

NFL owners strongly favor testing randomly for drugs

FORT WORTH (AP) — The current NFL drug policy is inadequate, and a new one in the works now would have no bite without random testing, according to a newspaper's survey of 22 of the league's 28 teams.

"I think if it isn't something random, it wouldn't have any teeth," Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in a story published Thursday. "If the Players Association doesn't agree, it's a mistake, because we're dealing with the lives of players, not just an issue."

The NFL's current drug policy allows teams to test players once a year on a mandatory basis. These tests are scheduled in advance and are usually conducted before a spring mini-camp or the start of summer practice.

But several club officials surveyed said the program is inadequate, the Star-Telegram reported Thursday.

"We do regular testing now, and they all come in clean," said Russ Thomas, executive vice president and general manager of the Detroit Lions. "But some drugs can be out of your system in 72 hours, and when a player knows he's going to be tested, he can prepare himself."

"It's like someone telling me not to get drunk," said Rankin Smith Jr., president of the Atlanta Falcons. "I can get drunk all I want as long as I know when I have to stop."

Cleveland Browns owner Art Modell said, "I feel deeply that unscheduled testing — done in

strict confidence, and that is a key — is necessary for an effective program."

Mike McCormack, president and general manager of the Seattle Seahawks, said, "All the people I've listened to who have had problems with drugs say you've got to have random test-

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— Mark Murphy

ing."

Management and the NFL Players Association agree the league's drug program needs to be improved and that random testing should figure into the new equation. How to do that is the point of debate.

Management prefers a broad application, with all players subject to random testing. The union says it should be done on an individual-case basis, only after reasonable cause has been determined. An NFLPA spokesman said surveys indicate 80 to 85 percent of players oppose across-the-board random testing.

The league and union have said establishing a new drug pro-

gram will be a priority when negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement begin this spring.

"If you look at it, we have the same goal: We want the game clean and want to help players with problems," said Mark Murphy, executive director of the NFLPA.

"From that perspective, we should not have much problem with a new agreement. The trouble is the focus has shifted some since 1982 (when the last collective bargaining agreement was signed)," he said. "Then, it was 'Let's try to help these people.' Now it's more like 'Let's catch them.'"

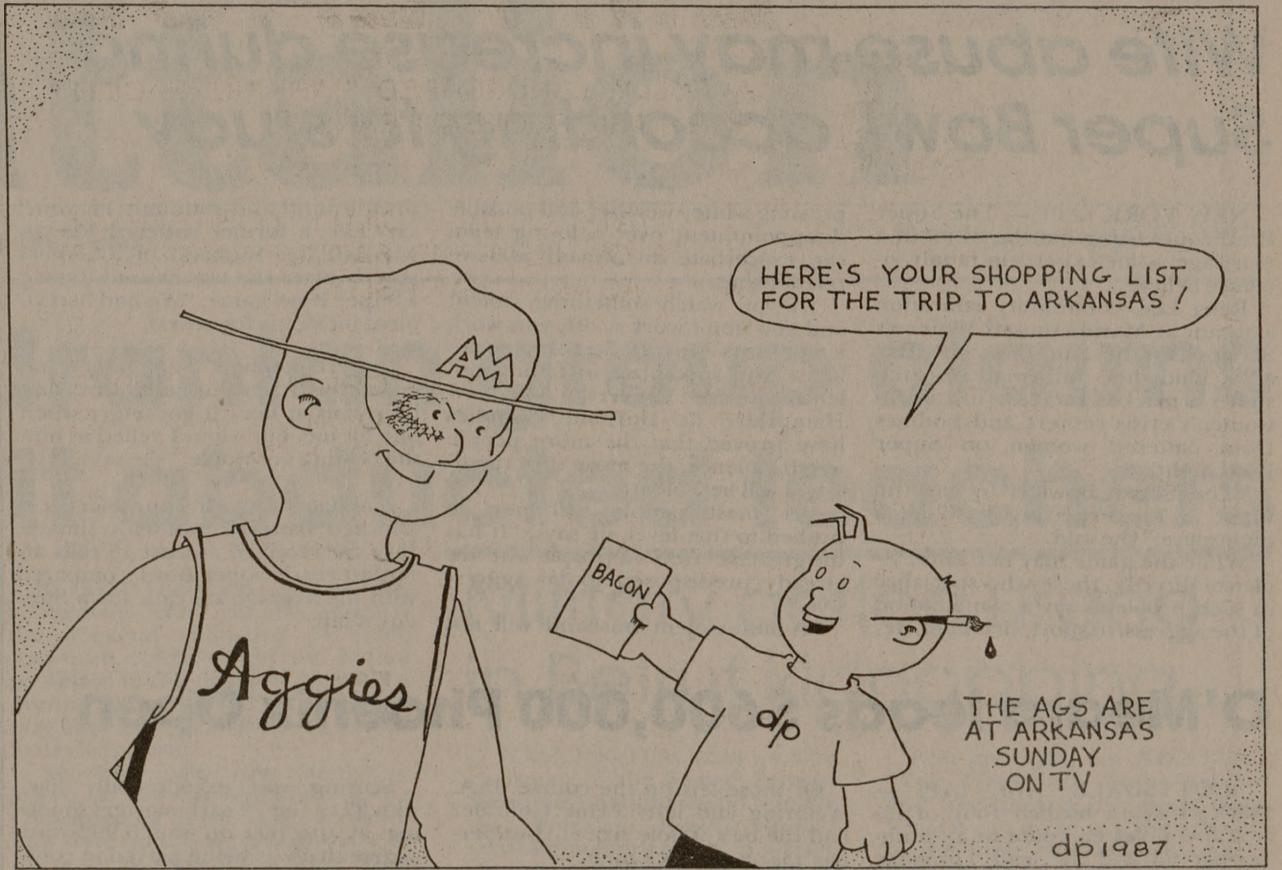
Under the present policy, if a player's test is positive or if there is reasonable cause to suspect drug use, the club can order further testing. Reasonable cause is determined by the team physician.

The players association wants the definition of "reasonable cause" clarified and the determination made by an independent expert.

"To some clubs, reasonable cause is getting beat for two touchdowns," Murphy said.

The NFLPA also wants stricter guidelines in the new program to assure equality for all players.

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Moe's 3-pointer with 15 min-

utes, 24 seconds left in the game broke a 59-59 tie and the unbeaten Hawkeyes went on to their school-record 18th consecutive victory.

Iowa took over sole possession of first place in the Big Ten at 6-0, while Indiana fell to 14-2 overall and 5-1 in the conference.

Iowa's big spurt gave the Hawkeyes a 78-63 lead with 11:17 remaining, but Indiana's Steve Alford, held to seven points in the first half, hit three consecutive 3-pointers to bring the Hoosiers back and they trailed 93-88 after Tony Freeman made two free throws with 2:24 to go.

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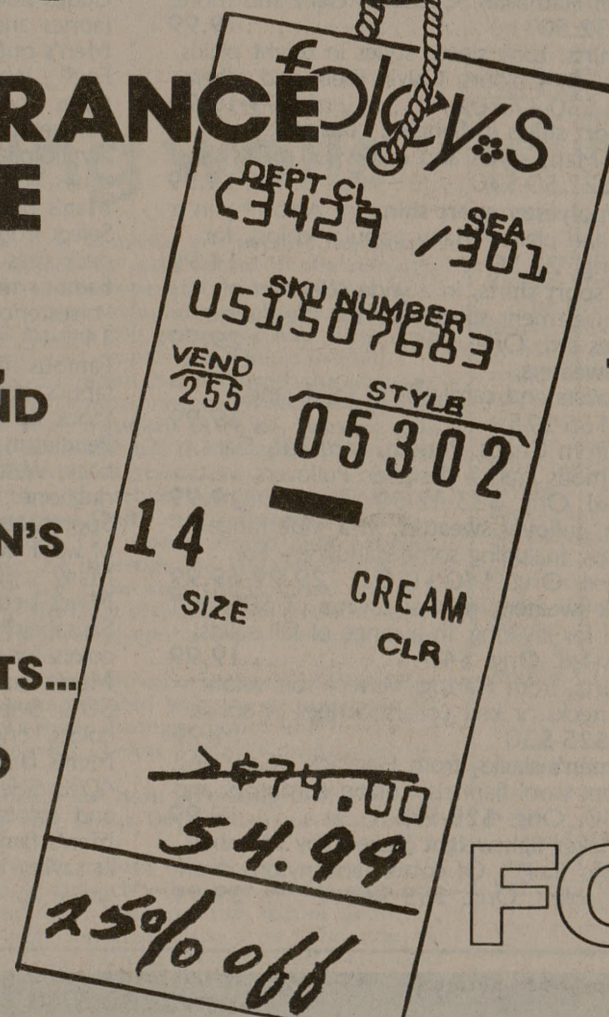
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