## NFL Imposes 30-Day Minimum Suspension for Positive Steroid Test

The Associated Press

PALM DESERT, Calif. - Any NFL player who tests positive for steroids will be suspended for at least 30 days, commissioner Pete Rozelle announced Tuesday.

Last year, the NFL began testing for steroids but delayed suspending players who tested positive until this year. A specific length of suspension had not been specified until Tuesday.

At the same time, Rozelle gave notice to all current and potential NFL players to allow them to get off the drugs, for which they will be tested over a seven-to10 day period during training camp. "I think this gives us the most strin-

gent drug program in any sport," he said. Under the steroid policy, a player who tests positive the first time will be sus-

pended for 30 days, or until his tests come up negative, whichever is longer. The names of those testing positive will be made public the Wednesday before the final exhibition game, meaning they will miss that game and three during the regular season.

The player would then become subject to weekly testing and would be banned for the season if they test positive a second

Moreover, any player taking diuretics or other "masking agents" for steroids will need a note from a doctor stating the reason for such use. Without that note, a positive test for a masking agent will be considered a positive test for steroids.

Under the league's policy concerning such drugs as cocaine and other illegal substances, a player isn't suspended until a second positive test. Last year, 25 players were suspended — 24 for four weeks, Tony Collins of Indianapolis for a year as a third-time offender. About 8 percent of the players who were tested for drugs

during the last two seasons showed posi-

tive for steroid use. Earlier Tuesday, the NFL owners ap-

proved a series of rules changes, including one that allows a referee to impose penalties for crowd noise — eliminating what some coaches think of as "the Domefield advantage."

The new steroid policy was the high-

light of the day.

Rozelle released a letter that will be sent to all NFL players and prospective rookies outlining the policy. He said he had been informed by Dr. David Black of Vanderbilt University, who will run the

program, that it will serve as sufficient notice "in 95 percent of the cases" for players to get steroids out of their system.

Rozelle said that Gene Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Union, had agreed "that something had to be done." Rozelle didn't say whether Upshaw went along with the disciplinary action, but said the union head had a copy of the letter, which will be mailed to players within two weeks.

Dick Berthelsen, the union's chief counsel, said if Rozelle thinks the NFLPA agrees to the plan, "he is misreading the situation."

## Three More Players Cite Threats by Bloom, Walters

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

CHICAGO - Prosecutors continued their attempts to link Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom to organized crime when three more football players testified Tuesday of threats they received from the two former sports agents.

The most serious alleged threat was directed toward Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Everett Gay during his senior season at **Texas in 1986.** 

"He [Bloom] told me that they had a situation with [Cincinnati Bengals receiver] Tim McGee when they had to send some people to the parents' house to collect some money owed to them," Gay testified. "He said, 'That's why we have friends in California, to make sure we don't get messed

U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas then asked Gay if he was aware of "who those friends

"No, not then," said Gay.

Walters and Bloom are standing trial in a U.S. District Court on charges of racketeering, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion for their involvement with college athletes.

Former New York Colombo crime family captain Michael Franzese testified last week that he was a silent partner of Wa ters and Bloom. Franzese moved to Los Angeles in late 1984 and testified that he gave Walters permission to use his reputation as a crime figure to "settle disputes."

However, Gay said he was never threatened personally by Walters, and he admitted on the witness stand, "I like Norby. . . . I like him a lot. ... I'm very impressed with Mr. Walters."

Also testifying about threats were Gay's former college roommate, Edwin Simmons, and former Pittsburgh All-America linebacker Tony Woods of the Seattle

Simmons first allegedly took over the telephone the threat from Bloom on Nov. 13, 1986 that was directed at Gay, who was considering dropping the agents.

"He [Bloom] said, 'No one does Norby like that. If he [Gay] leaves, then we'll make a phone call to some people in Las Vegas who will come down and make sure Everett Gay doesn't play football again," Simmons testified.

Simmons added that he and Gay joked about the threat because "we didn't take Mr. Bloom seriously as far as him harming somebody."

Later, however, Simmons testified, "but I did perceive it as a threat because of [people Bloom might bring in]."

Gay said, "Edwin told me I shouldn't be going up for any passes, because I might not come down. . . . or come down with broken legs."

Under cross examination, Gay also admitted that he did not immediately report the threat to anybody, not even when initially interviewed by the FBI some six months later.

Woods, the first witness Tuesday, testified that Bloom and Walters threatened to expose his improper dealings with the agents to the NCAA and Pitt.

The jury then listened to a 30-minute tape-recorded telephone conversation involving Woods, Bloom, Walters and Terry Bolar, who was hired by Walters to retain disenchanted clients.

One recorded threat involved exposing the fact that Walters and Bloom had provided Darryl Woods, Tony's younger brother and then a sophomore player at Pitt, with a plane ticket to go home to New Jersey.

"Norby says I have to do what I have to do now because he got the plane ticket," Bloom told Woods on the tape. "He wants to give that [information] to the NCAA so



Sports agent Lloyd Bloom, along with former associate Norby Walters, faces charges of racketeering, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion.

your brother can't play football for the next three years.'

On the tape, Walters later came to the phone and told Woods that a lawsuit he filed would be terrible for his reputation. There was considerable dispute between defense attorneys and prosecutors on whether the tape recording was made before or after Walters filed a \$500,000 breach-of-contract suit against Woods.

"This is my life on the line; now it's your life on the line," Walters said on the tape. "To me, I say you have to examine it because it is your life, your reputation, your business, your family, your brother. Everything is gonna be tainted and tainted

Woods testified that he dropped Walters and Bloom because of rumors that linked the agents to "the Mafia and cocaine selling." No evidence has ever come forward that Walters and Bloom have been involved with drugs.

Gay, Simmons and Woods each testified that they signed with Walters and Bloom in early 1986, several months prior to their senior seasons.

## Zane Smith Gets Call To Pitch Opening Day

□ The Exhibition Report, Page 5D By Joe Strauss

Staff Writer CLEARWATER, Fla. — Convinced by another in a line of impressive spring performances, Atlanta Braves manager Russ Nixon decided Tuesday that Zane Smith will be the club's opening-day starter April 4 in Houston.

Nixon strongly hinted that Smith will be followed in the rotation by Peter Smith, John Smoltz, Tom Glavine and the undetermined fifth starter. Glavine's first start would be in the April 7 home opener against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

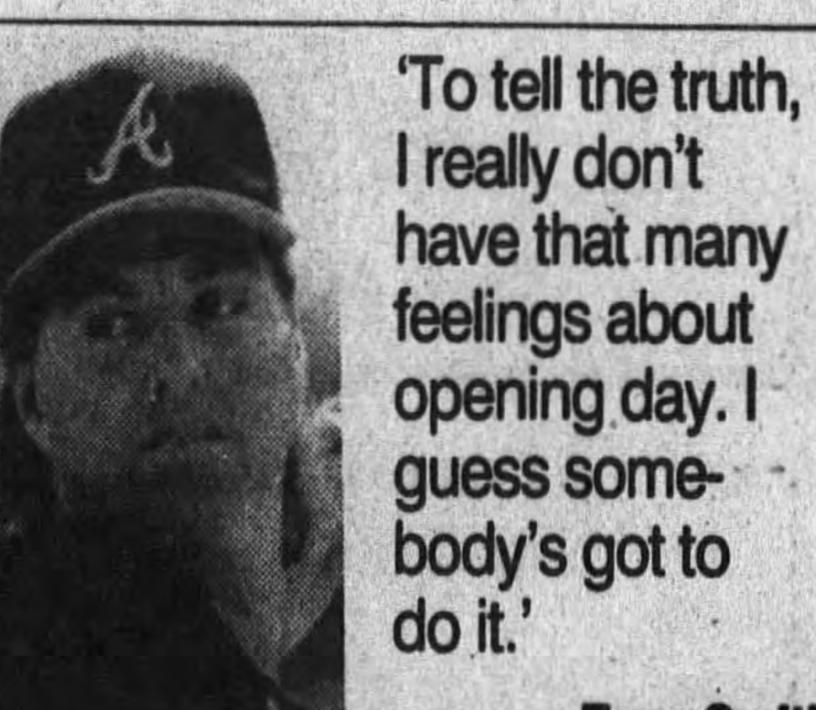
The assignment marks Smith's first opening-day start. It also represents a milestone for the lefthander, who underwent arthroscopic surgery on his left elbow last Sept. 1 and was considered a question mark upon entering camp after a 5-10 season in 1988.

"The way he's pitched, he has to be given a shot at it," said Nixon following Tuesday's 7-2 loss to Philadelphia in which Smith allowed two runs, both unearned, in six innings. "In all fairness, he should be the guy who starts the first game for you. He feels good about himself and the way he's pitching. There's no reason not to."

Smith lowered his exhibition ERA to 1.35 and would have escaped unscored upon Tuesday if not for a pair of errors with two outs in the sixth inning. In five starts worth 20 innings this spring, Smith has 12 strikeouts while allowing only 24 baserunners.

Smith expressed little emotion over Nixon's decision.

"To tell you the truth," said Smith, "1 really don't have that many feelings about



- Zane Smith

opening day. I guess somebody's got to do

Smith was considered the likely opening-day starter last year following a 15-10 record in 1987. However, bone chips in his elbow made every outing a struggle last spring. Persistent pain flattened his curveball and he went on the disabled list

"Starting opening day is nice, but I'd rather make sure I get 35 starts this season," said Smith, who never won two consecutive starts as last year's No. 2 man in the rotation.

"I just wanted to show everybody that I'm healthy."

Nixon had hoped to give the first start to Pete Smith, allowing for alternating right-handed and left-handed pitchers. Zane Smith, a lefty, would have been the No. 4 pitcher under such a scheme. But a combination of Pete Smith's spring difficulties and Nixon's desire to have a lefthander begin the series against Los Angeles prompted him to schedule Pete Smith and Smoltz, both righthanders, on consecutive days.

□ Braves Notebook, Page 2D

## Most Important Considerations About Buying Season Tickets

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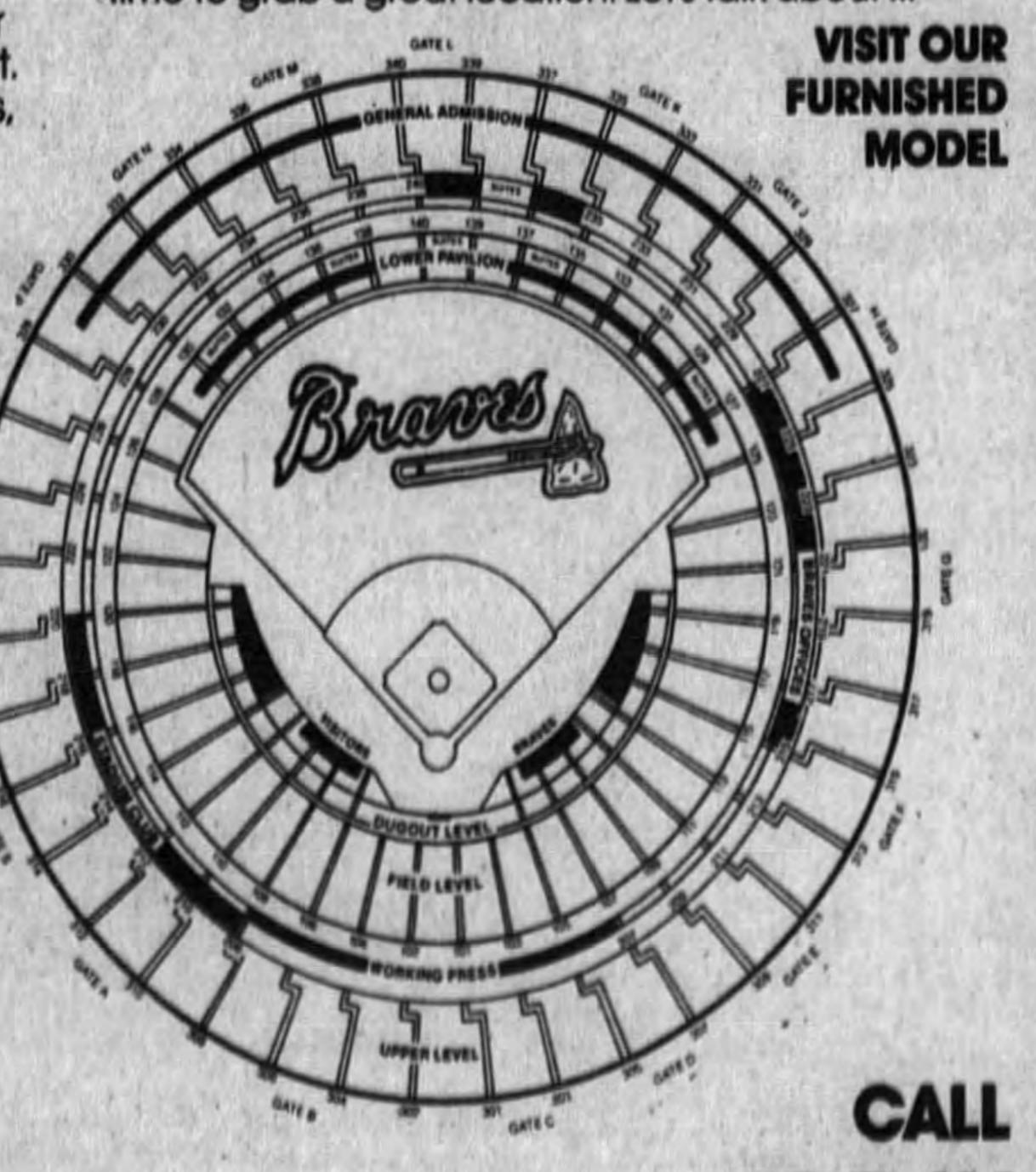
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