

Players sign NCAA affidavit affirming they have no agent

By Chris Mortensen
Staff Writer

If basketball once was a simple sport, consider where the NCAA has gone with its 64-team tournament. Before playing, players are asked to sign affidavits stating they do not have agents. After playing, they must prove they're not on drugs.

While the NCAA requires players on winning teams to submit to urinalyses to prove they do not use drugs, there is no test for whether a player has an agent. But, for the record, all 768 players in the tournament apparently have signed or will sign a document saying they do not.

"As of right now, I am not aware of one player coming forward," said NCAA assistant executive director Steve Morgan. "That doesn't mean we're naive enough to think that the whole tournament is clean."

For the first time, the NCAA requires tournament participants this week to sign affidavits stating they have not dealt with or signed with agents, or with any professional basketball team, or accepted any loans that would violate NCAA rules. If a player refuses to sign, he would be declared ineligible for the tournament.

Signing the affidavit is a repetitive step, since the players already have signed a student-athlete eligibility statement that says no rules have been broken. This statement is signed at the start of the school year.

"It (this week's affidavit) gives the athlete another opportunity to say, 'Whoa, I have a problem,'" said Morgan.

The affidavit is intended to do

more than that. The University of Alabama last year was forced by the NCAA to forfeit \$250,000 in tournament revenue after it was discovered that two players, Derrick McKey and Terry Coner, played despite having signed with agents **Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom.**

The NCAA wants member schools to explore legal avenues to recover such losses, even if it means suing an athlete who might sign a lucrative contract with an NBA team, such as McKey with the Seattle SuperSonics. The NCAA believes the affidavit might be used against an athlete in such cases and might put more liability on an agent.

Morgan alluded to two Memphis State basketball players, sophomore Sylvester Gray and junior Marvin Alexander, who lost their eligibility in December when former Atlanta sports agent Jim Abernethy said he had signed them to contracts during the summer. Memphis State is in the tournament.

"If it had not been discovered earlier, you obviously would have had a very interesting situation," said Morgan. "Those players would have either had to lie or say yes. Maybe other players had to make that choice this week. We're not saying it's a magic formula. It's just another step."

"I think all players understand what's going on. Before this past year, I think players could sign with an agent and be reasonably certain they would never get caught. But with reporters digging deeper, it no longer is a certainty, and the risk is greater, and the penalties cut deeper."

Auburn senior forward Chris Morris, who scored 36 points Thursday in the Tigers' 90-86 win over

Bradley at The Omni, said he signed the affidavit this week.

"I think the big message is to tell the truth or there could be trouble, and I don't have any problem with the truth," said Morris.

Morris had a bigger problem filling a urine specimen bottle after Auburn's game. It was about 90 minutes before his body produced the required amount of urine in the NCAA drug testing room. Only then was he released to rejoin his teammates.

And if Morris was not well-guarded by Bradley defenders, he certainly was shadowed relentlessly by an NCAA drug-testing courier, assigned to deliver him to the testing room within one hour of the game's end. Except for an initial 10-minute "cooling off period" in the locker room, the courier is told not to let the player out of his sight until the player is in the testing room.

Once the courier gets the player to the testing room, he hands him off to a "validator." The validator must witness the event.

The five starting players and a randomly selected sixth player, often the first or second man off the bench, from each winning team are tested in the tournament. Each of the winning players tested is assigned a courier. The losing team is not tested.

The urine specimens are sent overnight to one of three labs in Los Angeles, Montreal and Bloomington, Ind. Results are generally back within a week, which would allow a player who tests positive to play at least one more game.

Once a positive result is returned, the player is declared ineligible for the remainder of the tournament, but his team is not required to forfeit any wins.

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Terrance Howard steals inbounds pass intended for Bradley's Hersey Hawkins with six seconds left to clinch Auburn's victory.

Auburn

From Page 1E

Hawkins scored 17 points in the first 10 minutes, boosting Bradley (26-5) to a 27-23 lead. Then the Braves began stacking basket upon fast-break basket, pulling ahead 44-30 with five minutes left in the half, dazed Tigers in their wake. "Nobody in the SEC runs that fast," said Auburn coach Sonny Smith. "I've never seen a team run so fast they're out-of-bounds when they catch the ball."

Said Auburn's Moore: "We'd take a shot, and before we could turn around they'd be laying it up at the other end. But we kept playing, kept chipping away."

By halftime, the Tigers (19-10) had shaved Bradley's lead to 53-45. Over the first five minutes of the second half, Auburn outscored the Braves 10-3 to pull within 56-55. By then, Bradley's once-withering fast break looked more withered. The Braves were shooting only jump shots, and Hawkins wasn't shooting much at all. With 10:18 to play, Keenan Carpenter's layup put Auburn ahead 69-67.

"Once we got the lead, they were too tired to run with us even if they'd wanted," Moore said. "They kinda burnt themselves out the first half."

Bradley regained the lead but once, on Hawkins' three-point play with 7:32 left. Two Morris free throws tied the score at 73 eight seconds later. Moore's layup made it 75-73. Hawkins tied it with a 16-footer. Then the Tigers' John Caylor made five of six foul shots in an 81-second span to give Auburn an 80-77 lead. In all, the Tigers made 23 of 27 free throws, 16 of 17 in the last 13 minutes.

With 1:59 to go, Hawkins' three-pointer brought Bradley within a point. Twice Moore missed shots, and twice the Braves lost the ball moving upcourt. Morris made two free throws at 0:37 to give Auburn an 86-83 lead. Hawkins missed a 22-

footer. Morris rebounded, was fouled and made two more. Bradley's Paul Wilson hit a three-pointer. Auburn by two, 16 seconds left. On the inbounds pass, Trevor Trimpe induced Moore to fumble the ball out of bounds. With 15 seconds left, Bradley had the ball.

"We'd gotten this far with me shooting it," Hawkins said. "When I get a good shot, it usually falls. If I'm open or close to open, I'll shoot it."

Howard never gave him that light. With six seconds left, Howard batted Anthony Manuel's pass for Hawkins out of bounds. "Almost got that one," said Howard, his eyes dancing. He got the next one cleanly, thrusting Auburn into Saturday's second round against Oklahoma, a 94-66 winner over Tennessee-Chattanooga. And to think: It took Auburn all game to assign Howard to Hawkins.

Derrick Dennison opened man-to-man against Hawkins, Carpenter coming in on relief, neither working to much avail. Only when Dennison took what Smith deemed a bad shot with three minutes left did Auburn's coach turn to Howard.

"Howard's the quickest guy we've got," Smith said, "but that wasn't the reason. I just got mad at Derrick and jerked him. I told Crow, 'You're in. You get Hawkins.'"

Howard did more than that. He got Hawkins, the ball, the whole frantic game.

AUBURN (90)
Caylor 5-8 5-6 16, Morris 11-23 12-13 36, Moore 6-16 1-1 13, Howard 2-4 0-0 4, Dennison 1-6 2-2 5, Lynn 1-4 0-0 3, Geiger 1-3 1-3 3, Carpenter 3-8 2-2 8. Totals 30-72 23-27 90.

BRADLEY (86)
Powell 4-9 2-5 10, Trimpe 1-4 0-0 3, Jackson 7-10 0-3 14, Manuel 0-3 0-0 0, Hawkins 15-25 8-11 44, Thomas 4-9 0-0 8, Wilson 3-6 0-2 7. Totals 34-66 10-21 86.

Halftime — Bradley 53, Auburn 45. Three-point goals — Auburn 7-18 (Caylor 3-6, Morris 2-5, Howard 0-1, Dennison 1-2, Lynn 1-3, Carpenter 0-1), Bradley 8-17 (Trimpe 1-4, Jackson 0-1, Hawkins 6-8, Thomas 0-1, Wilson 1-3). Fouled out — Powell, Thomas. Total fouls — Auburn 17, Bradley 23. Rebounds — Auburn 44 (Moore 13), Bradley 40 (Hawkins 10). Assists — Auburn 23 (Lynn 7), Bradley 25 (Manuel 10). Technicals — Morris.

Ailing Morris, Howard won't miss Sooners

By Earnest Reese
and I.J. Rosenberg
Staff Writers

When Auburn senior Chris Morris limped to the bench grimacing from pain in his back with his team leading Bradley 78-75 with 5:15 left Thursday, the Tigers had suffered two casualties, however temporary. Earlier, point guard Terrance Howard had reinjured his right wrist.

"I fell on it just before half, and the way I went down I thought it was broken," Howard said. "I've had torn ligaments in it all season, but since this is my senior year, I decided to play with it the way it is. Today, I just didn't have enough strength in it the second half to shoot the ball."

Howard made a steal in the last six seconds and scored on a dunk to cap Auburn's 90-86 first-round victory in the NCAA Southeast Regional at The Omni.

Howard and Morris, who had a career-high 36 points, are expected to be ready to face Oklahoma Saturday.

OKLAHOMA'S KGB: Oklahoma's version of KGB — center Stacy King, forward Harvey Grant and guard Mookie Blaylock — was pure poison for UT-Chattanooga. King and Grant made a combined 21-of-31 field attempts from 10 feet and in to score 25 points each. Blaylock had nine assists.

TALKING ABOUT HAWKINS: Bradley's Hersey Hawkins, the nation's leading scorer with a 36-point per game average, would be a shoo-in for college player of the year if Auburn players were voting. "He's got to be the best in the country. He's got my vote," said senior Jeff Moore, with Morris nodding in agreement. To use Moore's word, Hawkins was "held" to 44 points by the Tigers.

NO LOVE LOST: Indiana coach Bobby Knight and LSU coach Dale Brown have had their well-publicized differences over the last year. So what was Knight's response when he was asked Thursday about his rivalry with Brown? "You should direct that question to his psychiatrist," Knight said.

SCOTT VS. MACON: After Georgia Tech freshman Dennis Scott won the ACC rookie of the year award Wednesday, several reporters asked Tech coach Bobby Cremins if he felt Scott was as good as Temple's Mark Macon, recently voted the top freshman in the country. "I think Dennis is as talented as Mark," Cremins said. "But he is not as mature."

ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO: Temple's John Chaney can be the first coach in history to win both the NCAA Division I and Division II championships. Chaney coached Cheyney State to a Division II national championship in 1978.

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