

# Ditka confirms he will return to NFL to coach Saints Coleman goes AWOL

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Mike Ditka confirmed he will return to the NFL as the new coach of the New Orleans Saints, saying "I'm going to climb the mountain one more time."

"It's going to be fun," Ditka said during Sunday's Super Bowl game, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

Earlier Sunday, Ditka ran into one of his old Bears' quarterbacks, the Colt's Jim Har-

baugh, and talked about his new job, the Chicago Tribune reported.

"He was happy, excited," Harbaugh told the Tribune. "He said, 'We're going to do it right this time,'" Harbaugh was quoted as saying.

A highly placed NFL source told The Associated Press that Ditka will become the Saints coach this week.

Asked while walking onto the field for the pregame ceremonies if he would like to coach

the Saints, Ditka responded with a quick, "Yes." After the ceremony, NFL officials rushed Ditka off, refusing to allow him to comment further.

Ditka, who quit his job as a television commentator on Saturday, was picked after general manager Bill Kuharich lobbied strongly for him, the NFL source said.

"Bill Kuharich has convinced (Saints owner) Tom Benson that Mike Ditka is the right man to

coach the Saints and help bring the crowds back to the Superdome," the source said.

Kuharich will remain with the team as president and general manager, according to the source.

Kuharich did not return calls after messages were left on his answering machine on Sunday. Benson declined comment.

The announcement from the Saints was expected early in the week.

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Dennis Coleman has not been heard from for four days and the Philadelphia 76ers are anxious to find out where he is. Coleman, who accompanied the team on a charter flight to Detroit on Friday, has been missing since failing to show up for Saturday's game against the Pistons.

When Coleman, who has been out with an injured finger, didn't arrive for practice on Monday, the 76ers fined the forward an unspecified amount.

"Yes, I'm annoyed, more than anything," 76ers general manager Sam Greenberg said Monday. "It's an uncalled-for absence and he'll be fined accordingly. But I'd like to get all the information before making a decision."

The 76ers said they tried to contact Coleman on Monday.

"I think anytime a player is missing, you're concerned," 76ers spokesman Bill Bonsiewicz said Monday night.

However, Greenberg left no doubt Coleman's actions were unacceptable.

"Obviously, we're going through a rough season," said Greenberg, noting Philadelphia's 9-33 record. "But sticking together as a team is so important through times like this. A distraction when one of your players separates himself from the rest of the team."

Coleman has been sidelined since Jan. 8 with a lacerated pinky finger which required 10 stitches after he was caught on the rim. He is expected to return to the lineup shortly.

Following the 76ers' 107-92 loss to Sacramento on Friday, Coleman joined his teammates on the charter to Detroit, his home town. But Coleman went his own way from there, staying at the team's hotel, attending Saturday night's game or returning to Philadelphia on the charter.

When he did not attend Monday practice, Greenberg and coach Larry Brown huddled at length before commenting on the matter.

"I want to reserve judgment," said Davis, who acknowledged that Coleman had missed practice earlier in the season and was fined. "I can't go on what's happened to him in the past."

"I want to speak to him about what's happened and go from there. I'm surprised, because Derrick has not demonstrated any erratic behavior. I'm taken aback by this. I'm very interested to hear what he has to say."

Coleman is averaging 14.2 points and 9.2 rebounds per game this season.

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## QUESADA

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With the additions of sophomore Calvin Davis and junior Larry Thompson, the Aggie front court has suddenly become crowded.

"I'm not scoring as much as last year," Quesada said.

"I'm not shooting as well as I was last year, but it is something I'm trying to get over. I'm working hard at it, but I'm not going to let it affect my defense or rebounding."

Quesada is averaging five points and seven rebounds per game, compared with last year's averages of 12.5 points and six boards per contest.

A&M Head Coach Tony Barone said Quesada is putting too much pressure on himself.

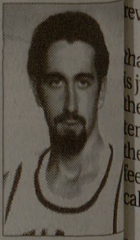
"He's way too worried about whether he is making baskets or not," Barone said. "In the last couple of games, we've told him to get his head up and stop worrying about that and do the other things he's capable of doing."

"He doesn't really buy into it — if you'll do the other things, the offensive game will be fine. I think you'll see a much more fluid player."

As the only player left from the 1994-95 Aggie squad, Quesada has the unique vantage point of seeing the changes and progress of the team.

"I think you can already see a big difference since my freshman year — everything is getting better," Quesada said. "I feel bad I'm going to have to leave after more year, because I'd really like to stay for when the arena is going to be ready."

We have a new arena, the Big Conference, we're really getting there with the big-time programs



Quesada

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