

NBA bans Houston's Lloyd, Wiggins after testing positive for cocaine use

NEW YORK (AP) — Lewis Lloyd and Mitchell Wiggins of the Houston Rockets on Tuesday became the third and fourth NBA players to be banned from the league for using cocaine.

Commissioner David Stern said the two were tested last Saturday after the league was presented with evidence of drug use "that would be adequate to cause a magistrate to issue a search warrant."

Lloyd and Wiggins join Micheal Ray Richardson of the New Jersey Nets and John Drew, formerly of the Utah Jazz, as players banished after failing drug tests.

However, Richardson and Drew were banned as "three-time losers" under provisions of the drug agreement that a player can be treated without penalty if he comes forward voluntarily.

Lloyd and Wiggins did not volunteer for treatment, so they do not get a second chance.

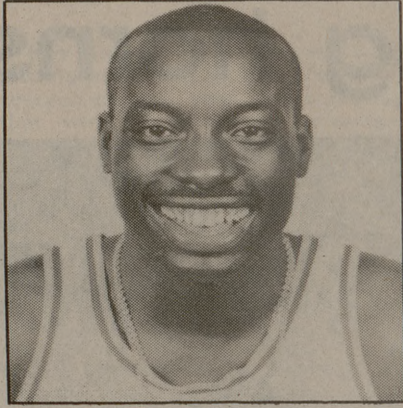
"They had plenty of chances to come forward," Stern said. "Our anti-drug program is not passive. We are constantly counseling all the players about the treatment programs available to them."

Rockets Coach Bill Fitch said the situation had taught him a lot about lying.

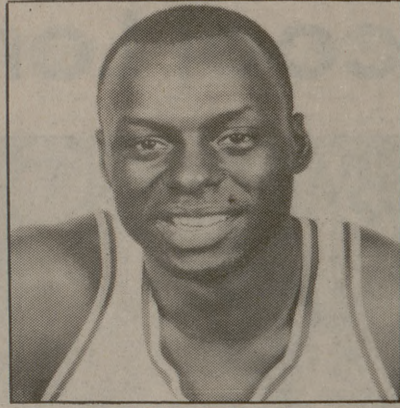
"They'll look you straight in the eye every time and deny it. That's frustrating," he said.

The commissioner said the test results on Lloyd and Wiggins were confirmed Monday night by the PDLA Laboratory in South Plainfield, N.J.

Under terms of the NBA antidrug agreement signed by the league and the NBA Players Association on



Lewis Lloyd



Mitchell Wiggins

Sept. 28, 1983, an independent expert, R. Harcourt Dodds, a former assistant U.S. attorney and deputy police commissioner for the city of New York authorized the tests after evaluating the NBA's evidence.

Stern would not elaborate on the nature of the evidence or how the NBA got it, saying only that "the NBA has security personnel all over the country."

Stern said Tuesday's developments reaffirm the effectiveness of the drug program. He said he was disappointed, but "the program is working the way we expected it would and hoped it wouldn't."

"The underpinnings of the NBA's antidrug program are forceful and clearly stated," Stern said. "Any player voluntarily coming forward and seeking help is entitled to receive, without penalty or loss of salary, the finest rehabilitation treatment that they NBA and the Players Association can secure."

Stern said, however, that Lloyd and Wiggins will still be treated at NBA expense at a rehabilitation facility in Van Nuys, Calif.

The four players can apply for reinstatement two years after their disqualifications took effect. Both the NBA and the players union have to approve any readmission.

"Drug use will not be tolerated in the NBA," Stern said. "But we want to combine that toughness with the need to protect individual rights. We believe we have the most effective and enlightened drug program in sports."

Lloyd and Wiggins are the second and third guards the Rockets have lost to drugs in the past year. John Lucas, a starter who was among the league's assist leaders, was cut by the Rockets last season.

Stern said he is not concerned about how the Rockets will handle their sudden depth problem in the backcourt.

"Our drug agreement is enforced without regard to the consequences to the teams involved," Stern said.

"Now you can go back and second guess just like replaying a ball game and see things you might have overlooked," Fitch said when asked if he suspected either player was using drugs. "All I can say about Mitch and Lew is if we were able to test them we could help, sit down and talk."

"No one has ever come up to me and said I know this for sure. As long as you are dealing in maybes and then you talk to a person who has the ability to lie, that's what is so frustrating."

Fitch, asked the effect the ban would have on his Rockets, said:

"You can't measure this in terms of wins and losses. I met with the club right after we got the news and it's the type of thing that should not happen to any club, but I would expect that we will react in positive ways."

Lloyd, 6-foot-6, started every game for Houston last season, but was a disappointment when the Rockets lost in the NBA finals against Boston. He averaged 16.9 points a game during the season, 7.7 against the Celtics.

He has averaged 20 points per game as the Rockets won five of their last six games. Lloyd averaged 12.4 points from the field for the season, and Wiggins 11.1.

Wiggins, 6-4, was a first-round pick of Indiana in 1983, but was traded to Chicago before the start of the season. He started 40 games for the Bulls, averaging 12.4 points a game and was traded to the Rockets the next season.

Ex-Aggie Siler on trial for murder charge

FORT WORTH (AP) — Richard Siler, who three years ago was a standout tight end at Texas A&M, is sitting in a Florida jail cell awaiting trial on a murder charge.

In the early hours of Jan. 1, a bullet from a gun in Siler's hand struck a 17-year-old girl in the head, leaving her brain dead. Terry Harry was pronounced dead on Saturday.

Siler said he accidentally fired the gun. Greg Smith, the Daytona Beach police detective investigating the case, thinks it was a practical joke with tragic consequences.

In 1983, the Florida native caught 40 passes for 485 yards, a performance good enough to earn him nationwide recognition. But an injury the following year bounced him from his starting role.

A&M sports information director Tom Turbiville said Siler became bitter over losing his top spot. But A&M assistant coach Lynn Amedee said that by his senior year in 1985 Siler had regrouped and was ready to perform.

"I think any time a guy who was a starter no long is, he's going to have strong feelings about it," Amedee said. "But I don't think his attitude was ever a problem (his senior year)."

But Siler was unable to regain his starting role, now occupied by Rod Bernstine. He caught only eight more passes as an Aggie after his 1983 season.

Still, he was invited to play in the 1986 Japan Bowl in Tokyo. His performance there was not outstanding, but scouts took an interest in his size and quickness.

The NFL's St. Louis Cardinals saw enough potential to invite him to their summer camp in 1986.

"He had a little quickness and a toughness about him," a Cardinals personnel official told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. "He didn't have great speed, but he caught the ball well."

But Siler never had much of a chance to make an impression. He broke his leg during training and the Cardinals released him Sept. 25, 1986. He returned to his mother's home to train for another shot at an NFL tryout.

Athletics ran in Siler's family. His brother, Herbert Lorenzo Siler, was a high school standout and attended Illinois University on a football scholarship. But in November 1985, he was convicted of conspiring to distribute cocaine and sentenced to six months in prison.

Siler played his freshman year at Illinois, but transferred to A&M.

On New Year's Eve, Siler and three companions, including his younger brother Clarence, were riding around. They were carrying a 9-mm pistol that the Silers say they wrestled from a drug dealer when he confronted them with it.

As the four neared the corner where Harry was standing, the gun jammed, Richard Siler said. When he pounded on the back of the weapon to free it, the gun went off, he said. The shot struck Harry in the forehead.

Now, Siler sits in jail trying to remain optimistic he will again see the glory days.

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