## Agents issue reaches 'new level' with trial

The practices of agents such as Jim Abernethy of Atlanta, once considered unethical at worst, are being prosecuted as crimes. Many agents applaud this development, but they also are leery of the ground that is being broken.

abama basketeal player Derick Mcree. Wal
 Charges as Abenenetyy Arraigment of watern


 ters and Bloom, sources said.
Regardless, the message is this: Agents'
practices that might previously have been con-
sidered unethical at worst now are being considered unethical at worst now are being con-
sidered crimes. Jail could be the sidered crimes. Jail could be the next step.
"This thing has gone to another level," said Jack Mills, a Colorado sports agent. "If there
are laws that fit the situation of agents siging are laws that fit the situation of agents signing
athletes early, Ithink it's good that agents are athletes early, I think it's good that agents are
being prosecuted. If it's a deterrent, I'd feel being prosecuted.
The agent issue has become an emotional
one, said Mills. Many agents applaud the inter one, said Mills. Many agents applaud the inter
vention of prosecutors. But even those in favo vention of prosecutors. But even those in favo
of punishment are leery of the ground that is
being broken. being broken.
typical overthing needs to to be done, but it's a said David typical over-reaction," said David Ware, an A
lanta-based attorney and agent. "Instead of fo cusing attention where it should be - elimi-
nating the need for an athlete to take mone nating the need for an athlete to take money
from an agent - they focus on the opposite from an agent - they focus on the opposite
side. You end up putting a bandaid on a cancer."
Ware nevertheless believes agents should not go unchecked because, he sald, where has kid's career by signing him early. You rob him of a certain portion of his youth he can't get
back. There's no overcoming the embarrass back. There's no overcoming the embarrass-
ment and shame an athlete faces in having ment and shame an athlete faces in having
been discovered defrauding his university, his alma mater."
Ware said state laws are not a strong enough deterre
lege athletes.
it's.'The way the state laws are being written, it's only a crime if you're caught while the
player is still in school" said Ware. "If they player is still in school," said Ware. "If they
really wanted to make a statute with teeth, it really wanted tim make a staute wial with a kid
should be a criminalofense to deal
early, regardess of when it is discovered early, regardless of when it is discovered
with some reasonable statute of limitations."
Siegelman also got a grand jury to indict
Walters and Bloom for dealing with former Al.


## Two Aussies ride high in NASCAR qualifying runs


#### Abstract

$\underset{\text { Sy }}{\text { Bd }}$ Ed Hiter Staf Writer MELBOUNE, Australia - The Australian drivers - road-course and dirt-track specialists - had and dirt-track specialists - had seemed game enough, just for giving semed game enough. just for giving go. But they'd been given virtually no chance of stealing any thunder no chance of stealing any thunder from the NASCAR drivers who crossed the Pacific this week to transplant their sport crossed the Pacinc translant their sport. However, Saturday, However, Saturday, two Aussies removed their overlander hats removed their overlander hats, strapped on helmets and wowed their countrymen. Alan Grice of Maitland, New South Wales, and Robin Best South Wales, and Robin Best of Westbury, Tasmania, surprised even Westbury, Tasmania, surprised even themselves by taking the secondrow starting positions for Sunday's Goodyear NASAR 50 , the first su- perspeedway stock-car race ever perspeedway stock-car race run outside North America. One they didn't surprise was Neiil Bonnett, who won the pole as Neil Bonnett, who won the pole as expected and was joined on the expected and was joined on the front row by fellow Alabamian Bobby Allison. "It didn't surprise me a bit that they ran this well," Bonnett said. "These guys have driven a lot of practice laps on this track (the new practice laps on this track (the 1.12-mile Thunderdome oval)." Further, Bonnett had watched last May as Grice, a veteran sportscar racer, went without fanfare to Charlotte, N.C. to compete in his Charlotte, N.C., to first NASCAR race. "A very good job at Charlotte," Bonnett said. "We had a lot of good Bonnett said. "We had a lot of good American teams that didn't make the field for the Coca-Cola 600 there, but Alan did." Mechanical troubles at Char- lotte kept Grice from finishing the lotte kept Grice from finishing the race, but the consensus among American drivers was that he'd taken to superspeedway techniques and the heavier cars smoothly in and the heavier cars smoothly in his first outing - the kind of praise his first outing - the kind of praise the stock-car raceers have rarely bestowed on American "sporty-car boys," as they call them, who've at-


mpted the transition.
Best, a dirt-track, sprint-car spealist, nicknamed "The Tasmanian Devil,", also spent time in the Unit-
ed States learning the basics of the states learning the basies of the
"thunderers," as Australians call merican stock cars.
Best worked in the shop of the egendary driver turned builder unior Johnsn in Ronda, N.C., and
served Johnson's pit crews, "doserved on Johnson's pit crews, doto hauling gasoline," he said. Under ohnson, "I learned ho
He sold all his sprint-car equipment to get enough money to buy one of Johnson's Winston Cup cars, the Chevrolet he has brought here. Grice and Best were close to
Bonnett and Allison with their qualifying speeds. Bonnett averaged 140.483 mph in a Ponntiac, and Allison did 140.396 in a Buick. But
along came Grice at 139.795 in an along came Grice at 139.795 in an
Oldsmobile and Best at 139.233 in the Johnson-built Chery.
Grice felt, however, the Aussies would be seriously handicapped on Sunday by lack of knowledge of "the
strategy of the race itself. When do strategy of the race itself. When do you change four tires, and when
only two? When do you pit under caution, and when do you stay out on the track?? All these things. The
American teams know. We don'." Bonnett expressed little conBonnett expressed little con-
cern about the prospect of racing closely through Thunderdome's tight turns against the Aussies, who are quite inexperienced at fend
banging racing in heavy traffic. "Hey, I've raced in the Daytona "Hey, Ive raced in the Daytona
500 against people I didn't know very well,", Bonnett said. "The way I see it, anybody who's able to mak
the field deserves to be here.
"You don't make an Fovt
"You don't make an A.J. Foyt in
ne race," Bonnett continued. "Ev. one race," Bonsett continued. "Ev-
eryboyd has to start somewhere. I'm sure I Iscared the hell out of a lot of veterans my first time out in a NAS.

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