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Ortiz Ends Career

MT Media Relations

Head coach Randy Wiel announced today that senior guard Fernando Ortiz has left the Blue Raider basketball team due to recurring problems with his left knee.

The Comoa, Puerto Rico, native has battled the problems all season and the pain and swelling have caused Ortiz to rest the knee in hopes of warding off further damage.

"At the beginning of the season our staff decided that Lee Nosse was the player that we could least afford to lose and Fernando was next. Now we face the rest of the season without both of them," said Wiel.

"In the beginning his knee was only getting sore and now it swells after he plays. The doctors have told him that he can injure himself even further if he continues to play and he has come to this decision."

According to basketball trainer Kevin Parker, Ortiz has undergone a series of treatments throughout the season in an effort to keep him on the court, but at this point rest seems to be the best option for Ortiz.

Parker stated, "The extent of damage to the knee made this scenario a possibility from the beginning even though we hoped it wouldn't come to this. We exhausted all possible treatment options for him to continue playing."

Ortiz, who hopes to play professionally in his home country, said that the decision to leave the team was difficult and did not come without a great deal of thought and consultation with his doctor and family.

"Dr. [Michael] Jordan told me that more damage could be done if I kept playing this year and I want to play again. I am sorry that it has come to this, but I have to do what I think is right for me. I talked to my family and they supported my decision. I will keep cheering for my teammates this season even though I can't be out there with them anymore," said Ortiz.

Ortiz arrived at his decision after undergoing two surgeries prior to the beginning of the season. The last surgery, performed by Jordan in October was a lateral meniscectomy that shelved Ortiz for most of the team's preseason practice sessions. He returned in time for the team's first game and has not missed a contest this season.

Ortiz currently leads the Blue Raiders in scoring at 13.0 points per game after leading the team a year ago with a 15.3 per game average. During his career, Ortiz netted 611 points in 42 games, an average of 14.5 per contest. His play had stepped up over the last three games. During this span, Ortiz averaged 19.7 points per game including back-to-back 20-point scoring performances.

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