

FOOTBALL

Big 10 asks court help in identifying Walters' clients

From Chicago Tribune wires

The Big 10 went to court Monday seeking to have sports agent Norby Walters and his associate, Lloyd Bloom, identify any conference players who signed with Walters' firm while the athletes were still eligible to play college ball.

Signing college athletes to professional sports contracts is a violation of NCAA rules, and a grand jury in Chicago probing the activities of the two New York-based agents is said to be considering whether such practices constitute fraud against the schools involved.

But the Big 10 lawsuit, assigned to U.S. District Court William Hart, says simply that the league certifies its athletes' eligibility and asks that Walters and Bloom be or-

dered to disclose the identities of any athletes they have signed "because they are undercutting our ability to do this accurately," said attorney Byron Gregory.

"Our sole concern in this matter is concealment. That is a violation of Big 10 rules," said Gregory. "If student-athletes want to sign these contracts, that is an issue that reasonable people can resolve.

"But we certify our athletes to bowls, other teams, conferences and the NCAA. That is based on the best information we have. If there is concealment of actions that render a player ineligible and we nonetheless continue to certify, we are in an untenable position."

Walters and Bloom, who have acknowledged signing players with

college eligibility remaining but contend they have broken no laws, are the only defendants named.

Walters and Bloom contend all the Big 10 athletes they signed already are known to the public.

The league has identified 10 former athletes who had dealings with Walters and Bloom, among them Ohio State wide receiver Cris Carter, who lost his senior year of eligibility when it became known he had signed with the two agents to represent him in contract talks with NFL teams.

Meanwhile, a two-month investigation by the Philadelphia Inquirer alleges that some of agent Art Wilkinson's dealings have violated NCAA rules.

Wilkinson, 32, has built one of

the busiest and most controversial businesses in the country, largely through his "unusual association" with the University of Nebraska, according to the newspaper.

Many of his star clients are from Nebraska. His first was running back Mike Rozier. The most respected name on his list is Nebraska coach Tom Osborne.

But Wilkinson's recruiting strategies at Nebraska and elsewhere have led to problems. The Philadelphia Inquirer found that:

- Wilkinson had a field pass for all Nebraska games and practices and, on at least one occasion, discussed business with a Cornhusker player—an NCAA violation.
- Wilkinson's firm paid two

Arizona players, Alfred Jenkins and Jon Horton, while they were still playing college ball—also an NCAA violation.

Said Wilkinson: "I know what the skeletons are in my closet, and in all honesty, they're nothing."

Osborne insisted that Wilkinson had never been his agent, although Wilkinson carries a letter, purportedly signed by the coach, saying: "Please be advised that Art Wilkinson, Esquire, is my agent."

Osborne also disavowed any knowledge of Wilkinson's special pass.

"The NCAA rule is that the people on the sidelines are players, coaches and medical personnel," Osborne said. "That's all I've ever authorized being there."



AP Laserphoto
Sports agent Norby Walters: Inquiring minds want to know.

Broncos hold off Dolphins

From Chicago Tribune wires

John Elway ran and passed for first-half touchdowns and Gene Lang raced 76 yards for a third-quarter score, leading the Denver Broncos to a 31-28 exhibition victory over the Miami Dolphins Monday night in Denver.

The Broncos (2-1) exploded for 17 points in the second quarter as Elway (11 of 19 for 164 yards) scrambled 8 yards for one TD and passed 8 yards to Clarence Kay



AP Laserphoto
The Dolphins' Mark Duper fumbles the football quarter of the Broncos' 31-28 exhibition victory after getting hit by safety Tony Lilly in the first Monday night in Denver. The Broncos recovered.

NFL NOTEBOOK

for another. Elway's 53-yard completion to Ricky Nattiel set up a 22-yard field goal by Rich Karlis.

Denver (471 total yards) went ahead 24-0 early in the second half when Lang burst off tackle and outran the Miami Dolphins (0-2) secondary.

"We're bursting with confidence," said Elway, whose backup, Gary Kubiak, added a 37-yard TD pass to Mark Jackson.

"We looked pretty sorry," Dolphin coach Don Shula said of his team's first-half performance.

Things turned around a little in the second half. Don Strock hit Mark Clayton on a 5-yard TD pass late in the third period and later connected with Mark Duper on a 30-yard scoring play.

Former Philadelphia QB Ron Jaworski (13 of 17 for 163 yards) made it close with scoring passes of 2 and 14 yards to James Pruitt.

■ The head of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics has asked National Football League Commissioner Pete Rozelle to postpone Friday's scheduled supplemental draft because it "attacks the integrity of our educational mission."

■ Carl Miller, NACDA's president and athletic director at Pacific, said in a letter to Rozelle the two groups must meet to discuss the ramifications of the supplemental draft. Rozelle has scheduled the draft to allow NFL teams to select former Ohio State wide receiver

Cris Carter and former Pitt running back Charles Gladm, who lost their NCAA eligibility for accepting money from agents.

Miller said the supplemental draft would effectively dissolve long-standing agreements and understandings about the drafting of players whose college classes have not yet graduated.

■ The New York Giants, who have had four players stricken by cancer within the last eight years, should consider testing the area around Giants Stadium, said NFL Players Association Vice President Mark Murphy. Murphy also said the union would like its next collective bargaining agreement to include a study of mortality rates at all NFL stadiums.

■ Tackle Karl Nelson is the latest Giant to contract cancer, having been diagnosed last week as having Hodgkin's disease. Two other Giants players died of cancer,

while one recovered.

■ Tommy Kramer, the NFL's top-rated quarterback last year who had spent the last month undergoing treatment for alcohol problems, made his 1987 debut at the Minnesota Vikings' training camp Monday morning. The 32-year-old Kramer, whose last game was the starting assignment for the NFC in the Pro Bowl, thus officially began his 11th season in the NFL. His appearance also means that every player on Minnesota's roster is signed and in camp.

■ Also Monday, the Vikings cut linebacker Matti Lindholm, the first nonkicking European player ever signed to an NFL contract. Lindholm is returning to Helsinki, Finland, to play in the European football playoffs.

■ The Detroit Lions dealt veteran safety Demetrious Johnson, who had asked to be traded, to the In-

dianapolis Colts for a future undisclosed draft pick. Johnson, 26, started every game for the club the last two years.

■ The Los Angeles Raiders made a legal claim for nearly \$18.5 million in damages from the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission for alleged breach of promises made to the team when it moved from Oakland to Los Angeles. If the claim is paid, it would deprive the Coliseum Commission of almost all the damages it hopes to receive in its suit against the NFL for impeding the Raiders' move from Oakland in the early 1980s. That judgment has been entered and the U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether to hear a final appeal.

■ Linebacker Billy Ray Smith reached agreement on a five-year contract with the San Diego Chargers, ending a three-week holdout.

Duerson bumps Fencik out of free-safety job

By Mike Kiley

Dave Duerson has moved into the Bears' starting spot at free safety, defensive coordinator Vince Tobin said Monday.

That means Gary Fencik, going into his 12th season with the Bears, will play off the bench. His 1,110 tackles are tops in team history, and Fencik also leads the club with 38 interceptions.

Tobin said he informed Fencik that he liked what he saw Saturday from Duerson at free safety and Todd Bell at strong safety in the exhibition victory against Pittsburgh.

"We'll start those two again Monday in the St. Louis game," Tobin said. "And unless something changes, we'd continue to go with them that way."

Besides the fact the Bears feel Duerson gives them better range than Fencik, the decision is based on how well Bell has improved. Bell returned last year after sitting out 1985 in a contract dispute. Duerson won Bell's strong safety job two years ago when he was gone, and was voted an All-Pro at the position the last two seasons.

"Last year, Todd pulled a hamstring early, and he just never competed for the starting job," Tobin said. "But he was an All-Pro in 1984, and he's working extremely hard this year. He's learned the system, and he's tough."

Fencik wanted to wait to comment on the situation. "Give me a day to digest it," he said.

■ Jim McMahon threw Monday in drills with the other three quarterbacks and appears to be on schedule to start the Cardinals exhibition, as planned. It would be his first game appearance since he

BEAR NOTEBOOK

had shoulder surgery last December.

■ Mike Ditka tried a couple punts himself before practice to show punters Maury Buford and his competition—rookie Kevin Brown—his form.

Ditka's performance showed he's no threat to them, except as a coach. He's stressed that he wants to see improved punting from them in the remaining two preseason games.

"Is Ray Guy retired?" Ditka asked so his punters could hear. "Maybe I could get him out of retirement."

It's not a laughing matter for Buford, who has been a solid performer for the Bears for the last two seasons.

"I've been punting well in practice, but in game situations I haven't got the job done," said Buford. "Fundamentally, I don't see anything that's totally wrong. I'm not keeping my head down all the way, I know that. But I just have to go out against St. Louis and get back my confidence."

■ Ditka might announce several more cuts Tuesday as the team works its roster down to 60 by Sept. 1. The Bears currently have 75 players.

■ "I feel like a giant standing straight up," Duerson said about moving from strong to free safety. "There's a lot of thinking going on out there when I'm at free safety. It's not as instinctive."

Duerson had a big sideline hit against Pittsburgh after hot pursuit, and it was like a wakeup call to him. "Against Miami, I didn't get much work at all. It felt great to get a hit. It got me started."

Bears

Continued from page 1

Conference all four years, he didn't spend much time in front of a television set dreaming of an NFL career.

"I'm really not into watching sports on TV," he said. "If I can't be there to see it, or be the one playing, it's not as exciting. The Bears were about the only team I'd watch because they had Coach [Mike] Ditka. I'd heard about how wild he was as a human being and then how calm and relaxed he was as a coach."

Calm and relaxed? Smith must have missed the game last season during which Ditka almost tore off Emery Moorehead's jersey giving him sideline instructions.

"Coming from Grambling, Ditka seems calm to me," Smith reiterated. "I've seen some real wild days with Coach [Eddie] Robinson. The only thing is, Coach Robinson doesn't curse, and Coach Ditka will."

"But Coach Robinson gets to whooping and hollering on the sideline, which you wouldn't expect him to do."

Robinson has visited various NFL training camps through the years. The Bears made a distinct impression that he conveyed back to his team.

"He said the Bears had an organization about like Grambling's, that it was a family; everybody was as one," Smith said.

"Every time he went off to an NFL camp, he came back and

told us his opinion of each team. He especially was impressed by the Bears and their system.

"It was a shock to me when the Bears drafted me, because I knew they had the great defensive line. I was kind of scared. But since I've been here I see I can compare myself at times with those guys. So now it's a matter of me taking a step forward and making it."

Smith doesn't feel he's been especially dazzling the coaches. But Ditka has said he likes the way he works hard.

"I've been coming around kind of slow," Smith said. "I'm trying to adjust to the way Coach [John] Levrva wants me to move up and down the line. As far as special teams, I think I've been doing great on the kickoff team."

"But on the line, I make a front step when I should be making a side step on the takeoff move."

Defensive line coach Levrva said: "Smith needs a lot of footwork technique on his run reads. He's a big, strong guy, and he rushes pretty good. But we have to straighten out his reaction on the line of scrimmage when the run is at him or away from him."

"I like what he's done on the pass rush. He's done better in practices than games. In games, he forgets it and gets too tied up with the blocker."

"It looks like he has good native instincts. He appears to be pretty strong, and for his size, he can move good. If he can learn to play the running game, he has a chance to be a real decent defensive lineman."

Lomax, Stoudt get call against Bears

From Chicago Tribune wires

MEMPHIS—Neil Lomax, St. Louis' No. 1 quarterback, will play the first 2½ quarters and backup Cliff Stoudt will finish the Cardinals' exhibition game in Chicago against the Bears next Monday night, coach Gene Stallings said Monday.

Quarterback Kelly Stouffer, St. Louis' No. 1 draft pick from Colorado State, has not signed. That leaves former Mississippi quarterback Kent Austin as the No. 3 passer.

"We might keep three quarterbacks," Stallings said. "But I am

still looking for something from Kent."

Stallings said he is pleased with running back Stump Mitchell, who ran for 90 yards in a 28-21 victory over Seattle Saturday.

The Cardinals, 1-1 in exhibition play, will conduct seven workouts through Saturday, then head to Chicago for Monday's pre-season game against the Bears.

"We won't do much hitting and we will go mostly in shorts and shoulder pads," Stallings said.

"At this point in the season, I can't afford to get anyone injured."

Tennessee

Continued from page 1

lack of interest. He remembers attending an Illinois quarterback camp with other top prospects from the state, among them Jim Bennett and Chuck Hartlieb.

"All the quarterbacks wanted to go to Illinois," he recalled. "That was the big question: Who's going to Illinois?"

"Illinois at the time was the hottest quarterback school in the country. Dave Wilson and Tony Eason had been first-round picks in the National Football League draft, and Jack Trudeau would lead the Illini to the Rose Bowl. So what the young prospects were really asking each other was, Which of us is bound for glory?"

Although it didn't look that way at the time, the answer seems to be Jeff Francis. Hartlieb ended up going to Iowa, where he is one of three quarterbacks contending for playing time. Bennett was the anointed one at Illinois but quit the football team a year ago.

"The funny thing is," Francis said, "I ended up being coached by the same guy who coached all those quarterbacks at Illinois."

Walt Harris, who had been Mike White's quarterback coach, had moved on to Tennessee. That was why, when the Illini decided to take Bennett, White called Harris and told him about Francis.

"Illinois did do me a favor," Francis acknowledged. They did Tennessee one, too.

"Recruiting him was kind of fun," Harris recalled, "because he wasn't recruited heavily. We came in a little late, and Miami of Ohio had done a real good job over a longer haul."

"I talked to Mike about that once, and he said: 'Heck, you're the only place he can play big-time football. You're going to challenge him, and if he's the kid you want, he'll take the challenge.'"

"I was there on the only recruiting trip Coach [Johnny] Majors made to his house, and Jeff was hemming and hawing around, and I finally said: 'Jeff, if you want big-time football, your school is Tennessee. If not, you'll go to Miami. C'mon coach, let's go.' Jeff took the challenge."

Francis admitted to having had some uncertainty about his ability to play at that level.

"At the time I really didn't know if I'd be able to play at a school like that," he said.

He was a redshirt freshman during Tennessee's Sugar Bowl season.

"I was just trying to survive," he said. "I really wasn't ready to play. I wasn't very good."

But when starting quarterback Tony Robinson



"This place is a gold mine for quarterbacks because of the receivers. I think we've got the best receivers in the nation."

—Jeff Francis

Trudeau, although, Harris adds, "He's more like Tony Eason in terms of football background."

"What I liked about Jack Trudeau was he really knew the game of football when he came to us. Tony didn't have a great background but had tremendous ability. Jeff is more like Tony in the mental part."

"He had an awfully good starting year from where he came from. When Jeff first got the job, he was concentrating so hard on doing his job that it was almost like he was on an island. I told him, 'Jeff, we're all on that piece of land with you.' Coming back from the dead like we did last year was, in its own way, as much of an accomplishment as winning the Sugar Bowl the year before."

Harris said he wasn't surprised Francis came through.

"He had to," Harris said. "It was his time. He'll do even better. He was a young sophomore quarterback. He's picked up our offense now. He's had all the times at bat, and he's got a real advantage in the guys he throws to."

"Our receivers were good at Illinois, but the guys we've got at this place are better. One of them, Anthony Miller, is the best they ever had at Tennessee. He's probably just as fast as Willie Gault and a better football player."

Francis is way ahead of Harris in counting his blessings.

"This place is a gold mine for quarterbacks because of the receivers," he said. "I think we've got the best receivers in the nation. Anthony Miller is an awesome athlete. I think we'll have to throw the ball more this year because of the talent of the receivers."

If Francis throws it as effectively as he did a year ago, he'll pile up some big numbers. He's already eighth in career passing yardage at Tennessee, and his completion percentage of 64.4 is the second-best in school history.

"He has to stay hungry and improve himself," Harris said. "He has to see more and react quicker. He read defenses last year, but he didn't read them; he read them but it didn't click."

Francis accepts that.

"I have to play better this year," he said. "You go back and look at the films and see that, if you'd done what you were supposed to do, the team would have done so much better. I know what to expect now."

Next Sunday, Iowa can expect to face a quarterback scorned. He couldn't be happier about the way things worked out. Still, he said: "My mom and dad met at the University of Iowa. I would like to have had a chance."