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# SMU players, coaches remain in limbo while NCAA ponders 'death penalty'

DALLAS (AP) — While Southern ethodist University waits for the CAA to decide the future of the ustang football program, players d coaches exist in limbo and ponan uncertain future.

The NCAA is studying renewed arges of recruiting violations that uld lead to a two-year suspenson SMU football.

On the outside, things are runeir off-season program Tuesday running and lifting weights. But beneath the surface, players

worried about their future "I'm scared as hell," junior Franky

omas said. "You think about it all time. I wonder. I wonder.

e back of his mind — they're going kill the program," junior Ken

Masterson said. "You can look at everybody and see they're thinking the NCAA is going to take it away." A ruling will likely come after the

Committee on Infractions meets Feb. 13-16 in San Diego, Calif.

Some players fear the NCAA will



"Honestly, every player has it in make an example of SMU by making it the first school ever to receive the "death penalty" under which its pro-

gram would be suspended for up to two years.

We know they have done a lot to clean house," a source within the NCAA told the *Dallas Times Herald.* "They are saying, 'We're bending over backward and the death penalty wouldn't help anyone But on the other hand, some now. are thinking this is a golden oppor-

tunity to use the death penalty Following the resignations of athletic director Bob Hitch and Head Coach Bobby Collins in December, the assistant coaches are looking for jobs, and recruiting has ceased.

In Ownby Stadium, posters and Mustang memorabilia have been removed from the walls of the athletic office and boxes are stacked in cor-

ners. "I'm tired of looking at these

boxes," defensive coach Randy Butler said. "They are ready to go and I am, too.

While the coaches wait for job offers, players mull transfers or life at SMU without football.

"I've been thinking about it quite a bit," freshman wide receiver Lynn, James said. "It's my future but I have no control over that part. My future is controlled by somebody

However, most players remain hopeful that the SMU program will not be suspended.

"I don't think they are going to give us the gas," sophomore line-backer Dick Anderson said. "But we'll be on probation the rest of our natural lives.

signs with A's

for one year

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Pitcher Vida Blue, a major fig-

ure in Oakland's glorious

1970s, made an emotional re-

turn to the A's Wednesday, and

was welcomed by Reggie Jack-

son, who also has come home

again. "I really want to shed some

tears, because I really am

elated," said Blue, who is 37.

"I'm really excited about get-

ting the chance to play for the

A's again." The A's announced Blue's

signing to a one-year contract at

Blue and Jackson, 40, are the

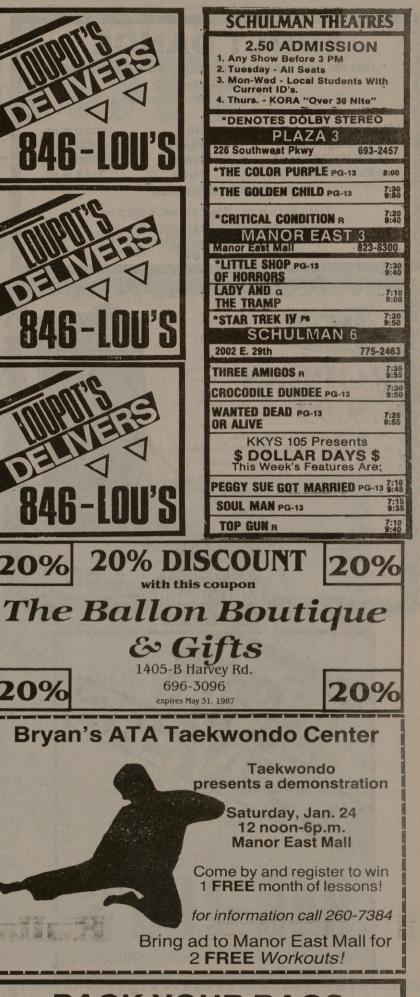
a news conference.

Vida Blue



20%

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### **PACK YOUR BAGS FOR COLLEGE MAIN!**



## New Yorks' secondary weak link in otherwise dominating defense

Even the Denver Broncos know hat you're talking about when one entions the weak link of the New ork Giants' defense.

For reasons even obvious to the ants, the secondary has been sort a whipping boy this season.

Whether the rap is deserved is anher matter. What most people do member about the Giants' secondis seeing Gary Clark of Washingn drop two deep passes in the NFC game, passes some thought uld have gone for touchdowns in a ame New York eventually won 17-

"I wouldn't say they are weak in sense of the word," Broncos de receiver Steve Watson said. "If

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) they are the ones who get all the attention. Nobody focuses on the defensive backs because they are overshadowed.

> Overshadowed isn't the word. Dwarfed seems more appropriate to compare the Giants secondary to their front seven.

"I suppose we are the weak link," Giants safety Kenny Hill said. "We don't have three All Pro players in the secondary as we do at every other position in the defensive unit."

What the Giants will have in the secondary for Sunday's Super Bowl in Pasadena are a 12th-round draft choice at free safety, Herb Welch; an acquisition from the Los Angeles Raiders at strong safety in Hill; a free agent at left corner in Elvis Patu look at their linebacking corps, terson, and a seventh-round draft

choice from 1983 at right corner, Perry Williams.

It's a group that has allowed an average of 217 yards per game, a figure that ranks in the lower third in the league. Against Denver earlier this year, Broncos quarterback John Elway completed 29 of 47 passes for 336 yards. He did not throw a touchdown.

"They beat up on our receivers pretty good," Watson said. "I think we have to approach this game a little differently. We have to change some things.

Most of the passes Elway completed were in the comfort zone between the linebackers and in front of the defense backs.

#### Denver defensive coach dubbed 'genius'

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (AP) Broncos linebacker Tom Jackson Try as he might, Denver Broncos fensive coordinator Joe Collier i't shake the "genius" tag. He meets the suggestion with a

wl, saying true geniuses belong in e laboratory finding cures for lifeeatening diseases, not diagramng X's and O's for football play-

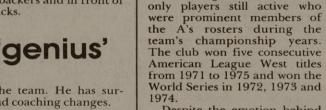
"He's uncomfortable with it,"

said. "He'd never refer to himself as a genius. But as players, we think he

In a business where job security is rare, Collier has, at least, shown a genius for survival. As the Broncos prepare for Sunday's Super Bowl matchup with the New York Giants, he is completing his 18th straight

season with the team. He has survived four head coaching changes.

A poll by a national publication this week showed Collier to be the most job-worthy assistant in the NFL. Head coaches were asked to list the assistants they would choose to begin building a new staff, and Collier was the overwhelming



Despite the emotion behind the return of Blue and Jackson, both said they came back because they believe they can help the team.

"The important thing to me is here's a guy who can still con-tribute," Jackson said after the conference.

