Humphrey Won't Say If He'll Go Pro

Jelks Says He'll Return to Tide, But Leaves Door Open

> By Earnest Reese Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — University of Alabama officials expected Bobby Humphrey and Gene Jelks to be present when they scheduled a press conference to announce the two fifth-year football players would return next season.

They were half right.

Humphrey, the Crimosn Tide's all-time leading rusher, did not show. That gave rise to the notion he may exercise his option to turn pro rather than take advantage of his medical hardship status.

"We were supposed to have our press conference together, but he called me and said he had changed his mind," Jelks said of Humphrey.

Asked if he knew why Humphrey had suddenly cooled on the idea of returning, Jelks responded with a "no comment."

Jelks did announce his intention to return, but later suggested that he may reconsider, should his injured right knee become totally rehabiliated by June.

"Basically, my knee is not 100 percent," Jelks said. "I felt that if I went to the NFL, it wouldn't be fair to myself to try to compete with those other DBs up there. I've decided to come back and rehabilitate for a year, and give [the NFL] a shot next year."

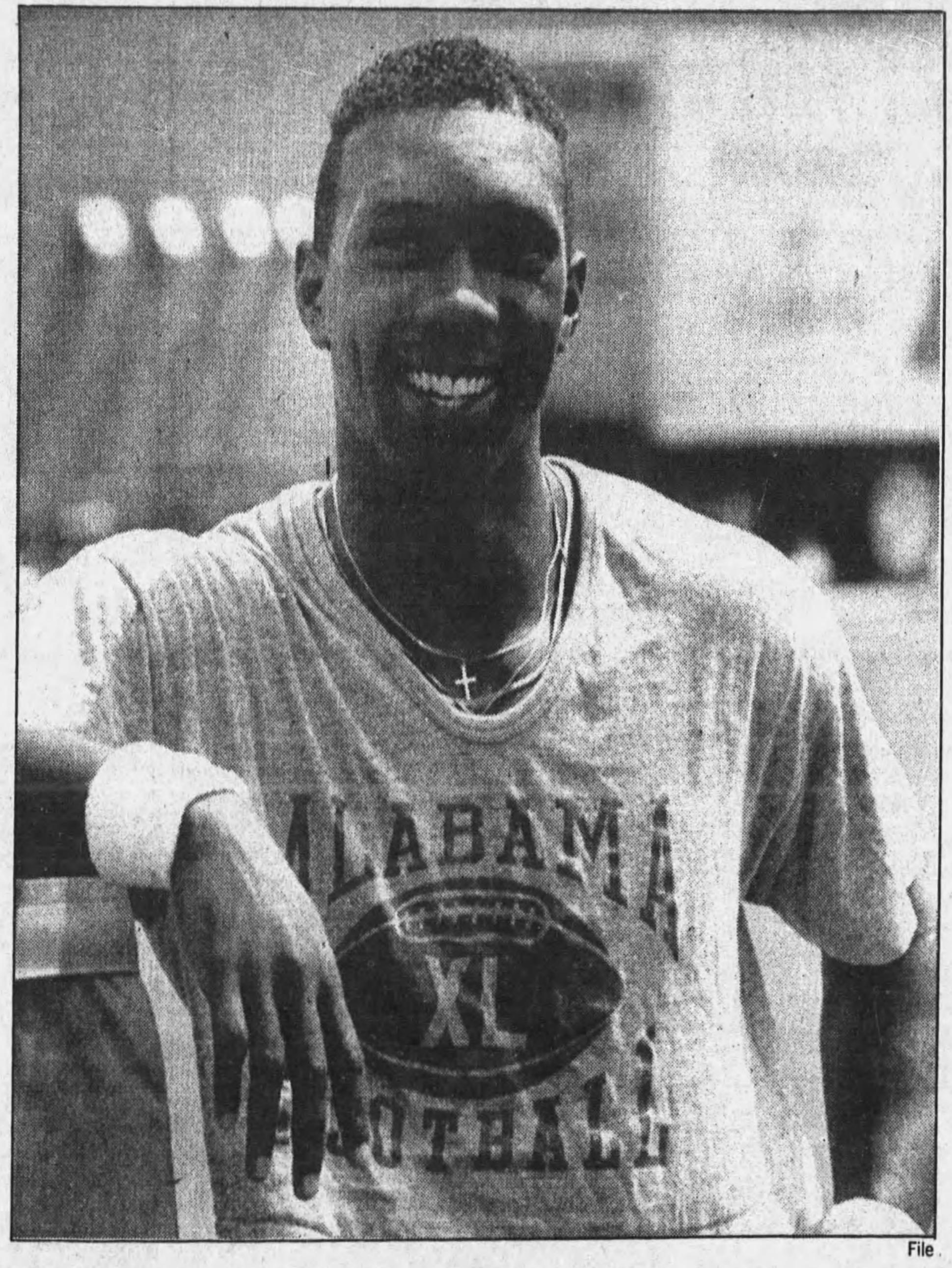
Asked if he would change his mind and petition for the NFL supplemental draft should he feel the knee is 100 percent by early summer, Jelks said, "That's a good question. Keep that in the back of your head. I've been thinking about that."

Humphrey and Jelks, both of whom were forced to sit out the rest of the '88 season after sustaining injuries in Alabama's second game of year against Vanderbilt, were given medical hardship status by the NCAA because those injuries occurred so early in the season. The ruling meant last season did not count against their eligibility.

The two players had to express their intentions before April 10, the deadline for making application for entry in the NFL regular draft.

Alabama coach Bill Curry, whose chances of guiding the Tide to the 1989 SEC title would have been significantly improved with the return of the two stars, said he was elated with Jelks's decision and respected Humphrey's.

"Bobby has had to delay his decision because of a business matter," said Curry, who guided the Tide to nine victories last



Alabama defensive back Gene Jelks plans to return for a fifth year, but admits he may change his mind and enter the NFL supplemental draft.

season, including a win over Army in the Sun Bowl. "That's all I want to say about

"A healthy Gene Jelks can go out and cover the other team's best receiver, which allows us to do other things with the other 10 players," Curry said.

Humphrey, the Tide's all-time leading rusher (3,420 yards) and touchdown scorer (40), suffered a stress fracture of his left foot during spring drills a year ago. In the fourth quarter of the Vandy game, the 6foot-1, 187-pound Humphrey reinjured the

The foot, which has a pin placed in it, was in a cast until February. According to team orthopedic surgeon Les Fowler, whose last X-ray of the star's foot was done Monday, Humphrey is fit and ready to go.

The prognosis on Jelks is not as positive. The 5-11, 174-pound cornerback, who gained 1,097 yards the two years (1985-'86) he shared the tailback spotlight with Humphrey, had to undergo reconstructive knee surgery. The knee so far has responded slowly to treatment.

"I've been jogging, but straightaway. No cutting or anything like that," said Jelks, who, in the Tide's first five quarters last' year, had returned two kickoffs for 117 yards and a touchdown, and had three punt returns for 45 yards and a TD.

"I definitely wouldn't have been a No. 1 [pick]," he said. "But if my knee was a hundred percent, I would've been gone."

"We have a plan, if and when Bobby and Gene return," Curry said. "We have a plan if they don't. But whatever they decide to do, we'll back them 100 percent. We just want them to be armed with solid information."

Meanwhile, it was business as usual at the Tide's spring practice Wednesday, though six offensive tackles are sidelined with injuries, including junior Vince Strickland of College Park, Ga. The injury to the six players has forced Curry to change the format of Saturday's A-Day spring game. Instead of splitting up the team into two equal squads, the 22 projected starters will face the rest of the team.

Walters-Bloom Case Going to Jury Today

Charge Isn't Complex, U.S. Attorney Says

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

CHICAGO — U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas told a federal jury Wednesday that there is nothing complex about the charge that sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom defrauded universities when they signed college athletes.

"If you lie to someone in order to obtain money, it is a fraud. If you submit false documents to obtain money, it is a fraud," Valukas said in closing arguments. "My children could understand that."

Valukas concluded two days of closing arguments in U.S. District Court, frequently referring to Walters as "Uncle " the nickname many athletes, entertainers and mobsters allegedly have given the agent.

Earlier, Walters's defense attorney, Robert Gold, told the jury it was "not even a close call" that the government failed to prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

"For Norby Walters, his life will be in your hands," Gold said in his closing arguments. "For a long time, he's had to live with the cloud of this investigation. He's already suffered the anguish and the embarrassment that this investigation has brought. Send him home to his family."

Judge George Marovich will instruct the jury this morning on the charges against Walters and Bloom before the eight-woman, four-man panel begins deliberation on charges of racketeering, conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion.

One critical instruction agreed upon by the judge and attorneys is that the jury must find Walters and Bloom guilty of mail fraud if the other charges are to

Valukas cited the University of Michigan in particular as a victim, pointing to the testimony of former Wolverines running back Robert Perryman and football coach Bo Schembechler.

"Robert Perryman was the single most important witness in this case because he told you that the certification documents were discussed with Walters and Bloom, and he was told to lie," Valukas told the jury. "Those documents were submitted to Michigan. A scholarship is money — Michigan's money — and they are entitled not to have that money taken by fraud."

On racketeering and extortion matters, Gold charged that government witness Michael Franzese was a "liar," and that Walters could not have committed a crime of fraud since he was acting on the money Mr. Walters, advanced to these advice of attorneys when he dealt with players," said Gold.

Nomatter what

college athletes from 1985 to 1987.

Gold asked the jury to focus on six civil lawsuits Walters filed against players who had reneged on contractual agreements in spring 1987.

"If you think for one second that Jorby Walters would file these lawsuits in a public courtroom to expose himself to the commission of crime, you would have to think he's insane," Gold told the jury. "He made a business decision based upon the legal advice from one of the most prestigious law firms in the country."

Valukas later told the jury they should ignore Walters's advice-of-counsel defense and ridiculed the public lawsuits.

"There are civil lawsuits filed every day in which criminal action is disclosed." Valukas said.

Gold told the jury that it should ignore anything Franzese testified about because he is a "professional liar and con man" who would do anything to get out of prison. Gold spent almost an hour trying to discredit Franzese, the organized crime figure who testified that he was a silent partner of Walters's and used that role to "settle disputes" with recalcitrant clients.

"Michael Franzese was the poison, not the evidence, to convince you Norby Walters was a gangster," Gold said. "Michael Franzese, by spilling poison over this courtroom, was to distract you from doing your job ... to deliver a verdict based upon the evidence before you."

Gold conceded that evidence showed Walters had an association with Franzese.

"There is no doubt, no issue about that point," said Gold. "There also is no doubt that Norby Walters has been in the entertainment business for 30 years. He went to Michael Franzese, the movie producer. It was ill-conceived and stupid, to say the least, but it does not make Norby Valters a racketeer.'

Valukas countered, saying, "I wouldn't ask you to believe Michael Franzese unless he was corroborated. We didn't bring him into this courtroom, his partner [Walters] did. Mr. Walters is not on trial for having an association with a captain of the Colombo crime family. It's how he used Michael Franzese and his reputation. That is a crime."

Gold said Franzese lied about giving Walters \$50,000 in seed money in 1985 to invest in the sports agency business.

"When you look at all 58 contracts and promissory notes, you will see that \$50,000 doesn't make a dent in the amount of



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