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OSU gives Carter boot - Star receiver is ineligible for contract with agent

*By From Sun-Times Wires July 16, 1987 Publication: Chicago Sun-Times Page: 120
Word Count: 605*

COLUMBUS, Ohio Cris Carter, the all-time leading receiver at Ohio State, was declared permanently ineligible Wednesday for accepting money and signing a contract with an agent. Ohio State athletic director Rick Bay, speaking at a news conference, said Carter admitted that on May 1, 1986, he had signed a representation agreement and a \$5,000 promissory note with **Lloyd Bloom** and **Norby Walters**, agents of World Entertainment and Sports, Inc.

In addition, Carter, who had one season of eligibility remaining, received \$150 per month for almost a year after signing the contract, which was postdated to Jan. 2, 1988. Bay said Carter looked upon the payments as a loan against future earnings but that it was still an infraction of NCAA rules, which carries a penalty of immediate ineligibility.

"Coach (Earle) Bruce and I felt, and (Ohio State) president Edward Jennings concurred, that the actions were so blatant and over such a long period of time" that the university had no choice but to declare Carter ineligible and would not appeal any penalties levied against him by the NCAA," Bay said.

It is against NCAA rules for a college athlete to enter into an agreement with an agent before the end of his eligibility.

Carter, a 6-3, 194-pounder who was a two-time All-America, caught 69 passes last season for 1,127 yards and 11 touchdowns, all Ohio State records. He also owns career marks with 168 receptions and 27 touchdowns.

In a statement, Carter said, "I regret the actions I took that make it necessary for Ohio State to declare me ineligible. I did not realize at the time the consequences that would result or the pain I would cause."

Carter's name had come to light in published reports of signings by agents early this year. But an investigation within the Ohio State athletic department, headed by Bay, found Carter innocent this spring of any wrongdoing.

"I asked him explicitly (at the time of the Ohio State investigation) if he knew **Norby Walters** and he said he did. I asked him if he had taken money from him and he said he had not. I asked him if he had ever signed a contract and he said he had not," Bay said, in explaining how Carter had been cleared in the internal investigation.

Robert Berry, a member of the faculty at the Boston College School of Law, was at the news conference representing Carter. He said federal charges still could be brought against Carter, who testified Tuesday before a federal grand jury in Chicago looking into dealings by **Walters** and **Bloom**.

"There will be a . . . lot of Ohio State football games after Cris Carter," Bruce said.

"I was naturally hurt, disappointed, kind of mad. I was angered that someone would do that to our football program and himself. It was kind of a dumb play, don't you think?"

"Somewhere along the line, he got to feeling the rules don't apply to him. But they do."

According to the NCAA, two football players at Pittsburgh, Teryl Austin and Charles Gladman, and Alabama basketball player Derrick McKey have been declared ineligible at their schools for dealings with **Walters** and **Bloom**.

Berry said he favored having Ohio State appeal if the NCAA declared Carter ineligible, due to "extenuating and, to an extent, bizarre circumstances."

He said that Carter was prodded into signing an agreement with Bloom by Carter's older brother, George.

Berry said that George Carter introduced Cris Carter to Bloom and Walters and then encouraged his brother to sign the promissory note and contract. He added he believed George Carter was in the employ of Walters and Bloom at the same time he urged his brother to sign a contract.

Bay said that no other athletes at Ohio State were under investigation.

Chicago Sun-Times

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