

## sports

# Sports' dirty secret



## The games, the gamblers and the mob

Part one of a three-part series

Organized crime and sports. They go together like fleas on a junkyard dog.

Throw in our society's love affair with gambling and for better, or worse, it can get messy.



Bill Lankhof

"The whole idea behind sport is that it should be a fair contest. When you raise the issue of gamblers changing the outcome of a contest, you can line it up with steroids as a threat to the integrity of sport," says Kevin Wamsley, who as acting dean of health sciences at the University of Western Ontario, has studied how sports and gambling can become uncomfortable bedfellows.

Wagering has been around so long that somebody probably had odds on whether Moses would make it past the Egyptian seashore. Canada's indigenous people wagered on everything from spear tossing to snowshoe races. Archeological evidence suggests animal knuckle bones were once used as dice.

In Canada, the only legal sports betting until the early 1970s involved horse racing — and all that did was make the racetrack a haven for mobsters and a murky enticement our mothers warned us to avoid. The warnings didn't stop some from exploring the dark side then.

It hasn't changed much now. Today, professional sports bodies warn of similar evils where a friendly little wager leads down a conduit of organized crime to loan sharking, point shaving and despair. Often, they get the same reaction as the mothers of a bygone generation.

"You are worried about people having an impact on the outcome of the game, having outside pressures influence how (players) perform on the ice," says Bill Daly, vice-president of the National Hockey League, which had to launch into damage control when a wagering scandal tainted the image of both itself and its greatest star.

The issue touches every sport at almost every level, in every league and it knows no national boundaries. So, in the wake of an investigation of 40 match-fixing incidents by UEFA, English Football Association chairman

David Triesman calls for a ban on betting on any soccer by players, managers and officials.

This comes not long after a book by Declan Hill unveiled compelling evidence that corruption may have touched some of the world's greatest soccer matches.

The NBA is still so sensitive about the gambling issue that, after five weeks of repeated requests for an interview, there remained merely the voice of deafening silence. Tim Donaghy can do that to an organization.

In an NCAA survey of 2,000 football players, 102 admitted they'd taken money to play poorly, knew a teammate who had taken money, been threatened or harmed because of sports wagering or been contacted by an outside source to share information.

One of those "outside" sources used to be Michael Franzese, or at least guys who worked for the former capo of New York's notorious Colombo Family.

"The leagues and the NCAA realize they can overcome a lot. They can overcome the steroid issues. They can overcome the harassment issues and guys getting in trouble for guns, and (fans) will still come back. But if there is a gambling scandal, if fans think athletes are doing something to change the nature

**Athletes have a propensity to gamble. It's an extension of their competitive spirit.**

— Michael Franzese, former mob boss

of the competition, that is going to be a problem," Franzese says.

"It has always been a big fear and it's very real. Athletes have a propensity to gamble. It's an extension of their competitive spirit and if they get themselves in trouble, get addicted, you know they'll do something to affect the outcome of a game. It's that simple. That's what the leagues are afraid of."

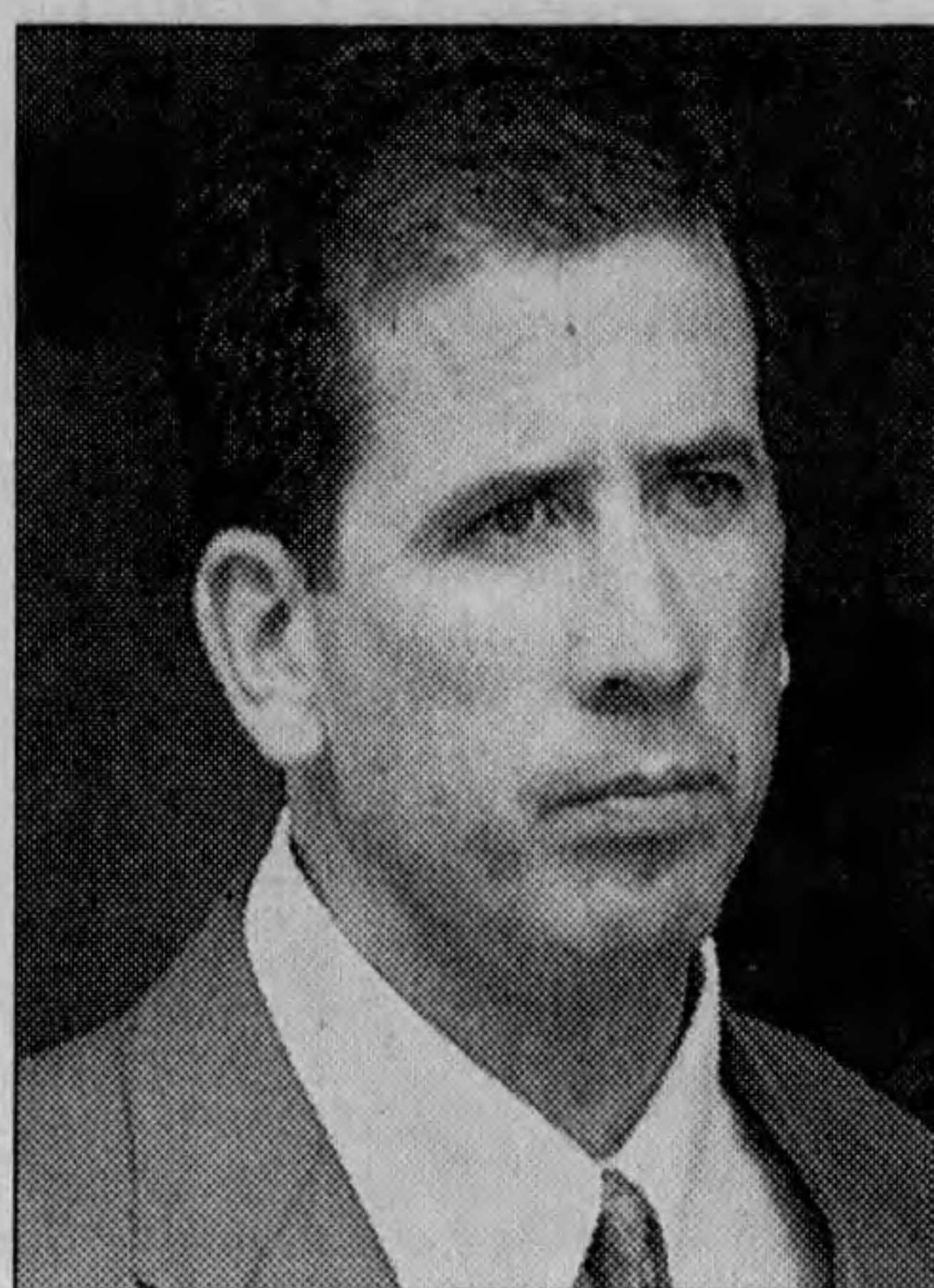
Franzese would know. He made more money for a crime family than anyone since Al Capone and was also a silent partner with Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom in a sports management agency.

"Organized crime is," he says, "all around."

In Germany, soccer referee Robert Hoyzer received a two-year prison sentence for taking payments from a Croatian-led betting ring to manipulate four matches.

The International Cricket Council brought charges against Maurice Odumbe for match fixing. Odumbe was found guilty and banned from cricket for five years.

Then there was the revelation last year in Britain by The Independent, substantiated by the head of the country's foremost clinic for treating sportsmen with



Tim Donaghy ruined the reputation of the NBA.

addictions, that an "epidemic" of gambling has led to incidents of corrupt on-field behaviour in order to repay debts to bookmakers.

How deeply gambling tentacles root themselves in sports is confirmed in a study by Garry Smith, a professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta, who has been researching gambling for 25 years. His investigations show more than 1,000 bookmakers are operating in Toronto alone.

True, many are small operators but it does illustrate how gambling has become so integrated into our sports culture. It is abhorred, yet cultivated. There is a certain hypocrisy when on any given NFL Sunday there are just as many people cheering the over/under as the numbers on the scoreboard.

"They (the NFL) turn a blind eye ... like it's something they're totally against," says Smith, yet, "if it wasn't for gambling, the NFL wouldn't have near the popularity that it now enjoys."

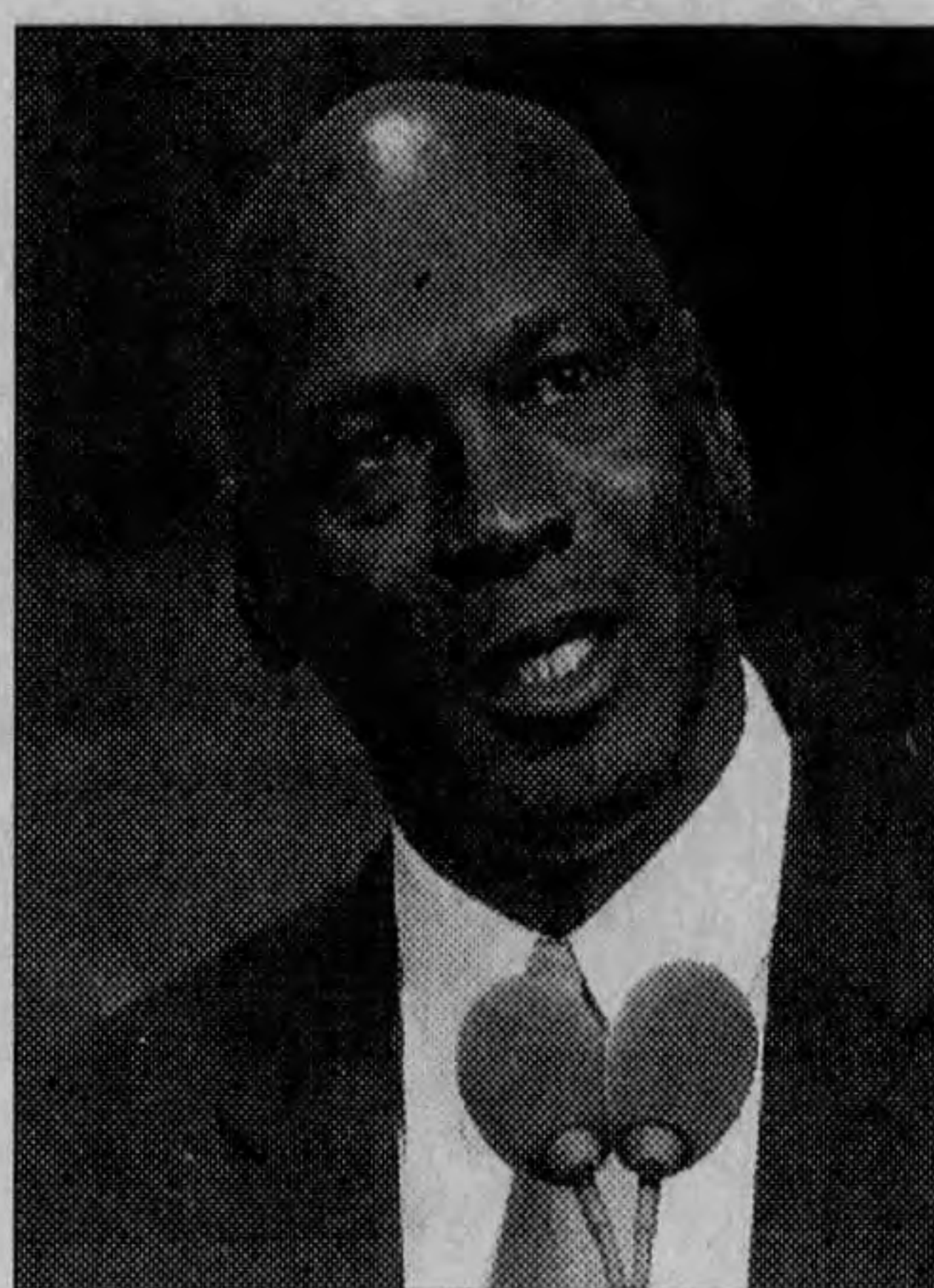
Pete Rose, baseball's greatest hitting machine, has been banished to a sports Gulag, the doors to the Hall of Fame slammed in his face after Rose's admission that he gambled on his own team — even if it was with the confidence that they would always win. Conversely, two other icons, Wayne Gretzky and Michael Jordan, survived unscathed against all odds, when they were linked to gambling scandals.

Journalist Armen Keteyian's book *Money Players* claims Jordan was kicked out of the NBA for his gambling proclivity. Keteyian also suggested that Jordan may have bet on professional sports. Jordan had substantial gambling debts to people such as James Bouler, a convicted drug dealer.

In 1993, Richard Esquinas, one of Jordan's golfing partners, wrote a book claiming that Jordan owed him \$1.25 million. In the same year, Jordan was found playing blackjack in Atlantic City just hours before suiting up for a playoff game.

The league investigated Jordan's gambling habits. A few months later, Jordan retired. A few days after the retirement, the NBA cleared Jordan of any wrongdoing.

This year, Jordan was inducted into the basketball Hall of Fame. Rose still waits. It indicates a certain ambiguity. Even sports leagues aren't quite certain how



Michael Jordan survived betting allegations.

cosy to get with gambling and its potential fallout.

"There's a conflict. (NHL) teams have casino advertising right on the boards. They're willing to get money from it but they don't want it to taint their enterprise," Smith tells Sun Media. "If they're so opposed to gambling you'd think they'd be completely opposed (but) the Penguins are tied to a casino. The CFL had a deal with Bowmans, an Internet betting site, for a few years which seems a bit weird."

"The new arena in Edmonton — they want to have a casino in it. In one way they try to distance themselves ... in another they promote it. In Alberta, it would have to be a charity casino. So, who's the charity going to be? The Oilers."

The ambivalence of leagues toward levying serious penalties (not more than five years) is understandable. It is an extension of our society where wagering — if the outcome of events isn't compromised — is considered a benign vice. Most Canadians view bookmaking with indifference.

"In a time of fiscal cutbacks, law enforcement has placed a lower priority on what are perceived to be minor crimes ... public pressure has dictated that prostitution and child pornography ... be the main investigative targets," Smith concludes in his

study.

But Earnel Lucas, vice-president of security for Major League Baseball, sees it as anything but benign.

"It starts out just gambling and from there it's a downward spiral into loan sharking, possibly prostitution and other illegal activities," he says. "It's a big concern because it has the potential to affect the integrity of our sport. It could jeopardize a player's career, his family and ultimately his freedom. Every police department and law enforcement agency in the country has an organized crime unit ... they believe it's real and an ever present danger. We in baseball believe it's a threat."

Baseball, perhaps more than any other pro sport, has learned and reacted to the scandals within its own house — more than in other jurisdictions such as the NBA and NCAA, where this summer six former University of Toledo football and basketball players were indicted in a point-shaving scheme.

Rule 21 is posted on every baseball clubhouse bulletin board. OK, at spring training it often ended up next to the clubhouse Final Four pool sheet but at least baseball admits it has issues trying to keep out the bad guys.

"You go to any clubhouse and that rule is posted in Spanish and English. That's how important we believe it is," Lucas says. "It must be read by a club official to every player at spring training ... signed by that club official and returned to this office with a list of all the individuals present when it was read."

Each January, MLB organizes a rookie career development program that features speakers from law enforcement, judges, prosecutors and former criminals such as Franzese.

"We've instituted sign-in policies so we know who goes in and

who goes out of the clubhouses," Lucas says. "We've established phone logs so we can track calls coming in and going out of the club houses, particularly prior to the game. Overall, we've restricted access because we know it can be preyed upon by individuals."

The security department also has a resident security agent program which uses active law enforcement officers in every city who, Lucas says, "become the eyes and ears of major league baseball to protect the sport and educate players and club officials."

Lucas' vice men visit each club every year to warn players how easy it is to get trapped by organized gambling.

"We walk out of our presentations and we can hear a pin drop. The message hits home."

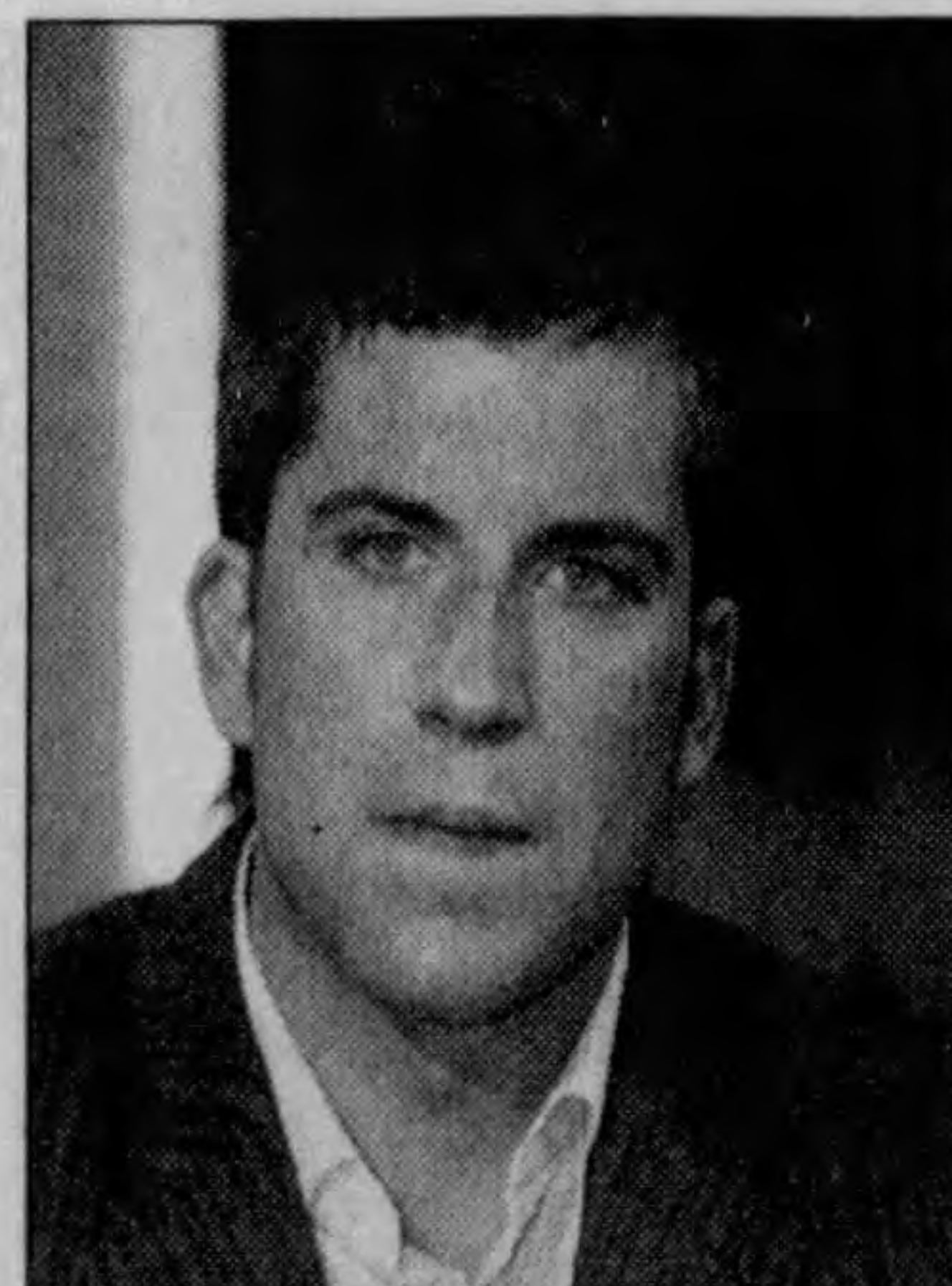
It better because the mob doesn't always come wearing dark suits, sunglasses and talk in deep, raspy voices.

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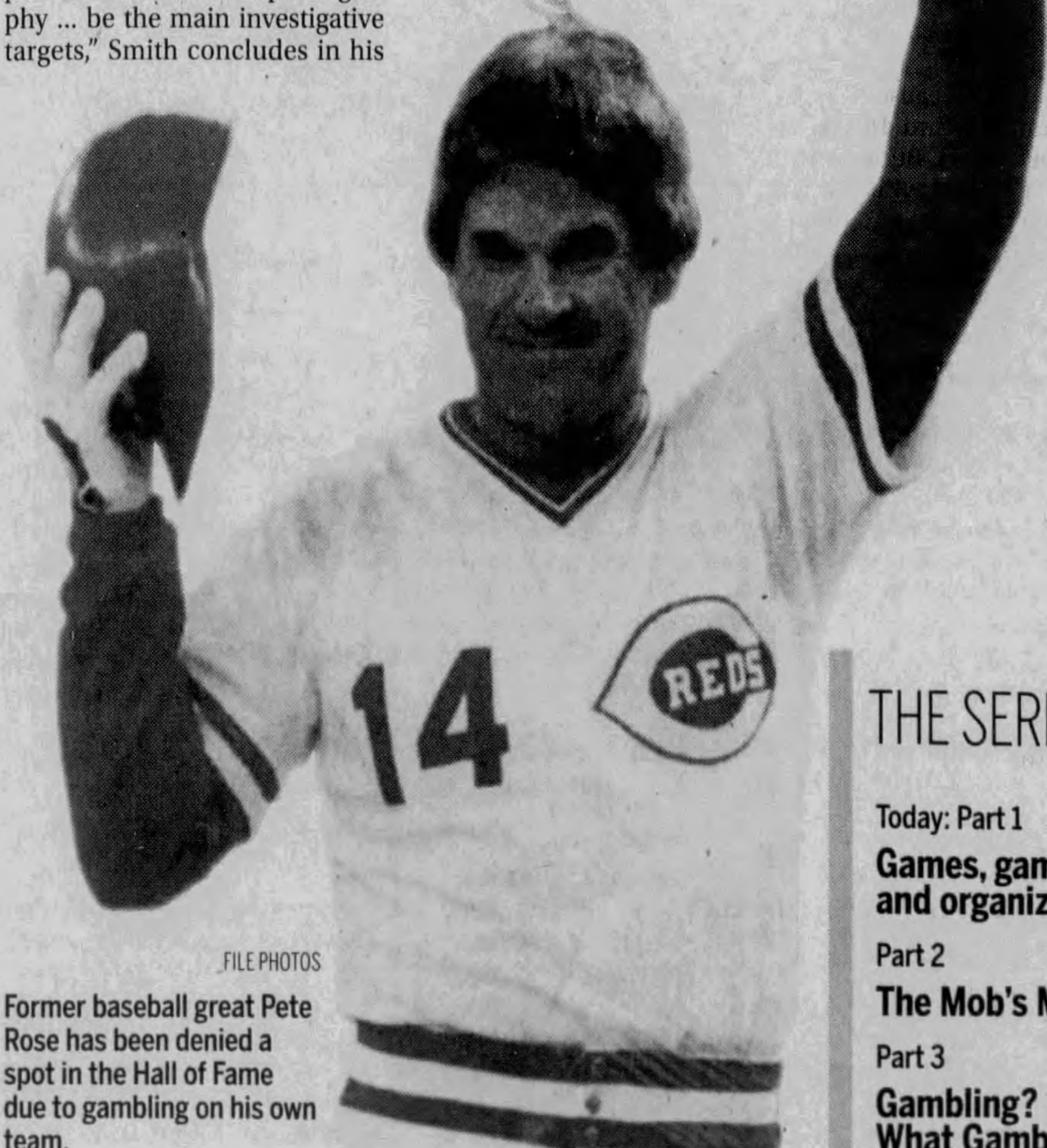
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Robert Hoyzer, imprisoned German soccer referee.



FILE PHOTOS

Former baseball great Pete Rose has been denied a spot in the Hall of Fame due to gambling on his own team.

### THE SERIES

Today: Part 1  
**Games, gamblers and organized crime**  
Part 2  
**The Mob's Mr. Fix-It**  
Part 3  
**Gambling? What Gambling?**

sports

■ Part two of a three-part series: Sports' dirty secret: The Games, the Gamblers and The Mob

# The mob's Mr. Fix-It

Michael Franzese has gone from an athlete's worst nightmare to guardian angel.

The son of reputed Colombo Family underboss John (Sonny) Franzese, his criminal empire included gasoline bootlegging, gambling operations and multiple businesses that brought in \$6 million-\$8 million a week.



Bill Lankhof

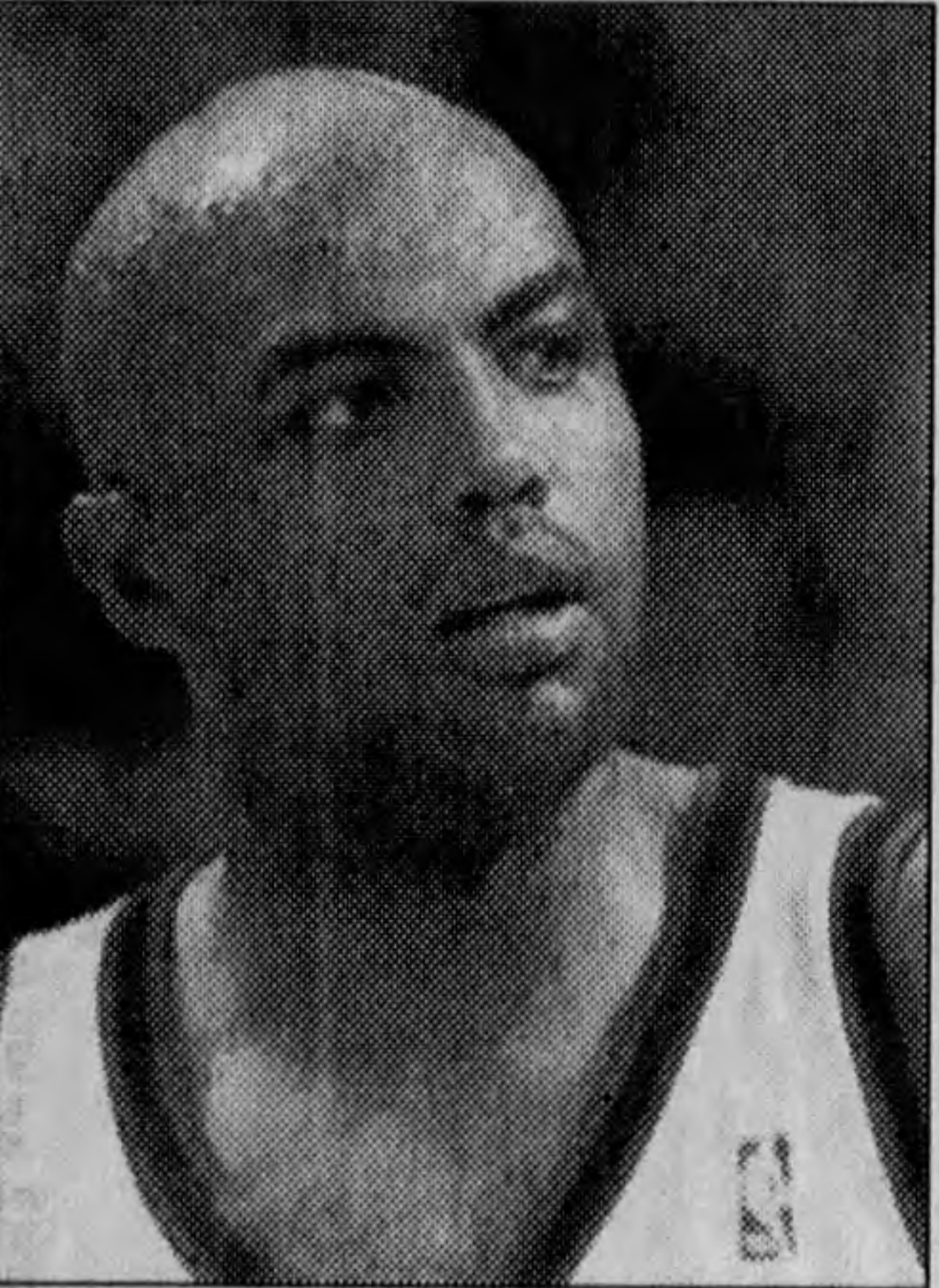
He was also a silent partner in the sports management agency fronted by Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom who, federal investigators claimed, used Franzese's name to frighten college athletes into joining Walters' agency. By the mid 1980s, Franzese was ranked 18th on Fortune Magazine's list of the Most Wealthy and Powerful Mafia Bosses.

"I've seen a lot of tragedy. I've seen more families broken up and more lives destroyed over gambling than either drugs or alcohol and that's a heavy statement for me because I had a sister who died because of an overdose of drugs," Franzese says.

A lot of that tragedy came courtesy of Franzese. He was not a very nice man to know. That was yesterday.

Today, he lives in California with his second wife, speaks to church groups, works for the FBI and counsels college and professional athletes on how to avoid the guy that he used to be.

"I tell them straight out, I wasn't your friend 12-13 years ago. As a matter of fact, I ruined a lot of your lives because I didn't care. We had a big gambling operation. We had athletes gambling with us. It was a business for me," Franzese said in an interview with Sun Media. "I tell them how we put athletes in trouble and how it could happen today."



Charles Barkley suffered gambling losses.

He has spoken about organized crime and the dangers of gambling at more than 400 college campuses and acts as a consultant to almost every major professional sports league, including some in Europe.

"People have raised eyebrows when they ask us for speakers and we recommend somebody who is a former organized crime member," says Rachel Newman Baker, director of the agent, gambling and amateurism department of the NCAA. "But he's hands down the best on this issue. People listen to him."

Curious how that can happen when a captain from the mob walks into the room.

"I tell them if I've got 300 of you in this room, 100 of you are gambling on something right now, whether it's poker or sports.

Every time I say that the eyes go down, there might be a sideways glance. The statistics bear me out and I might even be a bit low."

When he walks out the door, he leaves his e-mail: michaelfranzese@gmail.com; his website: michaelfranzese.com or says he can be contacted via Facebook or Twitter.

"I tell them I don't want to know your name. We can talk through it and it has never failed yet — I've done over 400 schools and before I get back to my hotel room that night I've got e-mails from kids in that room. Every. Single. Time."

Franzese is the only high-ranking official of a major crime family to ever walk away, without protective custodies, and survive. He puts a face to a menace that otherwise seems like something out of a fairyland. Gambling, unlike steroids, drugs or guns, doesn't sound quite so dangerous. But then, today's hobby evolves into tomorrow's addiction. And, for an athlete, today's buddy becomes tomorrow's loan shark.

Franzese (pictured at right) has seen it happen; he has made it happen.

"It's a worldwide dilemma and the reason is because of the accessibility of gambling today," Franzese says. "I just came back from Europe where they're concerned about cricket matches being compromised by organized crime. It's what all the leagues, the Big Four, tennis and soccer, are all concerned about."

Research shows college and professional athletes are more prone to gamble than the general population.

"It raises the stakes in the competition and that's what athletes are all about," Franzese says of gambling's lure. "If you have a compulsive, addictive personality, gambling should be up there on the radar screen with drugs, alcohol, pornography. It's an addictive vice. Gambling gets their juices flowing."

Which helps explain Michael Jordan sitting in a casino the night before a playoff game.

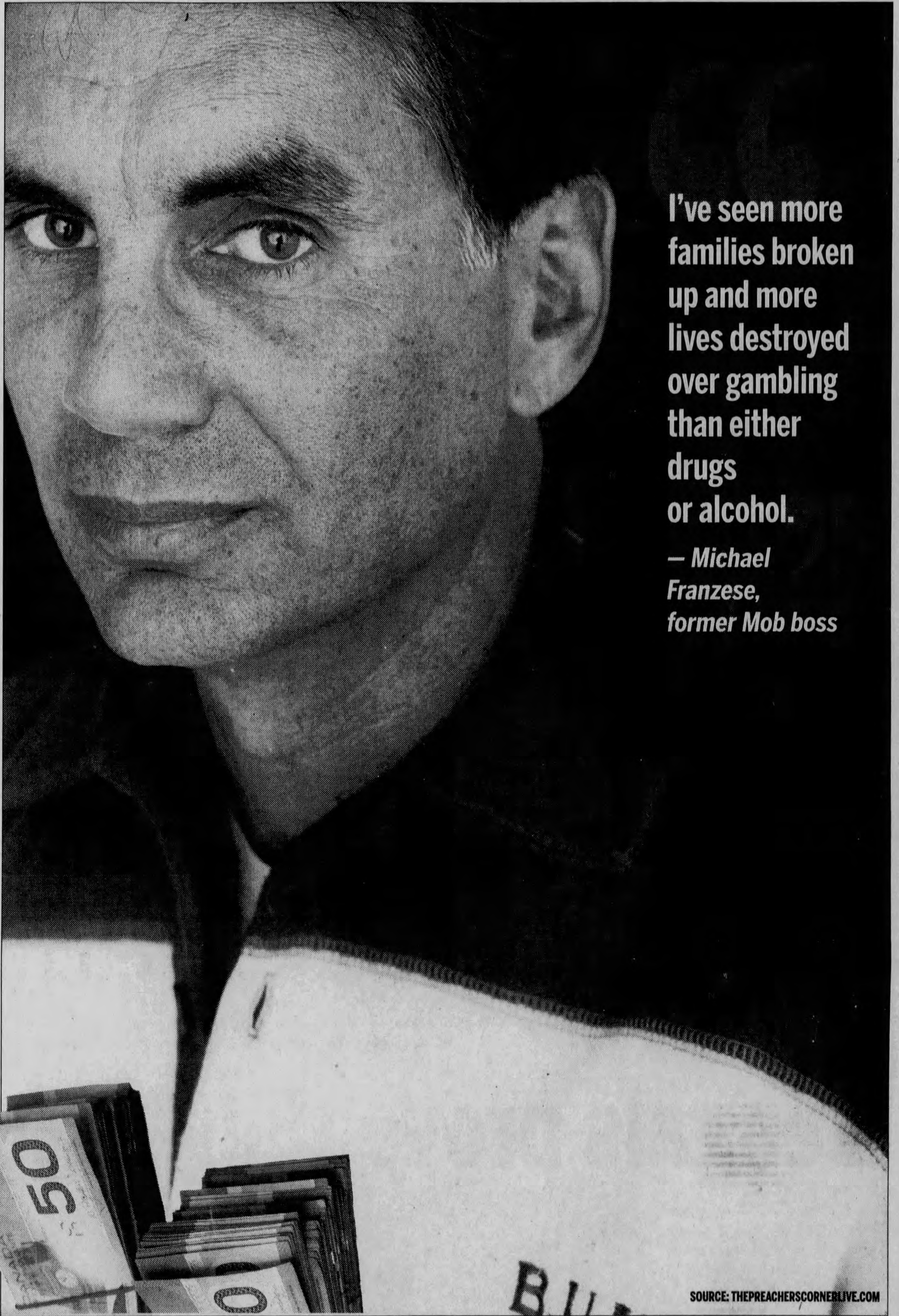
It sheds light on how NBA Hall of Famer Charles Barkley — who claims to have lost \$10 million gambling over the years — can end up getting sued in a Nevada state court for failing to repay \$400,000 in credit to a casino company.

"They gamble, and they gamble heavy," Franzese says of professional athletes, "but mostly they can cover their losses, they're making plenty of money." It's when the losses can't get paid that the big trouble — the loan sharking, the demands for inside information, the point shaving — begins.

It is that murky business that attracted the Colombo Family and Franzese to Walters/Bloom.

"My interest when I took it back to the boss of my family was ... 'look we're going to be around players. What better way to get close to the players. It'll benefit us in the gambling industry. I know they gamble. I know they'll gamble with my bookmaker and it will be a tremendous edge.' He said go for it."

Later in court, and after Franzese was in jail for racketeering, Maurice Douglass, who played with the Bears and Giants for 11 NFL seasons, would testify that he was told someone would break his legs if he deserted the sports agency. Former Kansas City running back Paul Palmer was defrauded of his signing bonus and court was told that



I've seen more families broken up and more lives destroyed over gambling than either drugs or alcohol.

— Michael Franzese, former Mob boss

SOURCE: THEPREACHERSCORNERLIVE.COM

Texas football player Everett Gay was told "someone" could fix it so that he'd never play again.

There is a reason major sports leagues and the NCAA have rules against associating with gamblers. Franzese tells how his group used to work:

"Pro athletes would seek out a bookmaker. I would tell the bookmakers working for me to give them all the credit they want; give them \$50,000, if they want to bet \$150,000 let them because for us it's a paper transaction. Let them lose as much as they can lose on paper. In time they have to answer for the debt."

"What I used to do was say, 'OK, you owe us 100 grand. Can you pay it by Monday?' No. 'Can you pay it next week?' No. 'Right, here's the deal. I'm going to let you pay me 2% a week on the outstanding debt until you find a way to pay me back.' What am I doing? I'm getting him deeper into a hole. He can't pay that kind of money. Finally, when all else is gone, we bring him back in and say, 'Hey, here's what we're going to do. The only way

you're going to wipe out this debt is to help us. We need information. What's going on in the locker room?"

"If it's a player of substance, you can affect the outcome of a game. You pick games where the point spread can be manipulated by one player, where a fumble or interception could mean something. You have that player working with you now because he has no choice."

"Over a season, you can make some money and wipe out the debt. At the end, everyone is happy except the player because once he does this he is in it for life. He's done. Because now you've got something hanging over his head. Basically, you ruin the poor guy."

Sometimes, it doesn't start or end with anything nearly so sinister. But it's still bad news for the athlete. Trouble can sometimes come, says Franzese, from just a guy "you're hanging out with. Gamblers are always looking for an edge. So the guy you think is your buddy is just trying to get information out of you."

If there is a guaranteed solution, Franzese isn't aware of it.

"I don't think reading about Michael Jordan or Charles Barkley has an impact. Gambling is so powerful. The marketing is so strong. It's so appealing to people that you're swimming upstream with this. I don't see any way to legislate this away. I got questioned a lot when (referee Tim Donaghy) went down that the NBA isn't doing enough. I said, 'listen, they all have an anti-gambling policy ... Unless you can scare the heck out of (players) one on one, I don't think just reading the stories has an effect."

Remember Bloom? He was acquitted on appeal, then found murdered in a hotel room. While no connection linking the murder to Franzese was ever made, the Colombo crime family is thought by law enforcement to have contributed to his death.

If that doesn't scare off some bets, maybe nothing will.

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## THE SERIES

- Part 1 Games, gamblers and organized crime
- Part 2 The Mob's Mr. Fix-It
- Part 3 Gambling? What Gambling?

### On the net

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Davydenko

■ In October 2007, Russia's Nikolay Davydenko becomes the centre of the match-fixing controversy in tennis. Five Italian players are later suspended in another gambling investigation.

■ Frederico Luzzi is fined \$50,000 and suspended by the ATP for 200 days for betting on matches. He becomes the fifth Italian tennis player to be punished for betting on matches.



Daly

■ Dolphins' Will Allen faces investigation for pulling a gun in a dispute over gambling debts.

■ John Daly says he has lost between \$50 million and \$60 million during 12 years of heavy gambling. He recalls earning \$750,000 when he lost in a playoff to Tiger Woods. Instead of going home, he drove to Las Vegas and lost \$1.65 million in five hours playing mostly \$5,000

slot machines.

■ Shawn Chacon, former MLB pitcher, is facing a felony charge of passing three bad \$50,000 cheques to cover gambling debts at Caesar's Palace.

■ Two days before the 1994 Super Bowl, Art Schlichter is sentenced to 25 months in prison for passing bad cheques. If not for the fact that he is a

compulsive gambler the former first-round draft pick might have been the starting quarterback in the game.

■ In March 1991, MLB all-star Lenny Dykstra, a notorious high-stakes bettor, is linked to a gambling probe in Mississippi.

■ In Antoine Walker's 13-year NBA career, he made at least \$110 million, but apparently today

he's broke. Walker will be going to court this week in Las Vegas to answer to charges of fraud for writing bad cheques — totalling \$1 million — to different casinos.

■ In Swaziland, a prominent club director with the Manzini Wanderers soccer club took 200,000 euros from the club coffers in cash, went gambling in a local Casino, and lost.

■ Tim Donaghy, a former NBA referee, is sentenced last year for 15 months after he said he took thousands of dollars from a professional gambler in exchange for inside tips on NBA games — including games he worked.

■ Pete Rose, the best hitter in baseball history, remains a Hall of Fame outcast.

## A WHO DUNNIT

Walker

Rose



## sports

■ Part three of a three-part series: Sports' dirty secret: The games, the gamblers and the mob

# Gambling?

# What gambling?

National Football League executives pat themselves on the back, noting they haven't had a major gambling scandal in close to 50 years. National Hockey League vice-president Bill Daly calls gambling on NHL games by players or club officials a "hypothetical" issue.



Bill Lankhof

Mostly, professional sports league administrators speak about how they have the twin-headed monster that is gambling and associated crime covered.

"Bull," says Arnie Wexler, the former executive director of the New Jersey Council on Compulsive Gambling, a renowned speaker and a self-described "recovering compulsive gambler" who has counselled numerous professional and college athletes.

"This is a huge problem not only with players but some executives," Wexler says. "It's a hidden secret. They don't want the information to get out to the public. So they try to hide it. They're afraid the media will write about it."

"This is the big dirty secret. This is a bigger, dirtier secret than steroids for pro sports and it will be the next explosion."

It doesn't help the optics when, three weeks ago, publishers suddenly cancelled the release of *Blowing The Whistle*, a book by referee Tim Donaghy, who was booted from the NBA for his gambling activities. It prompted whispers of an NBA coverup.

Pat Berdan, a senior consultant at Executive Prison Consultants and Donaghy's prison liaison to the publisher, told ESPN.com that the decision not to publish the book was the result of a threat of legal action by the NBA. The NBA has denied any involvement.

But there is no denying gambling is a sensitive issue within pro sports. The Raptors directed Sun Media inquiries to the league. The NBA wasn't much more forthcoming, offering after several weeks to provide a head-office lawyer.

The NHL Players' Association declined requests for an interview. Daly, at least, was willing to address the issue.

"Our players, owners and (team officials) betting on games, which is forbidden by the league, doesn't happen," he tells Sun Media. "If it was established to happen it would be a huge issue ... worse than doping and certainly worse than using any recreational drug because I don't think (those vices) strike at the heart of the competition in the same way."

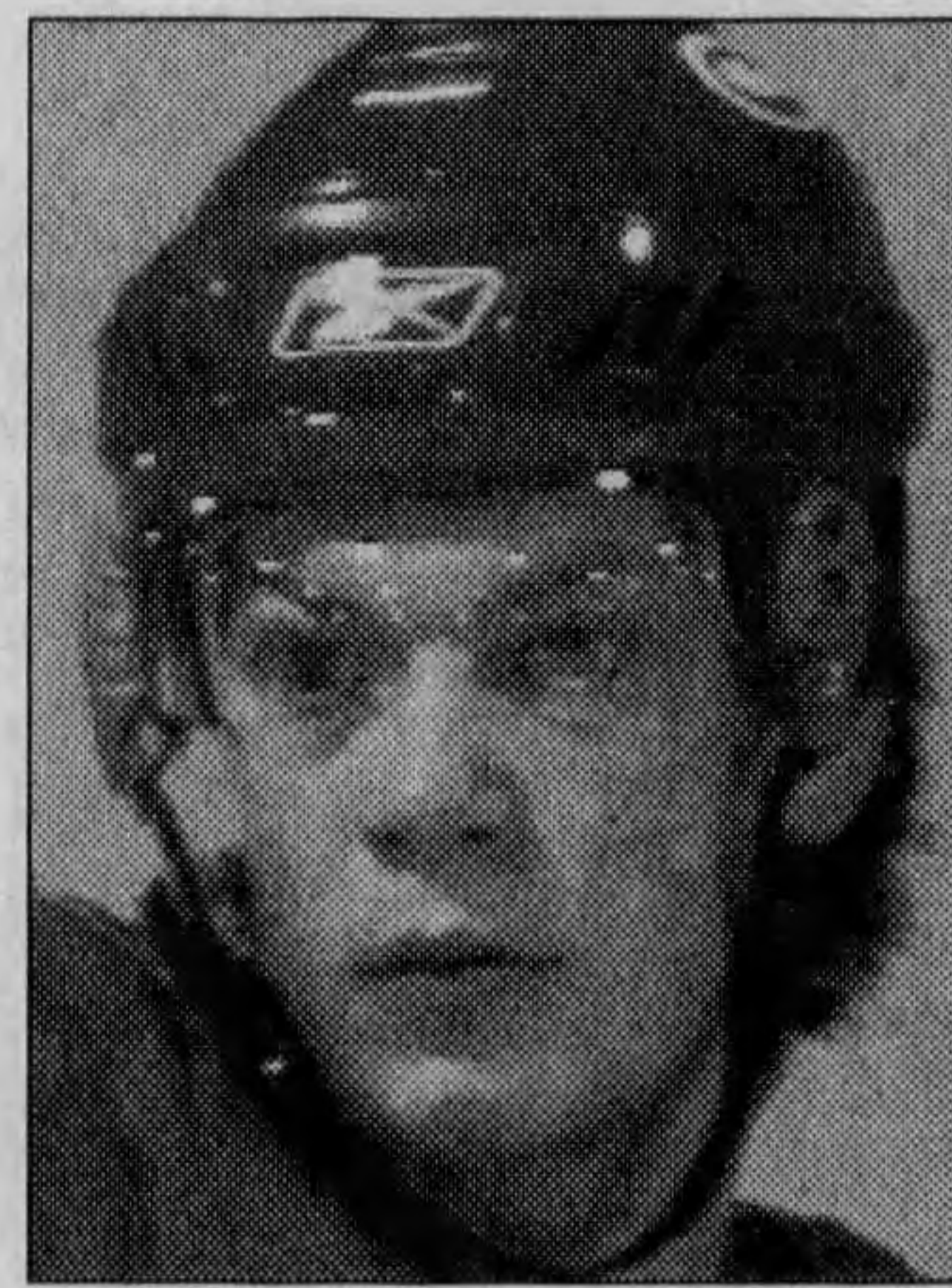
"We sell to the public every night the integrity of the competition that they pay to see. If that competition is compromised by gambling that is huge. It has just never been a realistic concern because I don't think it happens ... it's hypothetical."

Wexler isn't the only person who thinks that might be wishful thinking.

There's also Michael Franzese, a former organized crime figure now working with the FBI to fight gambling. Franzese believes it is an ostrich-in-the-sand approach.

"He (Daly) has his head in the sand," Franzese says. "I have friends; NHL players. Bruce McNall and I became good friends so I hung out with some big players. Some of the Russian players had family in Russia and they told me straight out that No. 1, they were being extorted and two, that they were involved with Russian organized crime guys that had approached them to throw games."

Daly's assurances come after a difficult time for the league during which its biggest star, Wayne Gretzky, and his wife, Janet, were linked to a betting ring for which then Phoenix assistant coach Rick Tocchet was charged with taking bets. Investigators said at the time an NHL team owner had placed bets with the gambling ring, as did others connected to NHL teams.



Andrei Kostitsyn was linked to organized crime.

Last February, the Montreal Canadiens' Kostitsyn brothers Andrei and Sergei were linked to organized crime figure Pasquale Mangiola. While the Kostitsyn brothers have been suspected of no criminal activity, the connection was embarrassing for the league. Daly would not confirm an NHL investigation or its findings.

"I'm not going to confirm your characterization of what the NHL did. Having said that, it is fair to assume that there was nothing we found that concerned us enough to assess discipline," Daly said in an e-mail.

That kind of response irks Wexler. He wants the leagues to admit there is a problem, deal with cases openly and help any players or team officials overcome their problems.

"Pro sports is afraid of this thing. They don't want you guys to talk about this," Wexler says. "I remember I did a four-day seminar for the NFL in the mid-90s. The first day in Denver, ESPN was in the hotel lobby and wanted to interview me. (The NFL) told me I couldn't talk to the media. The next day, they made everybody in the audience get up and identify who they were because they were afraid some media people were in the audience."

All the major pro leagues boast of gambling prevention and help programs. Not good enough, says Wexler, because the programs

aren't independently run.

"Would you go to your boss and tell him you've got gambling problem?"

"There isn't a player who is going to call a league office or the NCAA office and say I've got a gambling problem and I need help. In the NFL, I've had two players call me for help. That's the problem when you run an in-house program. I had a baseball player making \$800,000 and the same year he owed \$25,000 to the Trump organization in Atlantic City. I arranged for him to pay it off and wipe out the debt and his quote to me at the time was:

"I'm afraid Major League Baseball will find out and I'll get blackballed."

Each year, more than 100 million Americans wager an estimated \$96 billion on sports games, according to a survey by the Wall Street Journal. And, much of that action surrounds the NFL.

"Gambling isn't going away," admits Deana Garner, the NFL's director of player services. "People like sports. People like placing bets. Sports and gambling are going to continue to coexist because society allows them to do so."

Garner, in her second year heading up NFL security, says that's why the league is "proactive" in prevention programs.

"Players understand. When we ask them what one policy violation will get you put out of the league they'll tell you: 'Gambling. They're very aware.'"

A book by former all-America quarterback Art Schlichter released last month details how he ended up in prison through gambling and associating with criminals, but he was already in trouble before he got to the NFL and he was never a star. The last major scandal involved Paul Hornung, the Packers' star running back, and Alex Karras, an All-Pro defensive tackle for the Lions, who were forced to sit out the 1963 season for betting on NFL games and associating with gamblers.

Garner admits there are some in the NFL who think that just couldn't happen again.

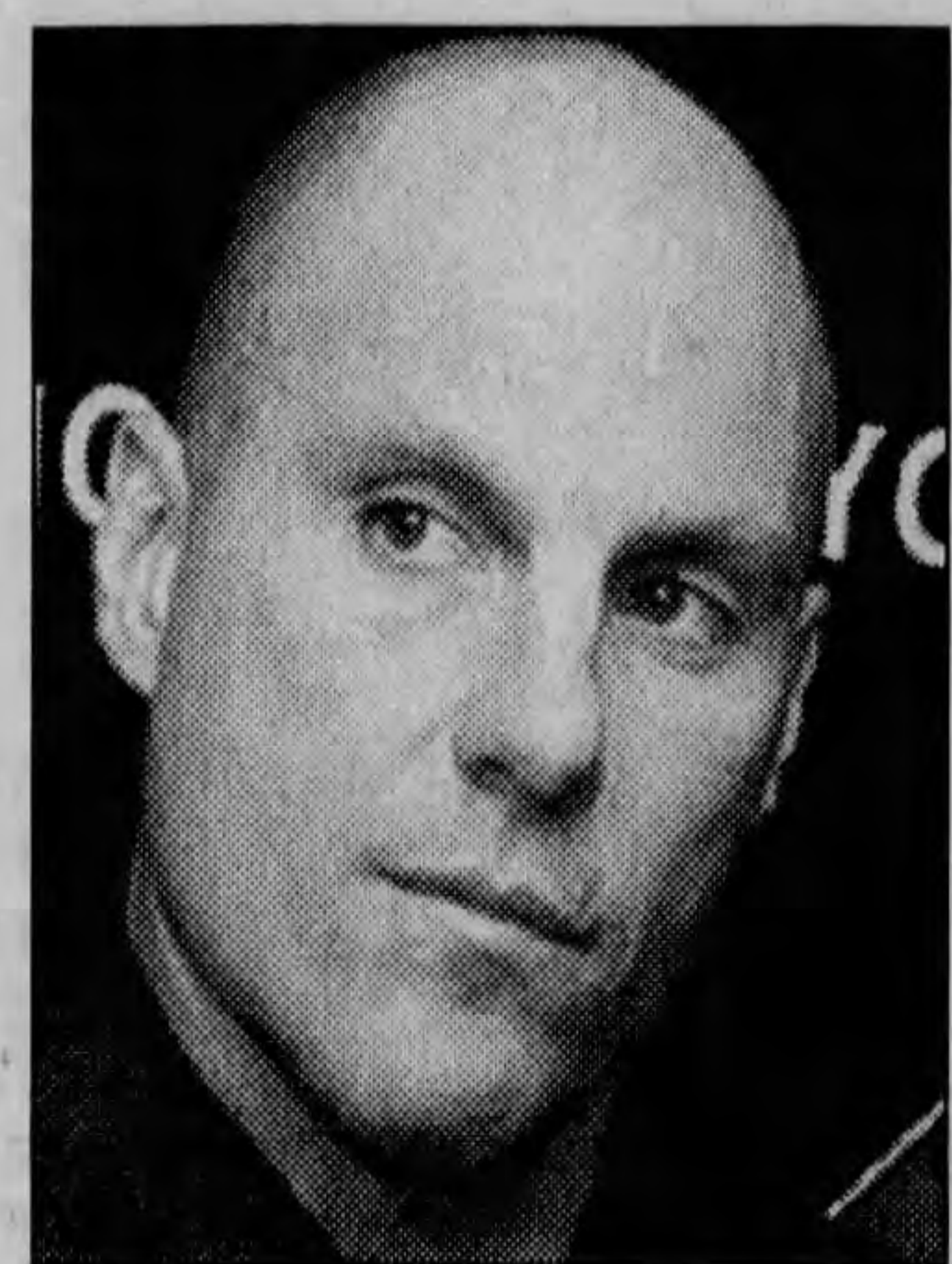
"I tell them, you guys think because you haven't lived through a scandal that it can't happen to you. But it can. It happened in college. It happened in (Toledo) Ohio ... at Northwestern ... they are our teaching moments."

And Garner, unlike her NHL counterparts, does admit that professional gamblers do try to infiltrate the game, that players and club officials are approached for information.

"I can't quantify how often (it happens)," she says, "(but) gambling is always an issue. Our sport is not immune. Organized crime likes to participate in gambling on sports. That's always a threat."

Every few weeks another example pops up. Donaghy was just released from prison and Nikolay Davydenko was a central figure in a tennis match-fixing investigation. Last week, former Celtics star Antoine Walker was arrested in Las Vegas for writing bad cheques for casino markers totalling \$1 million. Former major league pitcher Shawn Chacon is facing arrest for failure to pay Caesars Palace \$150,000 in gambling debts.

"It's a huge (problem). I dealt with hockey players, basketball players, baseball and football players," Wexler says. "In 1999, I was hired on a handshake deal by the NBA to deal with a gam-



Rick Tocchet was charged with taking bets.

bling problem with the players. They were going to let me talk to all the players because the security people at the NBA said we have a major problem.

"Then two weeks later, when I called to ask what was going on they told me (the commissioner's office) didn't want to do it, that (they) were afraid the media would find out. That was it. I sent (USA Today) the story two years ago when the Tim Donaghy stuff broke. The (NBA) refused to deny or admit that they had meetings with me about that."

Similarly, Daly says there really wasn't much to learn from the Tocchet incident.

Were there any lessons learned from Tocchet? I can't tell you there really were," Daly says of Tocchet, who has returned to coaching in Tampa Bay. "There was no indication that there was at any level, by any person (wagering) on NHL hockey games. It was a bookie type situation which exists quite frequently south of the border, that one of our coaching personnel was using. Bad judgment. It constituted a crime for which he was punished. I don't think there was anything the NHL could've or would've done differently."

"It did cause us to conduct a pretty thorough internal investigation," says Daly. "I think we were ultimately satisfied there wasn't anything broader (that would've affected the outcome of games)."

Nice and tidy. But Franzese, like Wexler, isn't convinced that is a complete picture. While the NHL may not have found itself compromised by organized gambling, Franzese notes that doesn't mean the issue doesn't exist.

"(Daly) could say maybe that it hasn't surfaced as a problem in his sport," says Franzese. "Yet ..."

He does know that when it comes to wagering, most NHL players are out of his league.

"I started playing golf with NHL players back in 2000. I have never been around a group of guys who gamble more. That's the absolute truth."

Ultimately, no athlete can ever be too careful. And so it was Karras, who returned in 1964, when asked to call the pre-game coin toss refused, saying:

"I'm sorry, sir. I'm not permitted to gamble."

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## On the net

Watch the video:  
[www.canoe.ca/gambling](http://www.canoe.ca/gambling)  
Bill Lankhof discusses "Sports' dirty secret" with Gareth Wheeler

canoe.ca

## THE SERIES

Part one  
Games, gamblers and organized crime

Part two  
The Mob's Mr. Fix-It

Today: Part three  
Gambling?  
What Gambling?

It's just never been a realistic concern because I don't think it happens ... it's hypothetical.

— NHL vice-president Bill Daly, on gambling within the league