

SPORTS

Big 10 Investigation Reportedly Clears Iowa's Harmon of Any Wrongdoing

BY <i> FROM TIMES WIRE SERVICES </i>
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IOWA CITY — Big 10 investigators have concluded former University of Iowa running back Ronnie Harmon did not fumble intentionally when he lost the ball four times in the 1986 Rose Bowl, the NCAA News reported.

Collegiate football officials and federal prosecutors apparently were asking the same question as many Iowa fans following the Hawkeyes' 45-28 loss to underdog UCLA: Why did the sure-handed Harmon lose the ball four times in one game after fumbling only once in 11 previous games?

Big 10 officials and Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard Pearl examined the Rose Bowl tapes to see if Harmon might have been trying to throw the game for gambling purposes, but concluded nothing suspicious occurred, the NCAA News reported.

The investigation was apparently an off-shoot of a Chicago federal grand jury probe into alleged improper dealings by professional sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom. Both Harmon and former Iowa defensive back Devon Mitchell have been implicated in that case for allegedly receiving illegal payments from the agents before they graduated.

Harmon, now with the Buffalo Bills, fumbled twice during runs and twice more after catching passes. He also dropped an apparent touchdown pass from quarterback Chuck Long.

After the game, Iowa Coach Hayden Fry said the All-American was crushed by his performance. Fry has since said that anyone who believes the rumors is "outta his mind."