

**TANK McNAMARA**



by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds

# Anonymity not needed to nail SWC 'rule busters'

In the continuing saga — or should I call it trauma — of college athletics, the University of Houston and the University of Texas have become the latest Southwest Conference schools to be accused of wrongdoings within their football programs.

Former players, ranging from those who went on to play in the NFL as well as those who never even finished school, have spoken out against UH and UT for knowledgeably allowing improprieties such as free money loans, use of credit cards, complimentary ticket scandals and ineligible players to go on uncensored.

In a copyright story released by the *Houston Post* March 15, former UH wide receiver David Roberson accused the UH coaching staff of allowing him to play football while he was ineligible because of grade problems. Roberson also said he could receive cash payments up to \$375 from the coaches any time he wanted.

But now, Roberson is out of a job, has a disconnected telephone and is undergoing marital problems because he can't support his wife or their 8-month-old son. He blames all of this on the UH coaches for not making him actively pursue a college degree.

Within the last six months, so many accusations have been made against various collegiate athletic departments. A large number of these have been levied against the Southwest Conference — first SMU, then TCU, Texas A&M and Texas Tech.

SWC college officials, alumni, etc., used to, either out of envy or anger, anonymously report their rival schools for violations of NCAA rules. But as evidenced by players such as Roberson and the many former UT football players, like All-Americans Tony Degrate and Jeff Leiding, who spoke out on the complimentary ticket scalping scandal, any point is no longer the case.

Now it is the colleges' former players speaking out against their alma maters. They accuse their schools of using their talents to fill the stands on Saturday afternoons and collect millions of dollars a year only to leave them to make-it or break-it after their college career are over.

**DOUG HALL**  
Sports Viewpoint

Consider these points:  
1 — Yes, major colleges, especially those in the football-crazed South, use their income from football to finance athletic budgets and bring other non-revenue sports out of the red.

2 — Yes, many major college football coaches are probably guilty of "pulling strings" for their players and allowing players who should be declared academically ineligible to continue playing football.

3 — Obviously, other improprieties are going on in college athletics that are against NCAA rules.

But to Roberson and to many of



the other former athletes who are now speaking out against their alma maters because they want other players to put their education before football and not to let the coaches ruin their education. I say, quit your sniveling.

Roberson, who told the *Post*, "I can't even get a job, man," should have thought about his future while he was accepting those cash payments and failing his classes.

A full football scholarship, in most cases, includes financial provisions for room, board, tuition, lab fees and many other necessities. In a state-funded college such as Houston, the cost is about \$1,500 a semester.

So Roberson, like former UH running back Kevin Gill who told *The Post* that coaches should guide a player "into a field he's interested in

so he can have a career and support his family," were receiving a virtually free education for playing football.

And instead of making the best of a free deal, they blew it.

We're not talking about children, who don't know better than to accept unwrapped candy for Halloween, we're talking about 18-year-old to 22-year-old men who wasted a shot at a free college education.

Where does the fault lie? Is it with the coaches, the athletic system or with society?

I say yes to all the above.

Certainly the coaching staff should have kept closer tabs on Roberson's grades and should not be handing out free giveaways. Yes, it is apparent that college athletics are in a sad state of affairs and that society has grown accustomed to placing too much importance on winning on the shoulders of young athletes.

But for Roberson and all the others who blew their chances at a free education I say quit crying. You rode the gravy train for at least four years before you realized that the real world is not a free handout and that professional sports was not a guarantee.

Roberson was bound to know that the cash payments and other benefits he was receiving were illegal and he certainly had to know he wasn't going to get a degree by staying on scholastic probation. So why didn't he say something then?

He didn't say anything because he would have been biting the hands of those who fed him — and fed him well.

I think the NCAA, among other revisions, should consider a stipulation which states that athletes who accept cash payments or other aid which violates NCAA regulations are just as guilty as those who pay them and should be declared ineligible to play football for any school.

This would not solve all the illegal payments, but it might put a halt to players accepting money from alums that coaches know nothing about. In addition, it might help prevent players like Roberson from turning their backs on the people who provided them the opportunity to play major college football and get a free education.

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