

Wilbur Marshall

NFL upholds no-trade clause for Marshall

By Glenn Sheeley
Staff Writer

PHOENIX — The NFL Tuesday termed allowable under the collective bargaining agreement a one-year, no-trade clause included in the \$6-million, five-year offer sheet the Washington Redskins have extended to Chicago Bears free agent linebacker Wilbur Marshall.

The clause, which was upheld by NFL Management Council executive director Jack Donlan, acting on the request of Bears president Michael McCaskey, prohibits the Bears from matching the offer and then trading Marshall to another team for better compensation. If the Bears do not match Washington's offer by Friday, they lose the rights to Marshall in exchange for the Redskins' No. 1 picks in the 1988 and '89 drafts.

Cited as a precedent in the matter was a 1977 offer sheet from Washington to St. Louis Cardinals defensive lineman Bob Bell that included a no-trade clause. St. Louis at that time matched Washington's offer of \$49,900 and retained Bell.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., Marshall's agent Richard Bennett said there was a "good chance" his client will be a member of the Redskins by the end of the week.

The National Labor Relations Board has filed a complaint against Dallas Cowboys management for alleged strike-breaking tactics during the NFL strike last season. The Cowboys were charged with threatening to put in jeopardy deferred monies and annuities of four players — Tony Dorsett, Ed Jones, Kevin Brooks and Everson Walls — for their withholding of services during the strike.

"I don't believe the charges have any basis," said Cowboys general manager Tex Schramm, "and neither do our people."

NFL

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By a vote of 26-0-2 (the Los Angeles Raiders and Miami abstaining), the Cardinals were granted approval to play in 74,000-seat Sun Devil Stadium for the 1988 season on the first year of a 30-year lease. The Cardinals' deal allows for them to break the lease with the Arizona State stadium in the event a new domed stadium is constructed.

The St. Louis Civic Progress group made a futile last attempt to keep the Cardinals by offering to advance Bidwill a \$20 million loan until the construction of a new stadium in St. Louis to replace the 54,000-seat Busch Stadium. The Cardinals' average attendance was 27,000 last year.

The St. Louis group also proposed to financially make up the 20,000-seat difference in a sellout of the Busch and Sun Devil stadiums. The figure would be multiplied times eight (for the Cardinals' home games) as an incentive for the eight yearly opponents who, under current rules, receive a 40 percent share of the gate.

"It was good enough," said Raiders owner Al Davis, "that a lot of guys joked that they would take the deal right now to move to St. Louis."

There was no figure announced as an indemnification fee to be paid by Bidwill for moving into Phoenix, until now the NFL's prime expansion area, but the amount is rumored to be an estimated \$9 million. According to the resolution passed, the Cardinals agree to make payment on the figure eventually established "as calculated on the same basis and under the same methodology as it applied in the action involving the transfer of the Raiders from Oakland to Los Angeles." The damage phase of the Raiders' suit, which was previously established by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court, is being retried.

There has been no discussion by the owners of division realignment involving the Cardinals, who remain for now in the NFC East, and possibly Atlanta, an NFC West member. Bidwill said he wants to stay in the NFC East because of the rivalries that the Cardinals established.

Bloom won't appear with Walters at arraignment

By Chris Mortensen
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Sports agent Lloyd Bloom has decided not to appear with associate Norby Walters when the two men are arraigned today on misdemeanor charges stemming from their dealings with former University of Alabama basketball player Derrick McKey.

Bloom was considering Tuesday whether to send overnight a written plea of not guilty when the agents are arraigned in the Tuscaloosa County courthouse before Circuit Court Judge John Karr, according to attorney Mike Trope.

"He needs to be here," said Assistant Alabama Attorney General Don Valeska. "He said he'd be here."

Trope, based in Los Angeles, said Bloom would be absent from the arraignment. Another attorney for Bloom, Donald Stewart of Anniston, Ala., said that a written plea is acceptable by state law.

Trope declined to speculate on the possibility that Bloom would not enter a plea and ignore the proceedings, thereby becoming a fugi-

The three misdemeanor counts — tampering with a sports contest, commercial bribery and deceptive trade practice — are the same charges former Atlanta sports agent Jim Abernethy faced in Lee County, Ala.

tive in the state of Alabama. Since the charges Walters and Bloom face are misdemeanors, it is highly unlikely that they could be extradited to stand trial in Alabama, according to state law officials.

Valeska declined to say how the state would react if Bloom decides not to stand trial.

Walters plans to appear today, according to a family source, because he remains a leading music promoter who conducts business nationwide and does not want to be regarded as a fugitive in any state.

The three misdemeanor counts — tampering with a sports contest, commercial bribery and deceptive trade practice — are the same charges former Atlanta sports agent Jim Abernethy faced in a jury trial Feb. 29 and March 1 in Lee County, Ala.

Abernethy was acquitted on two counts, but was found guilty of tampering and received a maximum sentence of one year in jail and \$2,000 fine. Abernethy has filed for an appeal.

Walters arrived Tuesday in Atlanta, accompanied by New York attorney Robert Gold. They drove to Anniston, Ala., to meet with Stewart, Walters' local counsel.

Walters and Gold each declined to comment.

Walters formed his sports agency, World Sports Entertainment, three years ago and hired Bloom as vice president. They signed more than 50 college athletes — in violation of NCAA rules — including McKey, the Southeastern Conference Player of the Year as a junior during the 1986-87 season.

McKey played out his junior season before his dealings with Walters and Bloom were exposed. At the same time, it was revealed that Alabama teammate Terry Coner, later drafted and released by the Atlanta Hawks, also accepted money from Walters during his college career. McKey lost his senior year of eligibility and became a first-round NBA draft pick of the Seattle SuperSonics.

The NCAA withheld approximately \$250,000 in tournament revenue from Alabama because the school had played with two ineligible players. Alabama officials appealed the NCAA decision, claiming they had no evidence of the players' association with the agents.

Valeska has said the state intends to seek restitution of the \$250,000 to Alabama if Walters and Bloom are convicted.

Alabama athletic director Steve Sloan said the school has delayed civil action against the agents pending the outcome of the trial.

A trial date will be set today. A pretrial hearing is scheduled for April 28, at which time Walters' at-

torneys may ask for a dismissal on jurisdictional grounds. They are expected to argue that Walters never physically entered the state to deal with McKey and that it was Bloom who personally signed the player in a hotel room near the university campus, paying him a \$2,500 bonus.

Also present at the signing was Terry Bolar, one of the agents' recruiters, who is not being charged. McKey has declined comment.

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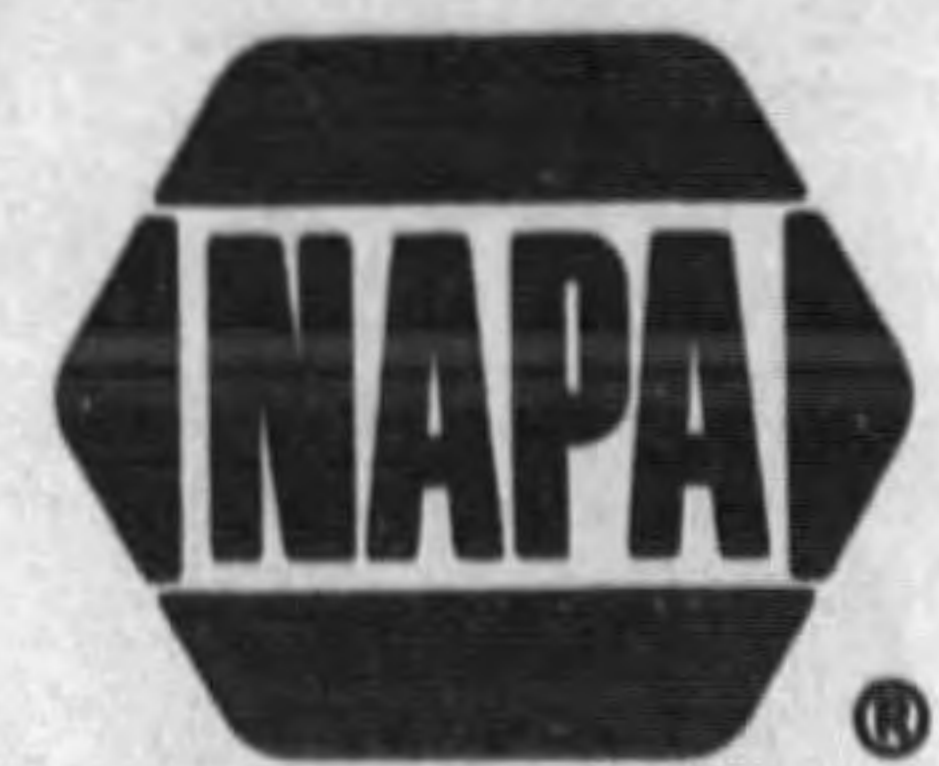
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