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Rays 5, Blue Jays 2 Red Sox 17, White Sox 1 Yankees 7, Orioles 4 Twins 1, Tigers 0 Mariners 5, Rangers 4 Royals 11, Indians 7 Angels 5, Athletics 4 - Details, 10-11C

Phillies 6, Cubs 2 Reds 8, Astros 1 Dodgers 7, Giants 6 Marlins 9, Expos 3 Braves 7, Mets 2 Brewers 7, Pirates 4 Cardinals 2, D'backs 1 (10) Padres 13, Rockies 6

## **AUTOS**

King recuperating Richard Petty is in hospital with bleeding ulcers. 3C

#### **NBA**

Seeking respect Spurs say Knicks were worthy Finals foe. 5C

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U.S. vs. North Korea, 7 p.m., ESPN2. 6C

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SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 1999

SECTION



Times art — BRANDON JEFFORDS

From automobiles to girls, (agents offered) anything that could tempt an 18-, 19-, 20-year-old young man.

- DAUNTE CULPEPPER, Former UCF QB and first-round pick of Minnesota Vikings

# Agents promise, pursue, persist

And some college athletes find it impossible to keep saying no when bombarded with incentives from cash to cars.

By SHARON GINN **Times Staff Writer** 

Long before he played on ESPN, well before he helped Central Florida's football team garner a modicum of national attention, Daunte Culpepper was a prime-time player in the eyes of sports agents.

It mattered not that UCF's program was still in Division I-AA. Even during his freshman year, he would find agents or their recruiters — known as "runners" — waiting by his dorm, hoping to engage the talented quarterback in conversation.

Over time they were more bold, Culpep-

per said, offering him incentives to sign with them, or agree to sign later. To do either would have violated NCAA rules and jeopardized his college eligibility.

And while such actions may not have caused UCF problems with the NCAA, they surely could bring unwelcome attention to the university. Just ask the University of Florida, whose program has come under public scrutiny after allegations that several players accepted illegal gifts from sports agent William "Tank" Black.

Culpepper said he was mature enough to resist but he can understand why some

players don't.

"From automobiles to girls, (agents offered) anything that could tempt an 18-, 19-, 20-year-old young man," said Culpepper, who in April was drafted in the first round by the Minnesota Vikings. "They target guys that come from pretty much nothing. If a guy was poor growing up and you offer him \$25,000, that's a big temptation."

At UCF, runners would pitch their agents' services to any player with pro potential, he said. Culpepper has no doubt that every projected high draft pick is approached

Please see AGENTS 9C

## Rupes win is trom the gut

Rookie puts plenty of Jays on base, then keeps them there in 5-2 victory.

By JOHN ROMANO Times Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — One look at the scoreboard and you figured Ryan Rupe was in trouble.

NOT FAIR: Red Sox support Pedro Martinez with 11-run first in 17-1 win. 10C

A second look at the number of runners on base and you were sure Rupe was in

Manager Larry Rothschild was able to look somewhere else. He walked to the mound in the seventh, looked directly in Rupe's eyes and knew the Devil Rays still were in the game.

Rupe pitched from behind, he pitched from the stretch, he pitched from the heart. And before the night was through, he pitched the Devil Rays to a 5-2 victory Saturday against the Blue Jays before an announced 22,062.

"When he has to dig down and dig deep, he does it. That's the kind of makeup you want a pitcher to have," said Wade Boggs, who began the winning rally. "He's as good a competitor at that age as you're going to find. He has a mound presence, he's very mature and he's got guts."

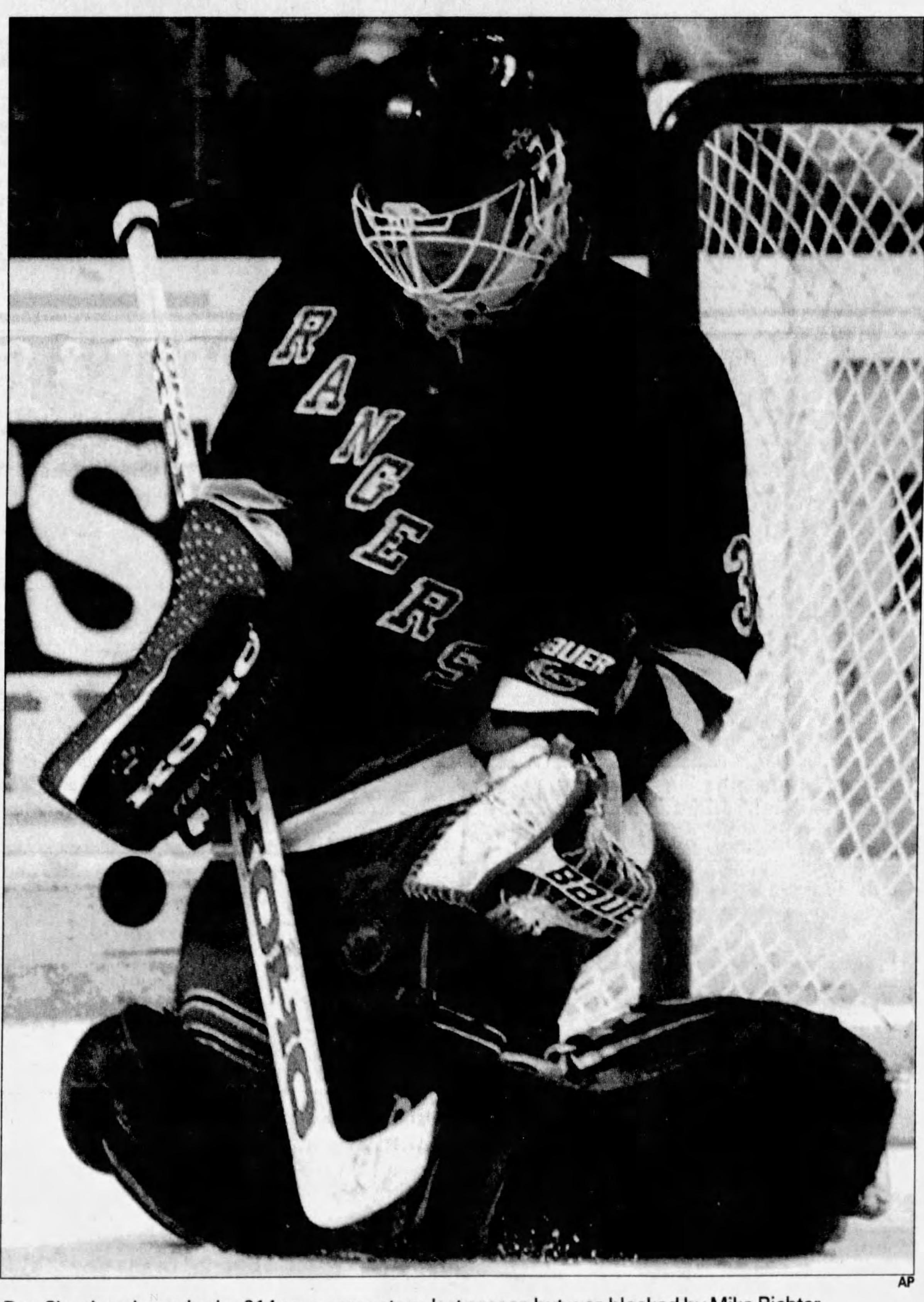
Rupe, 24, also had Kevin Stocker on his side.

With the score tied in the sixth, Stocker made a diving, backhanded catch of a line drive to leave a runner stranded at third. An inning later, Stocker fisted a two-out single to right to drive in Boggs with the go-ahead run.

"Stocker's play was awesome. It was a great out," Rupe said.

Please see RAYS 12C

# Lightning bet: pick six



Dan Cloutier, above, had a .914 save percentage last season but was blocked by Mike Richter.



Niklas Sundstrom is penciled in as a wing on a line with center Vincent Lecavalier.

### Player, position, former team

LIGHTNING PICKS

and overall selection by Tampa Bay in NHL Draft: Sheldon Keefe, RW, Barrie (OHL), 47. Evgeny Konstantinov, G, Ak-Bars (Russia), 67. Brett Scheffelmaier, D, Medicine Hat (WHL), 75. Jimmie Olvestad, LW, Djurgarden (Sweden), 88. Kaspars Ashtashenko, D, Cincinnati (IHL), 127. Michal Lanicek, G, Slavia Praha (Czech Republic), 148. Fedor Fedorov, C, Port Huron (UHL), 182. Ivan Rachunek, LW, Zlin (Czech Republic), 187. Erriki Rajamaki, F, HIFK Helsinki (Finland), 216. Mikko Kuparinen, D, Grand Rapids (IHL), 244.

■ Tampa Bay deals No. 1 selection and winds up with a starting goalie, a front-line forward and four picks.

By TOM JONES Times Staff Writer

BOSTON — And the answer is: none of the above and more than anyone expected.

When high noon hit Boston on Saturday, the Lightning was supposed to announce its No. 1 overall pick in the entry draft. Would it be Pavel Brendl? Patrick Stefan? One or both of the Sedin twins?

Instead, the Lightning shocked the hockey world and put more stock in a No. 1 goalie than a No. 1 pick. And it showed the future is now for new boss Rick Dudley.

In a dizzying chain of moves that drew rave reviews from rival teams, the Lightning traded the No. 1 pick and ended up with a No. 1 goalie (the Rangers' Dan Cloutier), a first-line wing (the Rangers' Niklas Sundstrom), a first-round pick next year and three third-round picks. That's potentially six players, two of whom will play right away. All for the first

"Our team moved up a notch for sure today," Lightning executive Cliff Fletcher said.

General manager Jacques Demers went a step further, saying, "We're a better team now than we were (Friday). The Tampa Bay Lightning is no longer the laughingstock of the league."

Already, the 23-year-old Cloutier, a backup to Mike Richter this season, has been anointed the No. 1 goalie. And Sundstrom, a 24-year-old left wing who has 65 goals and 98 assists in 315 games over four seasons, has been penciled in on a line with center Vincent Lecavalier.

"The biggest thing is (we're rebuilding), and we maintained our philosophy of not doing it with older players," Dudley said. "These guys will be around for a long time, and as they get better, we'll get better."

The wheeling and dealing went like this: The Lightning first moved from the first pick to the fourth and picked up two thirdround picks this year. Then it traded the No. 4 pick to the Rangers for Cloutier, Sundstrom and the

Please see LIGHTNING 8C

## ror becker, last dance, love attair continue

WIMBLEDON, England e will not go away. He cannot leave, and from the looks of it, there are precious few who can run him off.

Boris Becker stood in the middle of Centre Court, his court, and once again, his bearing was that of a conqueror. His chin was high, regal, and the familiar rooster's crown that is his hair gleamed in the midday sun. He raised his hand, and it was as if he were adjusting a volume knob. The cheers, his cheers, rose ever louder, until you were certain they would take form and embrace him.

This was the way it used to be at Wimbledon.

For at least one more day, it was that way

again. No, that was not film footage on your tele-



GARY SHELTON SPORTS COLUMNIST

work by mistake. On a loud, lovable Saturday, Becker rode again. Feel free to adjust your clock 10 years.

He is supposed to be gone. By now, he has been turned over to the museums and the memories. He is beyond one retirement and vision. No, that was not the classic sports net-just in front of another. He is older, slower,

AGASSI IN, KRAJICEK OUT: Former champs move in opposite directions during the third round. 16C

and the mornings after a difficult match, he admits he has trouble getting out of bed. So what is Becker doing here?

Why, he's winning. Thanks for asking.

"I have no explanation for it," he said, smiling slightly and looking at his hands, as if he were embarrassed still to be standing in a tournament where 112 competitors, all younger, have fallen. "I'm just going out there with the attitude that I've decided to stay a couple of more days."

Turns out, the worst thing Becker does on a tennis court is say goodbye to it. Wimbledon can thank heaven for that. He is 31 years old,



Fan favorite Boris Becker, a three-time Wimbledon champion, salutes the Please see SHELTON Back page crowd after beating Lleyton Hewitt to reach the round of 16.

The state of the s

#### Agents from 1C

at one time or another.

To the NCAA, the problem is as serious as on-campus gambling.

"I think . . . that the large majority of the agents operate in a way that is not respective of NCAA rules," said Bill Saum, the NCAA's director of agent and gambling activities. "I've just been involved in this too long to view it any differ-

Agents may offer, or players may ask. However it happens, any deal made while the player is still eligible violates NCAA rules. In Florida and many other states, the agent also breaks the law.

But such deals happen anyway, for simple reasons of supply and

Some players are looking for spending money or other perks. Some agents are desperately seeking clients and are more than willing to provide such benefits.

The NFL has about 1,600 players on its 31 rosters; the NFL Players Association has certified more than 800 agents to represent them. NFLPA general counsel Richard Berthelsen estimates that 25-30 agents represent 75 percent of the players, which would mean about 400 players are left for the other 770-775 agents.

"Some of them think the way to make it in the business is to try to pay players (in order) to represent them," Berthelsen said.

As UF is discovering, even schools with agent-education programs applauded by the NCAA are not immune.

The UF Police Department and the NFLPA are investigating allegations of illegal player recruitment by Black, a Columbia, S.C.based agent. UF has spent tens of thousands of dollars on the investigation, which is ongoing.

The school, which prides itself on its compliance programs, is learning a painful — and very public — lesson.

"In a perfect world, you could say the problem is only at the University of Florida and let's deal with it at Florida," UF compliance director Jamie McCloskey said. "But unfortunately, the problem is that it could happen on any cam-

John Bove knows that firsthand. Schools may take all possible precautions, but "you can't legislate integrity," he said.

At Penn State, he sends packets to freshly signed high school seniors and their parents, warning them about contact with agents months before they begin prac-

"We have to, because the agents

make contact

with some of

school's com-

pliance direc-

tany Lions'

agent educa-

The Nit-

high



William "Tank" Black allegedly paid UF players while they were

tion program is among the still eligible. country, Saum said. It is proactive almost to the

extreme. Once freshmen arrive at State College, they are introduced to

members of the professional sports counseling panel, a group of on-campus experts who advise and assist athletes in preparing for pro careers. Such panels are encouraged by the NCAA. Five times a year, parents are

offered a chance to meet with members of the panel. Speakers are brought in. Videos are shown. It is drummed into the players' heads again and again: Do not sign or agree to sign with an agent before your eligibility is complete. Do not accept anything from agents, runners or financial advisers. Draftable players are encouraged to call for advice whenever they need it.

And yet . . . Star tailback Curtis Enis was suspended from the 1998 Citrus Bowl after it was revealed he accepted a \$400 suit from agent Jeff Nalley and wore it to a televised awards show. Florida beat Penn State 21-6 in the Citrus Bowl, and Enis, a junior, turned pro.

"I was disappointed because Curtis was intensely involved and appeared at every education session, but still fell prey to Jeff Nalley's offer," Bove said.

Fell prey.

Some would disagree with Bove's choice of words, including Gators coach Steve Spurrier, who



Lloyd Bloom, left, and Norby Walters brought the shady side of agent dealings to the forefront when they were found guilty of racketeering, conspiracy and fraud in the late 1980s.



Former Penn State star Curtis Enis sports a \$400 suit, courtesy of an agent, at a college awards show. Enis turned pro after his junior year.

says his players are to blame if they did accept extra benefits from

Former agent Ellen Zavian said things have changed since the late 1980s, around the time the sordid and shocking tale of agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom came to light. Walters and Bloom reportedly spent more than \$800,000 to recruit 58 athletes at 32 schools and were found guilty of racketeering, conspiracy and fraud charges.

These days, Zavian said, fewer college players are guileless.

"I had plenty of players say, What kind of car are you going to get me?" said Zavian, the first female agent the NFLPA certified. "It takes two to tango.

"The players are bold enough to ask now. Ten years ago they didn't ask, they hinted."

And most know their requests violate NCAA rules. Saum said UF, FSU and Miami — most top athletic departments, in fact — educate their athletes well.

"By now, (players) know better," said Florida State coach Bobby Bowden, whose school has improved its compliance program since the infamous 1993 Foot Locker shopping spree funded by prospective agents. "They can say they don't, but they do."

Some agents are aggressive even when a player isn't receptive.

Arizona Cardinals defensive end Simeon Rice, the No. 3 overall pick out of Illinois in 1996, said agents and runners started approaching him after he was named Big Ten Rookie of the Year as a freshman. One offered him \$100 a sack, Rice said. He was offered everything from a car to concert tickets. Several tried to push him to leave school after his junior year, telling him he would be the No. 1 pick. (He stayed in school.)

"If you're susceptible to ladies, they'll hook you up with the ladies," Rice said. "If you're starving, he's gonna get you something to eat. They come at you through what you fancy."

Rice said he did not accept agents' gifts, and eventually went with an agent who didn't offer him anything. Still, some were persis-

"One particular agent, he wanted me to sign so bad, he was taking care of my boys," said Rice, referring to longtime friends who were not athletes. "Rent money. Furniture. I told him, you can give it to my boys; you can't do nothing for me. He said, 'If I'm taking care of your boys, will you sign with me?' said, 'I don't know.' "

The agent gave one friend \$800 a month for several months, Rice said. But the friend stopped accepting the cash. "I'm not going to pimp you anymore," Rice said the friend told him.

Culpepper said agents have other creative ways to try to land players. When young runners swarm around players ("Oh, my God, every day," Culpepper said), not all of them are male.

"It's funny," he said. "They send girls. You maybe go out with your buddies, and they send a really attractive girl to try and lure you. I've seen that happen. Not to me, but some of my buddies have told me about them."

Said Penn State's Bove: "It goes on all the time. Individuals outside of the university community have made these student-athletes believe they deserve more than their scholarship."

#### **WARNING SIGNS**

Schools can — and often do - explain the rules about dealing with agents again and again, but some top prospects still break them. Compliance directors, coaches and staff must keep an eye out for things that don't fit with a student's economic background. Here's a list of some of the red flags, from the obvious to the not-so:

- Athlete wears significantly nicer clothes, wears new jewelry or drives a new car or sport-utility vehicle.
- Athlete has off-campus housing (with many extras) or carries a cellular phone.
- Parents frequent away games or athlete doesn't return with team after away games.
- Names of agents, runners or financial advisers appear on an athlete's list for complimentary tickets.
- Athlete frequents companies that transfer money.
- Athlete attends expensive concerts.

- Source: NCAA

The NFLPA's Berthelsen said he isn't sure the players don't deserve more. Their ability to earn an income is limited, he said, and he'd like to see that change.

Until that day, though, the NFLPA is trying to crack down on agents who break the rules. Nalley, the agent who bought Enis the \$400 suit, received an unprecedented two-year suspension.

"There are not many things in life that I've found to be universally true," said NFLPA president Trace Armstrong, a Miami Dolphin and former Gator. "But one is this: If a guy will cheat to get you, he will cheat you when he gets you."

Culpepper agreed.

"If something that easy comes along, you have to double and triple think about it," he said. "You're gambling not just on yourself, but you're going to hurt your teammates, you're going to hurt your

- Staff writers Joanne Korth, Brian Landman and Ernest Hooper and researcher John Martin contributed to this report.

Culpepper, now with the Vikings, says the pressure from agents is great. "They target guys that come from pretty much nothing," he says.

Former UCF

quarterback

Daunte

# NCAA, others vow to keep eye on agents

State and federal legislators join efforts to keep deals with college athletes aboveboard.

By SHARON GINN Times Staff Writer

Make no mistake.

"There are some very fine, reputable people representing youngsters," Penn State compliance director John Bove said. "If I had a son or daughter that needed one, I wouldn't have difficulty selecting one with high ethics."

But there are enough miscreant agents — and enough athletes willing to accept gifts from them that Bill Saum calls agents' involvement in the college game as big a problem as on-campus gambling. But Saum, the NCAA's director

of agent and gambling activities, said his department has spent less time the past two years on the agent issue while trying to "catch up on the gambling side." Agents who break the rules are

about to get it from every direction. While the NCAA focuses on educating and legislating athletes and schools, others seek to punish agents who make improper con-

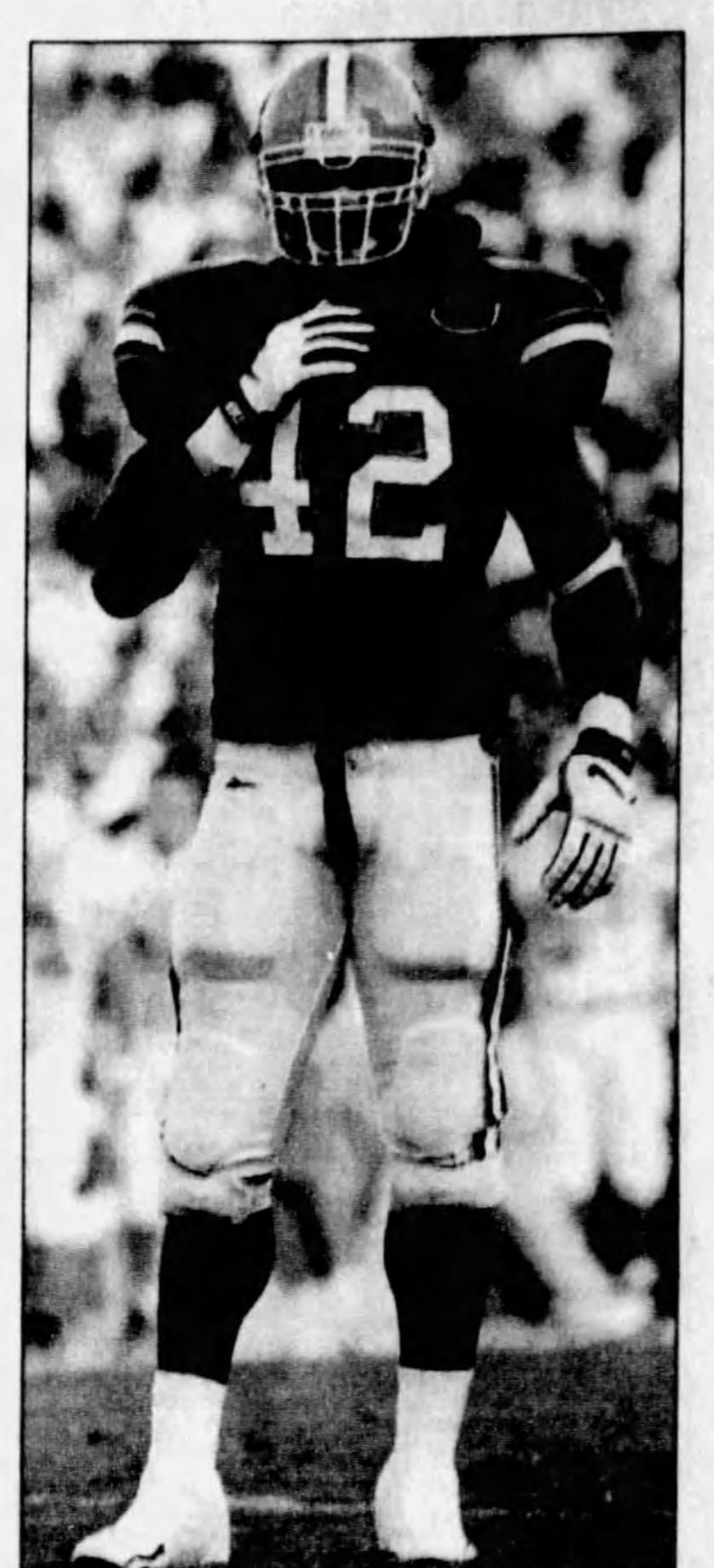
Here's how:

■ The NFL Players Association's board of directors in March passed a provision that requires an agent to forfeit his fee (usually a percentage of the contract negotiated) in any cases where he's made an improper inducement. If the player comes forward with evidence, he doesn't have to pay the agent's fee.

"The agent is less likely to do it, for the obvious fear that he may not get his end of the deal,' NFLPA general counsel Richard Berthelsen said.

"And the evidence, which is so often hard to get, is more likely to come forward. It's a cynical view of the process, but I think it's going to make inroads."

In such a case, the player would suffer only embarrassment — that is, if the incident even came to light. But universities caught in the middle may have a way of



Times files — TONI L. SANDYS

Jevon Kearse, who has admitted to taking money from an agent, is banned from UF facilities.

University of Florida general counsel Pam Bernard has said the school is considering suing any players or agents involved in illegal activity for the cost of the investi-

A university also may be able to recoup the cost of a player's scholarship that way.

■ State and federal legislators are weighing in. Florida has among the toughest laws in the country. It's the only state to require agents to take a certification

Meanwhile, a bill (the Collegiate Athletics Integrity Act of 1999) was introduced in April in the U.S. House of Representatives. If passed, federal law would mandate that sports agents who knowingly influence a college athlete to terminate his or her eligibility would be fined or imprisoned for up to three years, or both.

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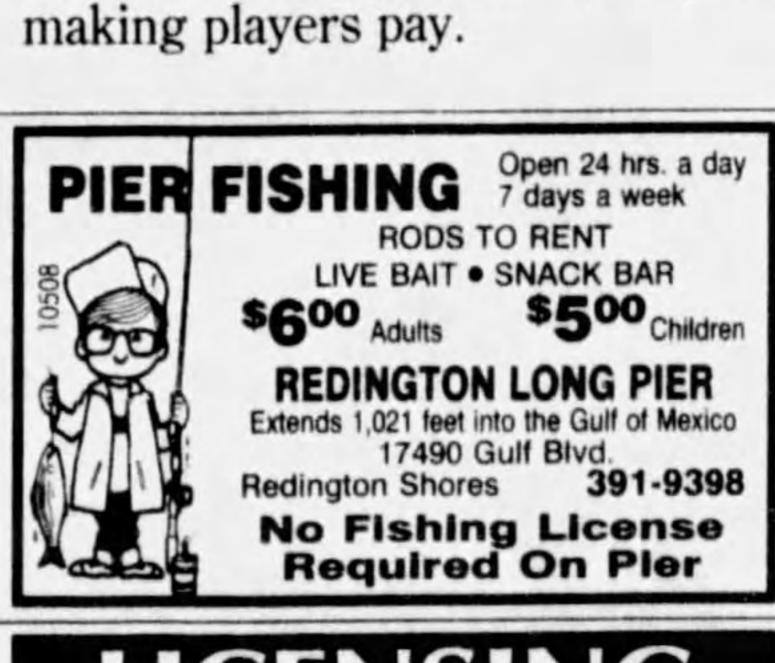
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