

# Mavericks falter in fourth quarter again, lose to Kings, 104-97

*The Sacramento Kings went on a 21-7 over the final 6:18 of the game for the win*

DALLAS (AP) — The Sacramento Kings broke a tie by outscoring Dallas by 14 points in the first 6:18 of the fourth quarter to strengthen their hold on a playoff spot with a 104-97 victory Tuesday night over the Mavericks.

Reserves Michael Smith and Billy Owens combined for 15 points in the 21-7 run that led the Kings to their fifth victory in seven games. Sacramento increased

its lead over Golden State to 2 1/2 games pending the outcome of the Warriors' game against Houston.

Smith scored nine points and Owens six as the Kings moved from a 71-71 tie at the start of the fourth quarter to a 92-78 advantage with 5:42 to play. Smith had a three-point play, a tip-in, a layup and a dunk during the surge, which also included a 3-pointer from

Sarunas Marciulionis.

Brian Grant had 25 points, Mitch Richmond added 17 and Smith contributed 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings.

George McCloud scored 26 points and Jim Jackson added 25 for the Mavericks, who have dropped 14 of 15. Jason Kidd turned in a 15-point, 12-assist, five-rebound game for Dallas.

Dallas erased a nine-point halftime deficit, opening the third quarter with a 24-11 run to grab a 68-64 lead on Jackson's three-point play and McCloud's three-pointer.

Sacramento came back with a 7-3 run at the end of the quarter and the teams were tied at 71 entering the final quarter.

Grant scored 18 first-half points as the Kings took a 53-45 lead at intermission. Sacramento shot 55 percent from the field against Dallas' soft defense while the Mavericks converted only 32 percent

of their first-half field goal attempts.

Averaging more than 23 points per game, Richmond is on pace to become the seventh player in NBA-ABA history to average 21 or more points in each of his first eight pro seasons.

He will join Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Rick Barry, Larry Bird, Wilt Chamberlain, Michael Jordan and Oscar Robertson. Referee Blane Reichelt split his game early in the first quarter and had to duck into a locker room for a quick change during the break before the second quarter.

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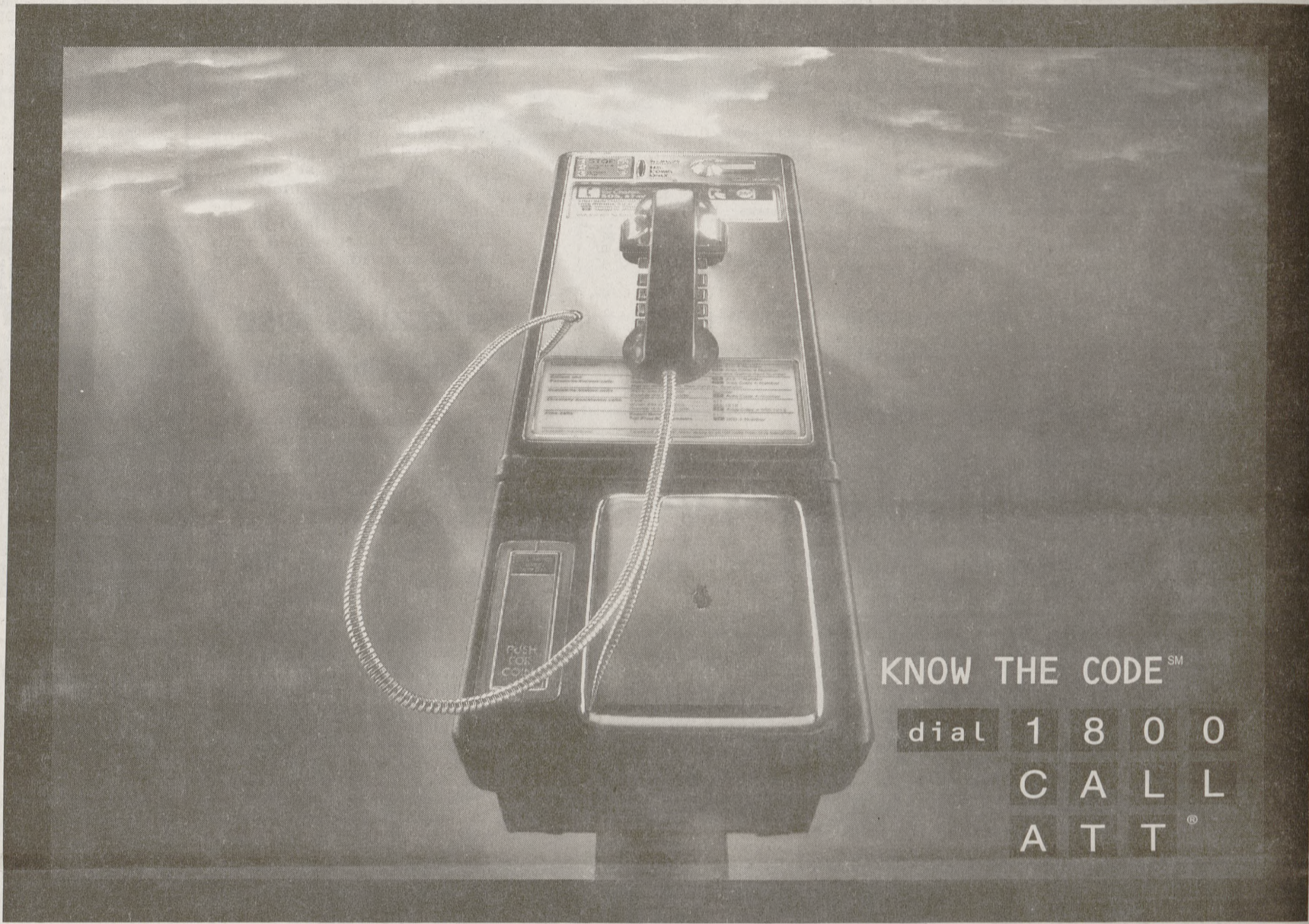
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