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Legal dispute may stall trial of 2 sports agents

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U.S. District Judge George M. Marovich insisted Monday that, despite last-minute problems that could cause a delay, trial will begin this week for two sports agents accused of giving college athletes cash to sign contracts with professional teams. Defense attorneys for **Norby Walters** and **Lloyd Bloom** maintained they are ready to proceed tomorrow as scheduled.

But 11th-hour legal maneuvers, which include the possibility of new charges against **Walters** and a potential conflict for his attorney, made a delay possible.

"I don't mean to be wishy-washy, but somebody is going to go to trial Wednesday," Marovich told the prosecution and defense Monday. His comments came after a nearly two-hour, closed-door session followed by wrangling in open court.

Walters and **Bloom** are charged with plying athletes with cash and gifts to sign professional contracts in violation of National Collegiate Athletic Association rules and then using threats to retain them as clients. **Walters** also is charged with lying to a federal grand jury and concealing documents.

Monday's legal tiff centered on:

The government's plan to add more perjury charges to the indictment, a move that automatically entitles the defense to a 30-day postponement.

The possibility that Walters' attorney, Robert Gold, might be a witness in the trial, and so must withdraw from the case. Gold may have knowledge about materials Walters is accused of withholding from a grand jury. More time, Gold said, would be needed for a new lawyer to prepare.

Walters' announced defense - that he relied on the advice of a New York law firm in signing the athletes - conflicted with the defense strategy of Bloom.

"I thought I would be told today all the ducks were on the pond for Wednesday," said Marovich. "Suffice to stay the magnitude of the problems comes as a great surprise to me."

Marovich will hold a hearing today to see if U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas has filed a new indictment and to consider a motion by Bloom's attorney, Dan Webb, to have Bloom tried individually.

"It is time to put the tourniquet on this baby and stop the bleeding," the judge said.

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