Carter Pleads Guilty to Mail Fraud

By David Davidson College Editor

CHICAGO - Former Ohio State wide receiver Cris Carter, the only athlete ever indicted for dealings with sports agents, pleaded guilty to charges of mail fraud and obstruction of justice in federal court here Friday.

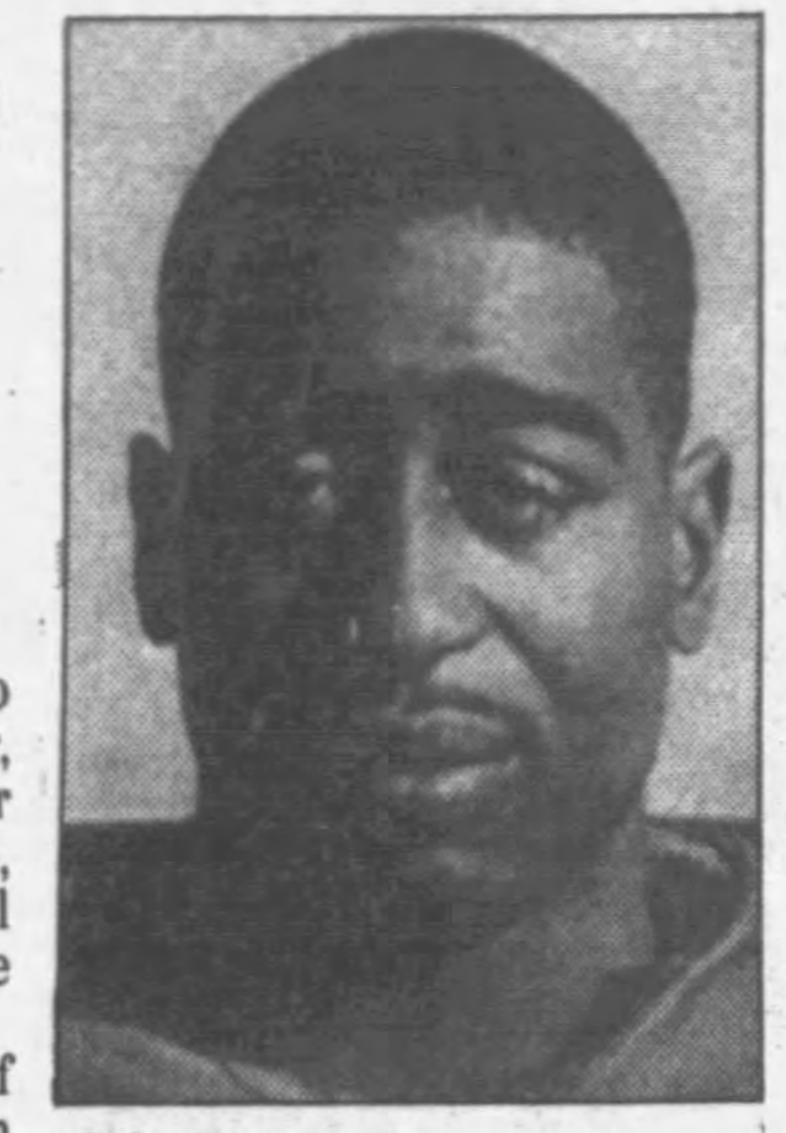
The guilty pleas were part of a plea-bargain arrangement in which Carter, 22, agreed to testify for the government in its cases against sports agents Norby Walters, Lloyd Bloom and David Lueddeke.

Carter and the three agents were indicted by a federal grand jury here Aug. 24. Mr. Walte and Mr. Bloom face charges of mail fraud, wire fraud, racketeering and extortion, and Mr. Lueddeke faces charges of obstruction of justice and perjury.

Carter also agreed to reimburse Ohio State \$4,519.60, the cost of his scholarship in 1986. He played that season despite having signed a representation agreement with Walters and Bloom — a violation of NCAA

"As part of the plea arrangement," said assistant U.S. attorney Howard Pearl, "the government has agreed to inform the judge of the nature and the extent of Mr. Carter's cooperation (prior to sentencing)."

Carter faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine. Sources close to



Cris Carter

the prosecution said they expect he will receive a probated sentence though the government likely will recommend some period of imprisonment for Carter under terms of the plea

agreement. In accepting the guilty pleas during Friday's arraignment, however, U.S. District Judge Brian Duff made it clear during that he is not bound to any plea-bar-

gain agreement.

Carter was released Friday on a \$4,500 personal recognizance bond and is free to travel with the Philadelphia Eagles, for whom he now plays in the National Football League. Carter lost his eligibility for his senior season at Ohio State after his dealings with Walters and Bloom were reported by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and he was selected by the Eagles in a special supplemental draft.

Judge Duff deferred sentencing until May 27, 1989, following the trials of Mr. Walters and Mr.

Basketball

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is very nice people." So welcome to negotiating with

the Russians, NBA. It may be that Marchulenis is considered a gift to Hawks owner Ted Turner, who has become immensely popular in the Soviet Union due to his staging of the Goodwill Games and the Hawks' summer

"All Russian people are saying, 'Thank you Ted Turner,' " said Gomelski.

But how much weight does the temperamental and flamboyant coach's opinion about Marchulenis's future carry?

"Aleks is high up in the Party," said Dr. Edward Steitz, an American representative to the International Basketball Federation. "He's a survivor. He will tell you, 'I don't have the final say.' But he knows what's going to happen. I've known him a long time. I've talked with him privately a lot. He knows."

What both Steitz and Gomelski know is that once a couple of international sports federation barriers come down — and they likely will world basketball will break wide open, and the NBA rosters will know no boundaries.

"When the buck raises its head," said Steitz, "Everybody is going to branch out. Once this (Olympic competition) goes pro, everybody's going to come in."

And the first wave of this new kind of globetrotters very likely will be several members of the Soviet Olympic team.

The Hawks already own NBA rights to forwards Aleksandr Volkov, 6-10, and Valeri Tikhonenko, 6-9. In 1985 Atlanta drafted gargantuan center Arvidas Sabonis, whose

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- Aleksandr Gomelski, Soviet basketball coach

mere height measurement, 7-foot-3, is a woeful understatement of his appearance on a basketball court. These boys play for clubs in the So-But the Hawks' pick of Sabonis was voided by the NBA because he hadn't reached his 22nd birthday, and his rights are now owned by Portland.

Rimas Kurtinaitis, the small forward whose passes are effortless magic, likely will play in Germany. Another center, Aleksandr Belostenni, appears bound for Spain.

Gomelski himself wants to coach in Spain after these Games and likely will get permission.

"I would like to change situations, change teams, because with me this is sixth Olympic time. That is very long time," said Gomelski. "Probably I go in Spain. But this is not 100 percent because before my federation would not give me permission. But this will be discussed after the Olympics."

How soon might the Soviet players be in the NBA?

"This is very difficult for this (upcoming) season," said Gomelski, "because the people are not likely to give the permission (in time)."

First, the international federation must rule NBA players eligible. for future Olympics. Its next scheduled meeting will not be held until next August in Munich, but the OK is almost a foregone conclusion.

Also, "there is Cup Europa and Soviet Championship," said Gomelski, referring to eligibility rulings yet to be made on professional players in those competitions.

"That decision, I think, will be

made on Oct. 10 this year," said Gomelski. "That is the one problem. viet Union. Without them it is possible not to win Soviet championship or Europe Cup."

The gist is that the Soviets are willing to let their players go pro, as long as they are assured the players will remain eligible for internation al and intra-Soviet competition.

A formula is believed to have been worked out whereby Goskomsport, the government-run sports authority, will receive 75 percent of salaries with 25 percent going to the players. Usually, the Soviet government appropriates living expenses for its citizens abroad.

Is Marchulenis as adamant about Atlanta as his coach says?

"Yes. Yes," he said through an interpreter. "I have spoken only with Atlanta representatives. And have received a letter of invitation.

Marchulenis was one of several Soviet players who came to Atlanta and worked with the Hawks in the summer of 1987.

Of the prospect of a high-scoring guard teaming with the Hawks' high-scoring forward Dominique Wilkins, Marchulenis said, "It is not my goal to get the most number of points, but also to pass to teammates. I try to assist. If I get a lot of points, it is a necessary thing."

That is, he scores when the Soviet inside game is being stifled.

The Hawks, precisely, are longing for such a guard who can be a playmaker or be a deadly shooter from the outside when the inside game is suffering.

Of the players who apparently will go abroad, Gomelski feels that Marchulenis, Volkov and Sabonis are the solid shots to make it in the

But Volkov said he feels that "it will be very difficult for me to make

team that already has such a front line as the Hawks." Seoul, and much of the world, is rife with anticipation in these

Games of the first U.S.-Soviet basketball showdown in 16 years. "Ah, yes, that will be a good sto-

ry," said Gomelski. "But it is not a good story yet." "There are many teams to play

first," said Marchulenis. "There is Brazil. There is Yugoslavia (against whom the Soviets open on Sunday)."

And there is the question of Sabonis, who got the OK only last Wednesday to participate in these Games. He has been recuperating from Achilles tendon surgery, and re-injury could be career-ending. That might leave the Hawks with the only two Soviet players Gomelski feels are fully ready for the

Since he is apparently so close to a contract with Portland, does Sabonis consider participating here a gamble?

"No," he said. "I feel good."

Doctors' opinions on whether he is healthy enough to play "are 50-50," he said. "Fifty say no, 50 say it's good."

The colorful little coach, the influential Party member who had been so far-reaching in his conversation about the future of world basketball, reverted to being a cagey coach preparing for the present, hiding his hole cards in response to one question:

Will he start Sabonis against Yugoslavia?

"That," he said with a sly smile, "is my problem."

Bisher

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But I drift. I don't mean to be disrespectful, but it always struck me as strange that a so-called sporting spectacle should (1) turn so political as to try to influence policy in member nations, and (2) kick off its games with something as ritualistic as The Opening Ceremony, so large it requires capital letters. It often has struck me as being a pagan homage paid to muscle, and swiftness and brawn and courage, and to the television dollar, which encourages such glorious excess.

I will speak here of a miracle. I'd never seen one before. While all the nymphs and maidens were adancing, stars seemed to fall upon Olympic Stadium, small bits of sparkly paper, just out of the sky. I looked up. There was no plane or helicopter hovering around, only clear sky. Where did these stars come from? It had to be a miracle.

President and Madame Roe Tae-Woo arrived just as suddenly as they were announced, and just as swiftly took seats in a wellconcealed location. Now we got around to what we were here for. Here came the athletes, from Greece on down through an alphabetical order arranged. For some reason, Norway and The Netherlands came before Denmark and Equatorial Guinea, but maybe that's the way the Korean alphabet runs.

I think I've been around some, but when they came to Burkina Faso and Vanautu, they had me. I remember that in Los Angeles, it was Bhutan. So I went looking the Bhutanese up and discovered that some wealthy New Yorker, when serving on one of President Eisenhower's commissions, had become enraptured of Bhutan in his travels. Archery is the national sport, so he organized an Olympic team, presented himself as chef de mission and led his Asian archers to LA, a striking lot in their mosaic costumes. His name was Leonard something. Leonard didn't make it this time. They had their own native chef. Some of the Samoans forgot their shirts, just looking like a bunch of muscle on its way to Southern Cal or UCLA or the NFL or Saturday TV Wrestling.

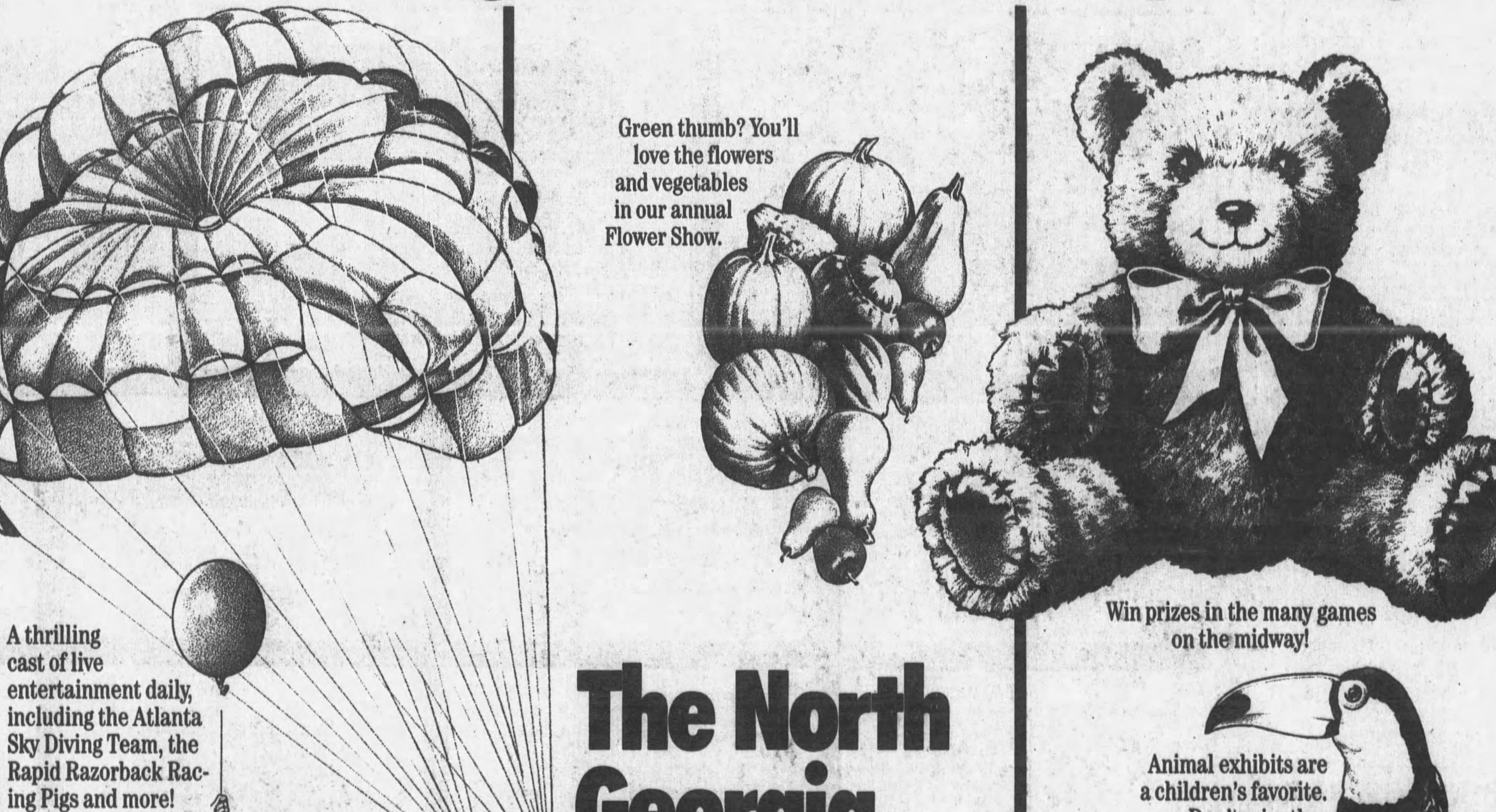
And so it went. Ceremonial gratuity paid to all, nation and athlete, lots of flag waving and wet eyes and husky throats, and the march went on. Permit me to say it was magnificent, politics and all aside, for it brings with it a onetime emotional surge that returns only when the flag goes up and the national anthem is rendered.

The gas was turned on, the burner was lit, and the Games were cooking until the gas man comes again and douses it Oct. 2.

So let the Games begin, and my compliments to Seoul.

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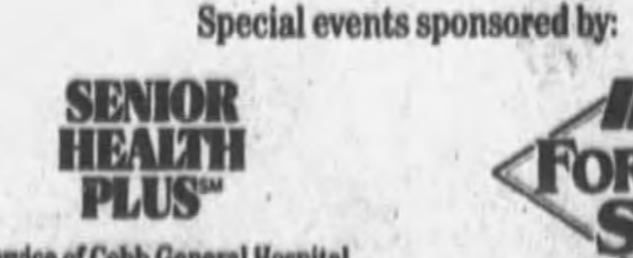
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