along a younger prospect.

Jewell's defense, its strong suit most of the season, was plagued by Linfield's sharp execution and misdirection plays.

"They ran a lot of slow-developing misdirection plays and executed very

well," Mattingly said of the Wildcats. "We are a pursuit team and they took advantage of how well we pursued. They got the pursuit going one way, then ran the other. Their quarterback (Randy Mueller) was mobile and seemed to hit the passes when they needed them."

Jewell finished 10-2, Linfield 12-0. The national title was the first for Linfield, which had lost in the championship game when NAIA football playoffs were lumped into one division. The two-division setup began in 1970.

Linfield Coach Ad Rutschman, who has coached the Wildcats to a national baseball title, gained his first football crown on his team's fifth trip to the Division II playoffs.

"Both national championships were great, but this one (football) is something extra because we won it at

home," Rutschman said. "I've never seen Randy Mueller sharper. He moved us through the air all day."