

Gottfried, Perles hot about agent approaching players

** Tuesday, March 17, 1987

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

Football coaches at two major colleges say they have confronted sports agent Norby Walters or his partner about Walters' attempts to approach college players before their eligibility has expired.

University of Pittsburgh coach Mike Gottfried said he "challenged" Walters' partner, Lloyd Bloom, the week of the Blue-Gray all-star game in Montgomery, Ala, and eventually called NCAA officials about Walters. Michigan State coach George Perles said he had a similar confrontation with Walters before the East-West all-star game in Palo Alto, Calif.

Walters, in a story in The Atlanta Constitution last week, admitted he has recruited college athletes by giving them cash and signing them to contracts before their college eligiblity expired, in violation of NCAA rules. The story identified Pitt linebacker Tony Woods as one of the players contacted by Walters. In an interview, Gottfried admitted he is skeptical about Woods' claim to him that there were no dealings between Woods and Walters during the player's senior season. "There is nothing I can flat-out prove," said Gottfried. "I heard what other people were telling me. And when that happens, if so many people are saying it, maybe there is something to it. I don't think there's any doubt that this guy Walters has been on my campus early to talk to some players. "If I can prove that any of my players has taken money from this guy, I'll turn 'em in, even if it's at the cost of the school and program." Gottfried said he was conversing with an NFL scout in a hotel lobby in Montgomery when he mentioned Bloom.

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THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

University of Pittsburgh coach

denied any early signing of my players. But I'm not letting it go.

"That week probably opened my eyes more than anything. Some of the things I saw and some of things heard are unbelievable. I felt the flection of how they operate yearround, it's sickening. The NCAA is on this thing. ... They need to get on it hard." The NCAA does not comment or divulge information on current investigations. Michigan State's Perles said he pursued rumors that Walters had tried to sign his players, including wide receiver Mark Ingram, early. "I basically screamed at the guy in public because of what I had heard," said Perles. "He said he hadn't been on my campus. I wasn't very nice to him." Perles said he does not believe that State's All-America running back, Lorenzo White, who has a year of eligibility remaining, has entered an early agreement with Walters. White also was named in the story last week as a player who has been contacted by Walters.

been no wrongdoing on his part, and there won't be."

Gottfried has issued a "public challenge" to Walters to name the college coaches who the New Yorkbased agent claims have ignored his NCAA had to know about it. If what cash payments to players. Walters these agents did that week is a re- said last week he had "hand grenades," a threat to expose coaches who ignored his payments .to players.

Graig Nettles, in the Braves' camp as a non-roster player, must make team to get a contract.

Nettles works to extend career, but has yet to impress Tanner

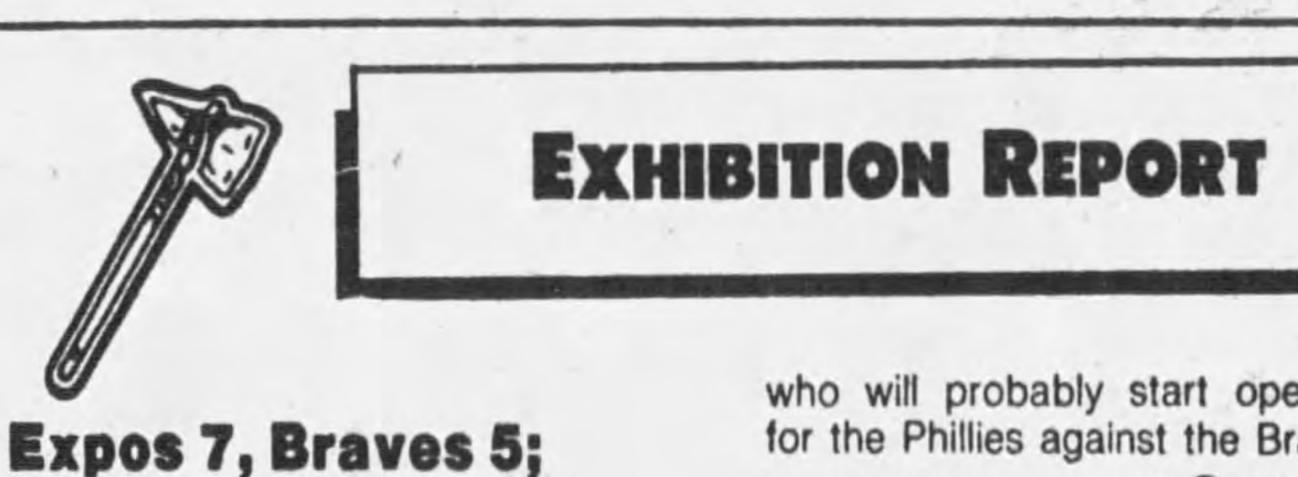
Braves Notebook, Page 2-B By Gerry Fraley Staff Writer

VERO BEACH, Fla. - The secure players stayed home Monday. Graig Nettles rode the early bus from West Palm Beach, hoped his two hits meant something to the Atlanta Braves and performed well at a position he had not played since 1968.

Nettles, with 20 years in the major leagues, must prove himself again. He must travel with a Braves split squad to road games when veteran teammates play at home. He must take every at-bat seriously.

The only thing Nettles has not yet done in his fight to stay with the Braves as a substitute is make a strong impression on manager Chuck Tanner.

"I try not to think about it," Nettles said. "You can go crazy if you think about it. I'm not sure what they're thinking. "Spring training has always been, for me, a time to relax and get myself geared up for the opening of the season. I find myself a little tenser in these games than I have been in the past because I'm under the microscope."



Braves 6, Dodgers 4

Against Montreal in West Palm Beach, Fla., the Expos produced three runs in the seventh against Matt West to take the win. Trench Davis had an inside-the-park homer and three RBI for the Braves. Against Los Angeles in Vero Beach, Fla., Darryl Motley drove in two runs, and three Dodgers errors led to two more scores in the Braves' victory.

The offense

Against Montreal, Gerald Perry ended an 0-for-9 run with two hits. Dale Murphy also had two hits and drove in a run. Against Los Angeles, Dion James continued his excellent spring with a double, a triple and two runs scored. James has hit and scored in all seven games he has played. He is batting .360 (9-25). Motley is also improving his standing. He had a runscoring double in the third, a sacrifice fly that scored the winning run in the seventh and stole a base. Motley also created a run in the first when he bowled over Dodger catcher Mike Scioscia, the league's best at blocking the plate, and forced him to drop the ball.

who will probably start opening day for the Phillies against the Braves.

- Gerry Fraley

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"Bloom overheard me," said Gottfried. "He introduced himself. I challenged him on the spot, but he him, called his mother, but there's.

"Lorenzo is one guy we've really counseled," said Perles. "I think it's unfair that his name got linked up with this. He hasn't done anything wrong. This guy has called

"This guy Walters says he's got i. hand grenades in his pocket," said Gottfried. "I think he's got hand !" grenades in his head. You can make this a public challenge to Norby .. Walters: Name those coaches who are looking the other way. Name 'em. If he doesn't, it's a bold and deceitful statement."

Walters said he has been "flooded with calls" since last week from reporters and other people regarding his tactics in signing players as clients. He did not deny having contact with two highly rated underclassmen - Michigan State's White and Ohio State wide receiver Cris Carter - but said neither player has accepted cash from him. The NCAA is aiming an investigation at Walters has underclassmen contacted.

"I got a call from families of both those kids, and both of them said, 'We got a big problem here,' " said Walters. "Neither one of those kids have taken anything from me."



Nettles has hit at least 15 homers in 17 consecutive seasons and would fill the first need of a bench: power to produce quick runs. The Braves want signs of life in the bat of a 42-year-old power hitter. The returns have been ambiguous.

Based on batting average, Nettles has not done well. With two singles Monday in the 6-4 split-squad win against Los Angeles, Nettles raised his average to .217 (5-for-23) with no extra-base hits and one RBI for all spring games.

"I'm swinging the bat well; I'm just not having any luck," said Nettles, who will receive a contract only if he makes the team. "I'm hitting the ball hard. I hope that's what they're looking for. I think I've shown I still have a quick bat."

The consensus among scouts is Nettles still has the quick swing that made him one of the generation's best fastball hitters. According to Dodgers starter Orel Hershiser, Nettles has also made adjustments and handles the breaking pitch better than before.

"In years past, that was a good pitch against him, but he's made some good adjustments," said Hershiser, who allowed Nettles' first-inning single. "I see someone who's still strong and who's still a good athlete."

The defense

Against Montreal, Ken Griffey extended the Braves' error-a-game pace with a bobble in left field. It was the third error in 11 games overall by Braves outfielders. Against Los Angeles, Graig Nettles had no difficulties in his first game at first base in 19 years. Nettles handled seven chances without an error and threw well when he needed to. Rookie shortstop Jeff Blauser began coming back to earth with his first error and an 0-for-4 game.

The pitching

Against Montreal, Jim Acker went five innings for the first time this spring. Acker had, some control problems and will probably begin the year in the bullpen. West had not pitched in seven days and will probably be better served by a return to the minors for more work. Against Los Angeles, David Palmer also went five innings for the first time.

The record

distinguished himself there.

only way to stay.

make them."

Overall: 6-5. Vs. NL West: 1-2. Vs. NL East: 1-2. Vs. AL: 4-1.

Next

The Braves play a rare day-night dou-McClure S, 1 bleheader Tuesday in West Palm Atlanta Beach. At 1:05, they face Montreal Acker with Zane Smith pitching against Jay West L. 0-1 Tibbs (WSB-AM, 750). At 7:35 p.m., Glavine they meet Philadelphia with Jeff Ded-Kilner mon starting against Shane Rawley, T-2:35. A-3.181.

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to pass, but close vote expected

By Glenn Sheeley Staff Writer

MAUI, Hawaii - First, Al Davis tried to make you believe he won't care what happens this week when the NFL owners vote whether to continue the television instant replay as an officiating tool.

"Whatever they want to do," said the NFL's resident maverick and Los Angeles Raiders managing general partner.

But eventually Davis caught himself. He couldn't allow the crowd of reporters to disperse without offering an opinion.

"The test (in 1986) was inconclusive," Davis said. "I worry about taking the game off the field. I'm worried that two or three years from now you'll have a guy up in the booth, and then they'll build a booth on top of him to see if this guy is right."

Dallas Cowboys general manager Tex Schramm said Monday he still feels "very positive" about the replay being retained for the 1987 season. In fact, the NFL's competition committee, which Schramm heads, has proposed that the owners approve the replay system for two years.

The TV replay system passed last March by a vote of 23-4-1. If passed this week, probably Thursday, the vote is expected to be much closer. A three-fourths majority vote (21 of 28 teams) is required for passage.

Atlanta out of Super Bowl bidding

MAUI, Hawaii - The NFL owners Monday announced the five finalists to be host to Super Bowl XXV, eliminating Atlanta, which had made an exploratary presentation for the game to follow the 1990 season.

The owners narrowed the list for their "silver anniversary" game to Anaheim, Calif., Los Angeles (Coliseum), Tampa Bay, San Diego and Miami. The choice will be made May 20-21 in San Diego.

The Atlanta presentation lost clout because it came without commitment of a domed stadium, required in areas where the average high temperature in late January is less than 50 degrees.

"I think their bid was mostly. given to get a feel for the system," said Jim Steeg, the NFL's special events director. "It's tough for anybody to do it on an 'if come' basis concerning a new stadium."

Steeg still termed the city'. "definitely viable" as a Super Bowl site, emphasizing an abundance of hotel rooms and excellent airport facilities.

"They've got everything you' could possibly want other than a. stadium," he said.

- Glenn Sheeley .

"Everybody expected a perfect system to start with and it wasn't going to be that way," said Miami coach Don Shula of the competition committee. "I think if saves one call, it's worth everything that goes into it."

Cincinnati's Paul Brown, another competition committee member, is solidly against the replay, citing what he calls the addition of "an extra layer of error."

The league is examining "excessive violence" with several proposals. One would bring about an automatic suspension from a spearing violation.

Schramm detailed a desire to prevent injuries to quarterbacks by enforcing penalties for hits made after the ball is released. The source for such discussion was chiefly the 1986 incident involving Green Bay defensive tackle Charles Martin, suspended for two games following a season-ending bodyslam on Chicago's Jim McMahon.

"Players have a responsibility to know where the sideline is, to know where the ball is and whether the ball has left," Schramm said." "They don't have an open book to, rush the passer with their head down."

Nettles has not moved Tanner, who has been oddly quiet on the subject.

"We have to see if we have the luxury of carrying a pinch hitter or do we have to have someone with versatility," Tanner said. "It's going to depend of the makeup of our club.'

If the Braves trade or release Glenn Hubbard, Nettles' chances increase. With Tanner set on carrying 10 pitchers, there are six bench spots available. Bruce Benedict, Gary Roenicke and Ted Simmons are assured of jobs. The last outfielder, either Darryl Motley or Trench Davis, will take the fourth spot.

The Braves carried one backup infielder last year but will probably go with two this season. They are becoming resigned to keeping Rafael Ramirez as a highly paid reserve middle infielder. Dispatching Hubbard would clear a spot for Nettles as a backup at third.

A bench including Nettles, Roen-

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