

Fisher Builds Resume With NCAA Title

Robinson Says 'Weak' Call Sent Him to Line to Win It

By Thomas Stinson
Staff Writer

SEATTLE — Now that the preliminary work is done, the spring's most interesting basketball activity will take place in Ann Arbor, Mich., where Michigan athletics director Bo Schembechler will choose the school's next basketball coach.

After the Wolverines won the NCAA championship here Monday night, Schembechler said he wanted to interview Steve Fisher, the humble but able interim coach.

Bo: So, son, tell me a little bit about yourself. We just don't hire anyone here at Michigan, ya know.

Fisher: Well, we just did win the first championship in Maize and Blue history

In the end, this championship was about employment, and at several levels. Certainly Fisher, the man who replaced Bill Freider as the NCAAs began, should be able to move into the head coach's office now. Glen Rice, the Wolverines' sleek forward who broke the tournament scoring record, thickened his resume, elevating himself in the NBA's lottery list. Guard Rumeal Robinson, whose two free throws with three seconds left in overtime brought UM its 80-79 victory, became eligible for any job anywhere in the state of Michigan for as long as he lives.

And what of Seton Hall? Did the Pirates get jobbed?

Robinson got to the foul line because the Hall's Gerald Greene tangled with him in the lane on a last frantic rush to the basket. John Clougherty, who is not affiliated with the Big Ten or the Big East, called Greene for the block with three seconds left, saying later because the ball was knocked loose and an advantage gained that he had no choice but to make the call. And in the aftermath, not even Robinson was kept on the whistle.

"Honestly, it was kind of weak to make that call at that time," Robinson said. "That's when I think referees take over the game. I honestly feel if I were the referee, I wouldn't have called that. I would have let the play go on because there were only three seconds left. When you have so much riding on the game, why call that?"

The Pirates, in the high character that they took through the tournament, were not so quick to moan. This was an old, experienced team with six seniors that felt more morose about not scoring for the game's last two minutes and 40 seconds.

"John Clougherty, to me, is one of the, if not the, best official in the country," said P.J. Carlesimo, who has twice coached the



Steve Fisher, who led Michigan to its first national title as interim coach, seems the obvious choice to replace Bill Freider, but he doesn't have the job yet.

Hall into the NCAAs after 49 years on the outside. "We couldn't ask for anybody else we'd rather have make a call when the game's on the line than John Clougherty."

With the clock inside five seconds, Robinson was not in strong position to get off a shot. It was also possible he was thinking about kicking the ball back out to Terry Mills, who was open 15 feet out on the wing. Mills, the Michigan center, almost overshot the basket from 18 feet in a similar situation Saturday night against Illinois. Only because Sean Higgins recovered the long rebound and made a shot at the buzzer were the Wolverines in the final.

"I couldn't believe it," said Greene. "In that type of situation, it should have been a no-call. They should've let us just play. It could've gone either way."

Afterward, Fisher, 6-0 as a college head coach, wondered aloud what would happen once he returned home. The last time he ran a team was in 1978, where he'd made Rich East High School the scourge of northern Illinois. Now he could joke about a career move so suddenly thrust upon him.

"If any of you will hire me as a ghost-writer, I'm going to retire undefeated, untied," he said to writers. "I don't know what's going to happen. I'm not even going to think about it. Good things will happen to all of us."

"If Bo asks me," said Mills, "I say hire the guy." Outside the Kingdome, Schembechler

was tracked down by reporters as he tried to leave. Asked when the hiring decision might be made, he answered, "Time frame? No, there's no time frame."

Then before he walked off, he said, "It was a helluva game, wasn't it? It was almost better than beating Notre Dame."

Clarification

Some readers have asked how Geoff Brabham could have had a 38.8-second lead in Sunday's Nissan Grand Prix at Road Atlanta, made a 21-second pit stop and yielded the lead in the process, as reported in Monday's Journal-Constitution.

Here's the answer: In International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) racing, as in NASCAR, pit stops are timed only from the point the car comes to a complete halt in the pits until the time it begins moving again. Therefore, time entering and exiting the pits is not counted in the pit stop time.

Also, in Monday's chart of the finish of the TransSouth 500, Mark Martin was listed fourth with 366 laps completed. NASCAR originally had him placing sixth with 366 laps, but later corrected a scoring mixup and awarded him an extra lap, making him fourth.

Prosecutor Calls Bloom And Walters 'Hustlers'

By Chris Mortensen
Staff Writer

CHICAGO — Sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom were depicted by a federal prosecutor Tuesday as "hustlers from New York" who broke criminal laws in their "mission to become agents of the stars."

Though Bloom's defense attorney, Dan Webb, called the government's case a "sham," Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard Pearl painted another picture as closing arguments began in the trial of the two agents on charges of racketeering, conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion.

Walters's defense attorney, Robert Gold, will make his closing argument this morning before U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas makes his in the afternoon. The presiding judge, George Marovich, then will instruct the jury on the laws at issue before it begins deliberation on a verdict.

Pearl told the eight-woman, four-man jury that Walters and Bloom finally got caught doing a "razzle-dazzle."

"During this trial, you heard evidence about Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, two hustlers from New York who traveled the country on a mission to become agents of the stars, desperately wanting to rise to the top of the world of sports and entertainment," said Pearl.

"In pursuit of that mission, Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom almost went completely unchecked. . . . They steamrolled over the interests and rights of anyone or any institution standing in their way. And they did it through deceit, fraud and extortion."

Pearl alluded often to the 40-minute, tape-recorded sales pitch the jury heard on the first day of the trial a month ago. Walters made the pitch to Iowa running back Ronnie Harmon in March 1985 prior to the player's senior season.

"The vision of America that Norby Walters sets forth on the Ronnie Harmon tape — the same pitch he made across the country to all the student-athletes — is one of bribery, cheating on taxes and corruption," Pearl argued. "He [Walters] calls this business a 'razzle-dazzle.' I suggest that the government did find out what Mr. Walters is all about, what Mr. Bloom is all about. And you, ladies and gentlemen, you are now beyond the razzle-dazzle."

"It is time to put a stop to these activities and remind America what this country is all about. It's about Father [Theodore] Hesburgh and Coach Bo Schembechler, or honest people like yourselves who live and abide by the rules."

Pearl further charged that Walters and Bloom were in "bed with the mob," citing Walters's association with New York Colombo crime family officers John "Sonny" Franzese and his son Michael over a 20-

year period. Pearl told the jury to consider that testimony from all athletes showed that Walters and Bloom conducted business by cash only. Then the prosecutor asked the jury to weigh heavily in their minds evidence that was entered as a "stipulation" about Walters's accounting records.

"The stipulation: Norby Walters Associates and World Sports & Entertainment have no records to reflect the generation of cash that was used to pay so-called loans, nor are there any records of any cash received or generated by or through or for the benefit of the business."

After reading the stipulation again, Pearl looked at the jury and told it to remember Franzese's testimony that he gave Walters \$50,000 in cash as seed money to enter the sports-agent field.

"When you take the mob's money, there is no record," Pearl said. "You don't issue stock certificates and you don't get receipts."

Webb, following Pearl, countered, "I'm not saying Lloyd Bloom is a saint, but there are no saints in this case. To say Lloyd Bloom is a racketeer is so unfair. He violated NCAA rules, and the government is trying to explode that and into this courtroom that he is a racketeer."

Webb argued that the only reason the case ever came to trial was because the sports agents signed 58 players from 32 schools. Webb used those numbers in an effort to shred the heart of the government's theory that Walters and Bloom defrauded six universities named in the indictment when they signed nine players with eligibility remaining in 1985 and 1986.

Webb accused schools of "covering up" their own NCAA rules violations in allowing the players to continue to play football "so they can make millions of dollars." He cited grade transcripts of some players who testified.

"A tragedy was uncovered in this courtroom about the academic fraud taking place in this country," said Webb. "Ronnie Harmon goes on academic probation his junior year, takes a summer course called Watercoloring and gets a D. Yet Ronnie Harmon came back, he took Iowa to the Rose Bowl and Iowa made a fortune."

"This facade of amateurism in the universities pretending these athletes are playing football in pursuit of academics is a charade. True, it's got to be changed, but you are not going to change it in this courtroom."

"I think Walters and Bloom are on trial because of the sins of [college] football. It's not fair to make Walters and Bloom the scapegoat for the whole sordid affair where universities make money off football players, where football players make money off agents, where agents make money off football players."

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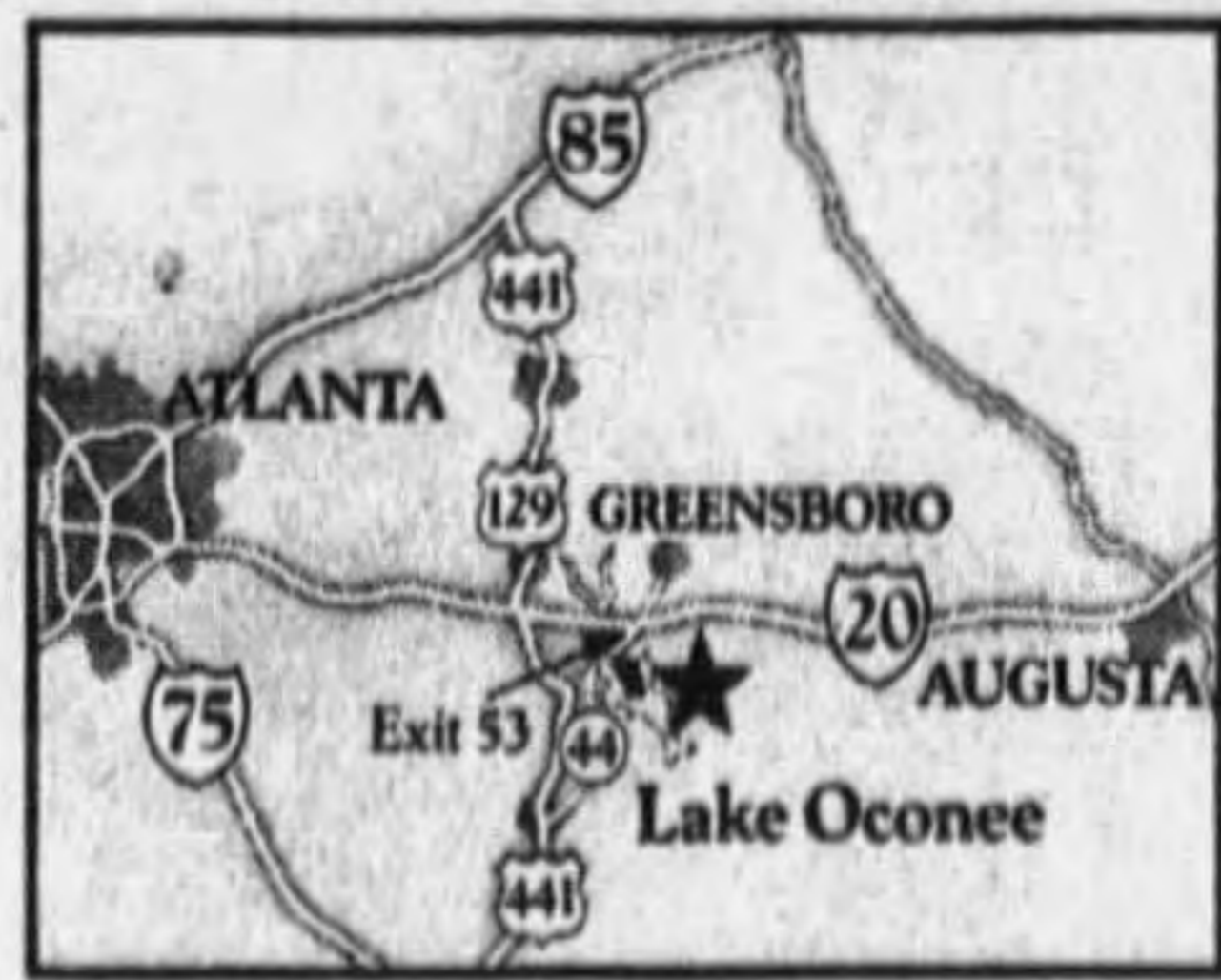


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