

Nets Awarded Protest In Nov. 8 Loss to 76ers

Larry O'Brien, the National Basketball Association commissioner, yesterday upheld the New Jersey Nets' protest of their Nov. 8 double overtime loss to Philadelphia in which Bernard King and Kevin Loughery, the Nets' coach, were assessed three technical fouls each.

The game will be replayed from the point at which Richie Powers, the referee, gave King a third technical with 5:50 remaining in the third quarter.

In making their protest the Nets had cited a rule stating that no player or coach can be assessed more than two technicals in a game. O'Brien agreed with that part of the protest but denied the Nets' request that they be declared the winners of the game, which they had lost, 137-133.

Furthermore, O'Brien suspended Powers for five games without pay "for failure to comply with league procedures." Norm Drucker, supervisor of officials, said the fine amounted approximately to \$2,500.

Point of Return

The protested game will be completed on March 23, before the regularly scheduled game between the teams at Philadelphia. It will resume with the score Philadelphia 84, Nets 81 and King ejected. Loughery will still be in the game since his second and third technicals came after King's.

"I'd rather Bernard were in instead of me," said Loughery, to whom the news brought some solace in the midst of a Nets' slump. "I expected that we would win. It was an issue of rules, not a judgment call."

"We're very excited," said Charlie Theokas, the Nets' general manager. "It means we have one less loss and Philadelphia has one less win. Our players have had to hustle. This was management's turn to stand up and we stood up, we put up the money [the \$1,500 deposit required by the league office before it will consider a protest]; we fought it. It's a tribute to the league office. I know it was a difficult decision. Larry has to wrestle with it for a while.

"The rescheduling is a very significant date. Obviously very many things will have developed. That should be an awfully important night."

The last protest upheld by the N.B.A. was after a game on Dec. 3, 1971, between Buffalo and Cleveland. The last four seconds of the contest were replayed because officials gave Cleveland the ball at the wrong out-of-bounds spot after a time-out.

O'Brien cited the N.B.A. guide and manual for referees in his statement on the decision. "If a player or coach is ejected [two technical fouls] and refuses to leave the court, it is the duty of the crew chief to remind him of the penalty for refusing to leave. Be certain he knows of his ejection and get the game going. The rest will be dealt with by the commissioner."

O'Brien interviewed Powers in arriving at the decision and Powers said that he had never called the third technical in his 21-year career. Furthermore, Drucker told O'Brien he had emphasized in referees' training camp that no more than two technicals could be called.