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Close call for White in agents' encounter

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Michigan State tailback Lorenzo White colors himself lucky after his brush with **Norby Walters** and **Lloyd Bloom**. The two agents, who created a national scandal by signing - and paying - several collegiate athletes, contacted the Heisman Trophy candidate last fall in East Lansing.

"**Walters** called me on the phone at my dorm room and said he wanted to meet with me when he was in town," White said. "He was telling me about all the big stars he represented.

"When I went to the meeting, **Walters** and **Bloom** were both there. They didn't mention any money or have any with them, but they did tell me about all the money I'd be making in the NFL."

White said that 20-minute session was the last he saw - or heard - of **Walters** and **Bloom**.

Although White was later questioned by both Michigan State and NCAA officials, he has not been subpoenaed by the grand jury in Chicago investigating the activities of **Walters** and **Bloom**.

That means White, who apparently has been given a clean slate, will have a chance to rebound from last year when knee and ankle injuries limited him to 633 rushing yards.

"I don't have anything to feel bad about," White said. "I didn't do anything wrong."

SCRAM! Michigan coach Bo Schembechler also had agents on his mind, even if he doesn't want them on his premises.

"I don't want them around - they're barred," Schembechler said. "They send guys, their pimps, onto campus to try and contact the kids. They don't come themselves.

"He'll have 35 gold chains around his neck and he'll be slick."

LIGHT READING: Ohio State linebacker Chris Spielman, who has a

legitimate shot at winning the Heisman, admits he's caught up in

football's history.

No wonder Spielman claims the only book he checked out of the school library last year was The Knute Rockne Story.

Spielman also can recite Grantland Rice's famous lead about the Four Horseman of Notre Dame and is amazed when no one else in a group of reporters surrounding him can do it.

Given all that, can it be a surprise Spielman would like to play his pro football in Green Bay?

"For the tradition," he said.

HOW GOOD? When Illinois coach Mike White looks at his defense, he sees stars.

And maybe a few roses.

"I think our defense this year will be better than the defense on our 1983 Rose Bowl team," White said. "We're strong."

That Rose Bowl defense, the heart of the team, featured the likes of Don Thorp and Mark Butkus.

That makes White's statement quite a mouthful.

"The defense will carry us," White insisted.

UNTAMED: Sophomore linebacker Melvin Foster has caught the eye of Iowa coach Hayden Fry.

"He's a wild man," Fry said. "He's the type who'll chase you up into the two-bit seats just to put a knot on your head."

DOWNING DOWNER: After having played behind the likes of Scott Campbell, Jim Everett and Jeff George, Doug Downing has stepped forward to become Purdue's starting quarterback.

But for Downing, a fifth-year senior, the memories aren't all good.

It still bugs him that George was given the starting job last year by then-coach Leon Burnett. He doesn't feel that George, who's since transferred to Illinois, deserved it.

"No way (George should have started)," Downing said. "He wasn't knowledgeable enough about the offense. We ended up simplifying the offense for him and taking out a lot of things we could have used.

"When they called me into the office last year and told me that Jeff was going to be the starter, I just said, 'Uh.' They never really did explain it to me. That was just an indication of how the communication was breaking down last year."

Michigan State's Lorenzo White breaks away from Illinois' Tucker Jenkins during a 1985 Big Ten game at East Lansing, Mich. Credit: Associated Press

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