

# O'Brien Agrees To Terms

By Greg Logan

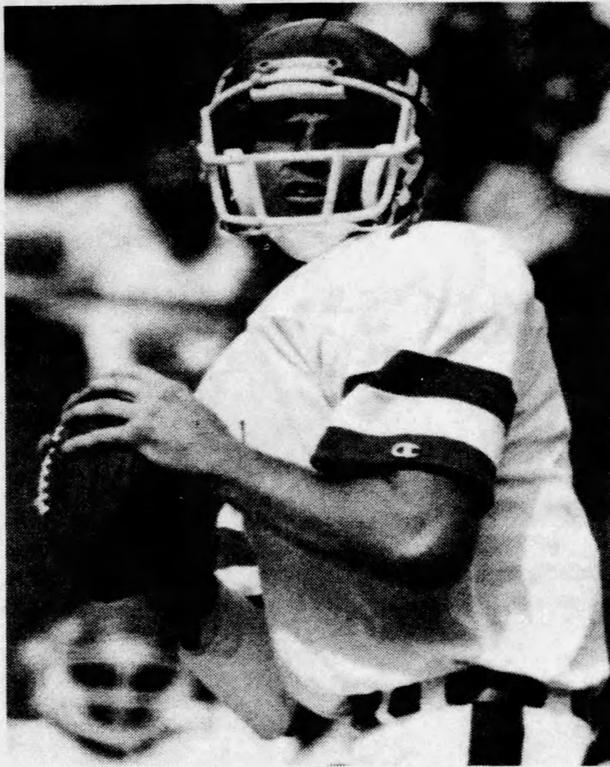
Quarterback Ken O'Brien late last night ended his one-week holdout and came to terms with the Jets on a one-year contract with an option that moved him into the high-rent district among NFL quarterbacks. Including incentives, O'Brien could make as much as \$1 million this season.

"We're happy with the settlement," said Leigh Steinberg, O'Brien's Berkeley, Calif.-based agent. "The lines of communication were never down. The Jets were very responsible, as we tried to be. It worked out very well."

Steinberg declined to discuss financial details of the contract but was known to be seeking a base salary of \$900,000. The Jets reportedly were offering a \$750,000 base with incentives that could boost the value of the contract to \$1 million. By all indications, O'Brien and the Jets met somewhere in the middle.

In terms of annual value of their contract packages, 10 other quarterbacks make anywhere from \$1.6 million per year for Buffalo's Jim Kelly to \$850,000 per year for Danny White of Dallas. Third-year Washington quarterback Jay Schroeder recently signed a three-year package worth an average of \$933,333 per year. O'Brien's deal most likely fell between Schroeder's and White's.

Jets president Jim Kensil earlier said O'Brien's performance at the end of last season when the team finished 0-5 after a 10-1 start was a factor in the negotiations. That may explain why O'Brien re-



Newsday / Paul J. Bereswill

Ken O'Brien ends his seven-day holdout

ceived such a short-term deal from the Jets, who apparently want him to prove himself this season before offering a longer contract for so much money. Of the 15 other highest-paid quarterbacks in the NFL, 12 have contracts of five or six years in length.

It's Jets policy to negotiate with a player entering his option year, which means the club and O'Brien will be back at the bargaining table again next year. In the meantime, O'Brien will report today to the Jets' Hofstra training camp with the remaining veterans. Oh yes, there's the matter of a \$7,000 fine to be paid. Well, you have to spend money to make money.

# Giants' Pick Took Money From Agents

By George Willis

Pleasantville, N.Y. — Giants rookie tight end Rod Jones said he accepted a \$250-a-month "loan" from New York agents Lloyd Bloom and Norby Walters during his senior season at Washington. Jones won't say how much money he took from the agents, only that he has repaid it in full.

While some clients — including Giants second-round pick Adrian White — left Walters, Jones plans to retain him as an adviser. "I don't feel he took advantage of me. When I needed him, he was there," Jones said.

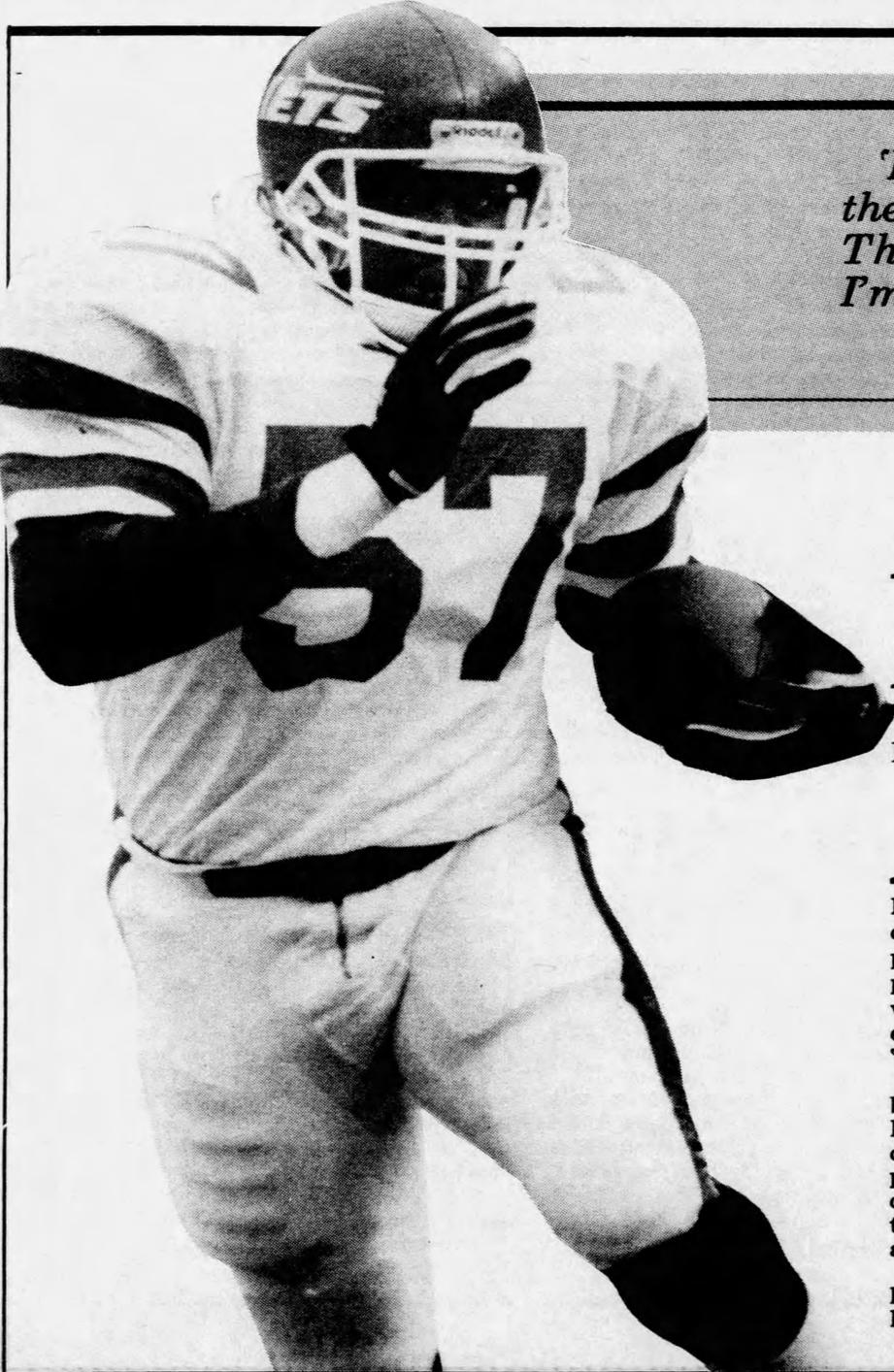
A federal grand jury in Chicago is investigating the agents. Jones, who was subpoenaed to appear last June, did not testify but was interviewed briefly by an FBI agent.

Between workouts yesterday at the Giants' training camp, Jones, an eighth-round draft pick vying to win a job as the third tight end, said he took the money because "I was in a bind." When Jones was redshirted one year, some of his expenses were not paid for by the university. Jones said he had to pay for his housing.

Jones told of being ashamed of always asking his parents to help with his expenses. "Athletes can't work [NCAA rules prohibit scholarship athletes from working during the school term]. It's tough," he said.

So when Bloom called in the summer of 1986, Jones became a client. Jones said he was fully aware that taking money from an agent was against NCAA rules. But he said he assumed other players on the team also were accepting payments from agents.

"I didn't use my money to buy gold chains or a car," Jones said. "I used it to buy something to eat . . . and maybe take my girl out now and then."



*'In the past, I had to start on the bottom and work my way up. This year, I'm at the top and I'm trying to stay there.'*

— Kevin McArthur, Jets linebacker

# McArthur Keeps Bouncing Back

By Rich Cimini

**A** SA YOUNGSTER growing up in Lake Charles, La., Kevin McArthur was awakened at 6 a.m. every day by his mother. Eula Mae McArthur gathered her 13 children in the living room, where they prayed until breakfast. "I came from a poverty-stricken family — we were always on welfare — but my mother never let us lose our faith," McArthur said. "That's what she instilled in us."

McArthur has applied his mother's beliefs to his football career. He has not lost his faith. Undaunted after being cut by the Jets in each of the past three preseason training camps, the 24-year-old linebacker has returned for a fourth try. It's much different this time around.

With Lance Mehl recuperating from knee surgery and expected to be sidelined until October, McArthur has

emerged as the No. 1 right inside linebacker. He did not earn the distinction by default. If you recall, he was resigned last season when Mehl hurt his knee in the eighth game. McArthur was impressive, punctuating his performance with a 21-yard interception return for a touchdown in the AFC wild-card game.

Now he is on top of the heap, ahead of the many obscure players who fill the depth chart. "In the past, I had to start on the bottom and work my way up," McArthur said. "This year, I'm at the top and I'm trying to stay there."

McArthur is thrilled about the opportunity, but there are traces of sadness in his voice when he talks about the upcoming season. During the Jets' strength camp last month at Hofstra, McArthur received a phone call from his sister back home in Louisiana. Mother had died.

The last time McArthur saw her, she

—Continued on Page 129