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Players hit skids after pacts: Schembechler

*By Adrienne Drell March 23, 1989 Publication: Chicago Sun-Times Page: 2 Word
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Legendary Michigan football coach Bo Schembechler testified Wednesday that two of his players slipped academically and athletically after they signed improper contracts with professional sports agents before their senior years. Defense attorneys declined to cross-examine the crusty, volatile coach, who testified for the government that he would have kicked players off the team if they had broken the rules.

"It's a tragic case," Schembechler told reporters after leaving the courtroom where **Norby Walters** and **Lloyd Bloom** are on trial charged with **defrauding** the University of Michigan and six other schools.

"I hope the trial will make players more wary about signing with agents," Schembechler said, admitting he was "surprised" he was not grilled by the defense lawyers.

Schembechler said outside the court that his players were constantly warned about jeopardizing their scholarship eligibility by signing with agents.

"I've always tried to let them know about pitfalls," said Schembechler. "But I don't win all the time. I lost these two (players). Don't think that didn't hurt. . . . I lost two very good friends."

Two ex-Michigan football stars, Robert Perryman and Garland Rivers, testified last week about

receiving thousands of dollars from the agents to sign postdated contracts in violation of college amateur regulations.

Schembechler recalled an April, 1987, confrontation in his Ann Arbor office after Rivers finally confessed he had lied to him earlier about dealings with professional agents. "I told him he was a disgrace to Michigan football, that he would get no more grant in aid, that he would be suspended from the team, his locker would be closed and his picture taken from the wall," Schembechler testified.

Both Perryman, now a running back for the New England Patriots, and Rivers, who had only a brief pro career as a defensive back, had been dedicated, hardworking players until they signed with the agents before their senior years, Schembechler testified.

Schembechler, one of college football's most successful coaches, said he would regularly call players into his office for lectures on grades and their football performances.

"What was your tone of voice?" Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard Pearl asked in reference to a session with Perryman about his grades. "Sometimes encouraging and sometimes mad," Schembechler responded.

In other testimony, Kansas City Chiefs halfback Paul Palmer testified that he took \$4,000 from Walters and Bloom while a junior at Temple University to sign a postdated contract and later gave Bloom \$159,000 to invest in a business.

Palmer testified he was not aware that Bloom used the money for his own purposes.

Bloom's attorney, Dan Webb, asked permission to question Palmer about a settlement with Bloom in which he received approximately \$59,000 in cash and an option on Bloom's \$300,000 house.

U.S. District Judge George M. Marovich ruled that it was irrelevant because the settlement came after the investigation into Bloom's activities was under way.

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