USC’s Royster decides to turn pro

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mazio Royster, who became the third Southern Cal sophomore to surpass the 1,000-yard mark in rushing when he gained 1,168 yards in 1990, announced yesterday he will leave USC to enter the NFL draft.

Royster, who has one year of eligibility remaining, started five games and saw action in two others as a junior last fall. He was hampered by a knee sprain early in the season, but wasn’t used late in the year despite being healthy.

Royster, 6-foot-1 and 195 pounds, finished the 1991 season with 542 yards rushing and seven touchdowns. He is 16th on Southern Cal’s career rushing list with 1,760 yards.

“It’s a tough decision to leave USC, but I want to try my hand at the next level and I feel now is the right time,” said Royster in a statement issued by the school.

Nebraska tight end opts for NFL

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska’s two-time All-Big Eight tight end Johnny Mitchell said yesterday he is placing concern for his family ahead of his academic career and leaving school for professional football.

Mitchell, a sophomore from Chicago, said an announcement earlier this month that he would stay at Nebraska one more season before entering the NFL draft was intended “to take some pressure off so I could finish this season.”

Mitchell, 6-foot-3 and 250 pounds, was a third-team All-American. He confirmed rumors that he had changed his mind and would become the first player in Cornhusker history to leave for the pros before his eligibility had expired.

“I have a great obligation to my family and I’ve decided to file for the 1992 NFL draft,” Mitchell said.

“It’s a family decision, something I have to do for Johnny Mitchell and my family.”

Fullerton kicker quits football team

FULLERTON, Calif. — Kicker and punter Phil Nevin quit the Cal State-Fullerton football team yesterday to concentrate on his law career and make himself eligible for the NFL draft in April.

Nevin, who has one year of football eligibility remaining, ran his string of consecutive conversions to 65 last season but made only 7 of 19 field goal attempts. As a punter, he averaged 40.9 yards.

“It’s clear to me that baseball is still my No. 1 priority,” said Nevin, who will be Fullerton’s third baseman this season. “I’m not doing this with the idea of getting drafted — it would be a pleasant surprise to me. But I no longer want to play college football. It’s just the time is right for me to make a choice.”

Committee changes ruling on fumbles

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — A rule change approved by the NCAA Football Rules Committee and announced yesterday will allow defensive players to advance fumbles no matter where they recover the ball.

The old rule allowed a defensive player to advance a fumble only if it occurred beyond the line of scrimmage.

The rule was changed to improve the balance between the offense and the defense and to make plays involving fumbles easier to officiate, the NCAA said.

It does not apply to missed laterals and pitchouts, which are considered backward passes under collegiate rules. It also does not apply to muffed kicks.

Ex-UA assistant named San Jose coach

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Former University of Arizona assistant Ron Turner was hired as San Jose State’s head coach Tuesday.

Turner, an assistant coach at seven schools since 1977, was given a four-year contract. Terms were not disclosed.

Turner, offensive coordinator at Stanford the past three seasons, succeeds Terry Shea, who left San Jose State last Thursday to become assistant head coach and offensive coordinator under new Stanford coach Bill Walsh.

Turner was an assistant at Arizona from 1978-80.