

College Stars May Have Been Ineligible

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Court documents filed as part of an agent's suits against several of the nation's top college football players contain promissory notes for several thousand dollars signed by the players. If the signatures are valid, the players violated college rules and should have been ineligible to play.

The players include such all-Americans as Brent Fullwood, the Auburn running back; Rod Woodson, a cornerback from Purdue, and Tony Woods, a defensive lineman from the University of Pittsburgh. All were clients of **Norby Walters**, a New York-based agent.

Under National Collegiate Athletic Association rules, a player receiving payments or entering into an agreement with an agent loses any further eligibility in the sport involved. Penalizing the players is impossible now because all have exhausted their college eligibility. Although the schools can be penalized, such penalties are generally not invoked, N.C.A.A. officials said.

"Unless the institution had knowledge that there was contact between the student-athlete and the agent, it's unlikely you can tie the institution into it," said Rick Evrard, director of legislative services for the N.C.A.A. Schools Investigate

Each of the five schools involved - two players from Florida and one from Clemson are also being sued by **Walters** - have conducted investigations. Most declined to divulge what they had found, saying they had turned the information over to their conferences or to the N.C.A.A.

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An exception was Pittsburgh, where the athletic director, Dr. Roy Bozik, said that Woods had acknowledged taking money during his playing career.

"Tony admitted it to us," Bozik said. "We played with an ineligible player, without our knowledge, and we've reported it to the N.C.A.A."

Walters is also the agent at the center of an investigation by the F.B.I. into alleged threats made by him and an associate against players and agents. **Walters** denied making the threats or having any knowledge of them. Suits Against 6 Players

Walters has said that he signed agreements to represent as many as 20 top college players and that "a few" of the players took money from him while they had college eligibility remaining. Though **Walters** would not identify those who took money, he has filed suit against six players, charging that each failed to repay loans and breached representation agreements with him.

Each of his lawsuits, filed in New York State Supreme Court in recent weeks, contains contracts dated Jan. 2, 1987 - the first day that senior players could sign such agreements under N.C.A.A. rules. However, each suit also contains copies of loan agreements for several thousand dollars that were dated at various times before the most recent football season. Each agreement carries the name of a player and a signature, purported to be that of the player. Each of the loan agreements says the money was to be repaid through the player's earnings in professional football.

The promissory notes were fairly uniform. The suit against Fullwood, for example, says he took \$4,000 last Aug. 20, before the football season began. The note bears the signature "Brent Fullwood."

A person close to Fullwood, who asked not to be identified, said Fullwood had acknowledged to Auburn officials and others that he took more than \$8,000 from **Walters** before his college eligibility expired. Attempts to reach Fullwood were unsuccessful. There was no response to messages left with his mother in Orlando, Fla.

Court documents on the Woodson case include a handwritten note, dated May 20, 1986, saying that Woodson acknowledged taking \$4,000 and is signed "Roc Woodson." Attempts to reach Woodson, who is a hurdler on the Purdue track team and, with Fullwood, a likely high first-round National Football League draft choice, were unsuccessful. There was no response to a message left at the school. Jim Vrugink, the sports information director at Purdue, who said he gave the message to Woodson, said the results of the school's inquiry were turned over to the Big Ten Conference.

Repayment Is Sought

Overall, **Walters's** suit says, he gave Woodson over \$21,000. Each of the suits asks for repayment and at least \$500,000 in damages.

Football players at five Big Ten schools - Purdue, Ohio State, Michigan State, Michigan and **Iowa** - have been linked to **Walters** in published reports. However, **Walters** has filed suit against only two: Woodson and **Ronnie Harmon**, formerly of **Iowa**, who played last season with the Buffalo Bills. **Walters** has declined to identify most of the others he represents.

Walters has said he gave **Harmon** "a substantial amount" of money when the running back was at **Iowa**, although his suit does not include any notes. Harmon's attorney and new agent, Martin Rausch, did not return several telephone messages. However, United Press International has reported Rausch said that **Harmon** took the money while at **Iowa** but did not know the payments were improper. Commissioner 'Very Concerned'

Wayne Duke, the Big Ten commissioner, said he did not have a "complete report" from any of the schools yet, but added: "I'm obviously very concerned about this. I think this is a very grave matter."

Woods, the Pittsburgh lineman, got \$2,500 from Walters on Feb. 10, 1986, according to the lawsuit, which says that he took an additional \$8,500 at later, unspecified dates.

Bozik said that Woods admitted that he signed a contract with Walters - the one dated Jan. 2, 1987 - in February 1986, the same time he signed the loan agreement.

The Florida players named in the suits were Adrian White, a safety, and Frankie Neal, a wide receiver, who left Florida for Fort Hays Kansas State College before last season. They sued Walters and his New York firm, World Sports and Entertainment, seeking to cancel their contract with Walters. He countersued, citing the loan documents. The Clemson player was Terrence Flager, a tailback.

Bill Arnsperger, the new athletic director at Florida, said only that "the university is not involved in any way with this and there is no eligibility involved." Pressed as to what the school's inquiry had turned up about whether White and Neal violated the rules, he said, "I've been advised not to comment."

Mel Levine, the agent now representing White and Neal, said it was clear the players had signed an agreement with Walters, but he was not sure when or whether they had taken money.

At Clemson, Bobby Robinson, the athletic director, said that the school filed a report with the Atlantic Coast Conference and would have no further comment.

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