

August 15, 1990
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Douglas Pils
Sports Writer

Pro's contracts thrive on greed despite big bucks

Greed. The world of professional sports revolves around it, and every year it seems to get a little worse.

These days, athletes constantly hold out for more money or seek to renegotiate their current contract. Those who want to renegotiate are doing so because of the million dollar contracts given to draft picks who have never played a down in the NFL.

The Indianapolis Colts gave their first round draft pick, Illinois quarterback Jeff George, a six year contract worth over \$15 million plus a \$3.5 million signing bonus.

It's no wonder Don Majkowski, who led the Green Bay Packers to a 10-6 record last year, wants a big increase in his paycheck.

Majkowski leads his team to the playoffs for the first time in years but he can't draw a bigger salary than someone who's never won an NFL game much less played in one.

Common sense says something's not right. What really bothers me about the whole thing is not someone like Majkowski, who's in the option year of his contract, but players like Chicago Bears' defensive tackle Steve McMichael.

McMichael's in the middle of his current contract but he's sitting out because he decided he wasn't earning his worth. Come on, this is what sports agents should be doing when the athlete holds out the first time.

When a contract is finally hammered out, there shouldn't be any more negotiations until that contract expires.

Same thing with New York Giants' linebacker Lawrence Taylor. Does this guy feel the need to hold out every year?

If a team feels a player deserves a bigger contract then I'm all for it.

I'm starting to think everybody holds out to stay away from the pain and torture of two-a-days.

What's worse than veteran holdouts are the ten first round draft picks who've failed to ink a contract. If I was a rookie in the NFL I'd be dying to get to training camp so I could assure myself of playing time if not a starting position.

The Detroit Lions' failure to sign last year's Heisman trophy winner Andre Ware is the most disappointing of those unsigned.

Ware and 1988 Heisman winner Barry Sanders are projected to lead one of the most exciting offenses in the NFL, as the Lions utilize the same run-and-shoot offense that Ware ran at the University of Houston.

Ware's absence in camp means when he does report he will be far behind the rest of the team both in conditioning and offensive knowledge.

With each passing year holdouts are more numerous and draft picks want more and more money. As long as the networks keep shoveling money in the owners pockets and owners keep dishing it out to unproven rookies the problem will only get worse.

Unmitigated greed

Davis' program suffers setbacks

From Staff and Wire Reports

Easy come, easy go. Trouble continues to plague Texas A&M basketball coach Kermit Davis in his quest to rebuild the Aggies' basketball program.

Maurice Sanders, a transfer from Marshall University, will not play for A&M because of a disciplinary suspension he received while at Marshall.

Davis had to contend with the loss of junior center David Harris earlier this year, but the addition of Maurice Sanders, a transfer from Marshall University, seemed to alleviate immediate problems.

Davis had planned on using the 6-5, 230-pound forward to beef up the Aggies' inside defense, using Sanders as an inside forward. However, Davis was unaware of Sanders' disciplinary problem at Marshall.

"When we signed Maurice (Sanders), we were unaware of his previous disciplinary problem at Marshall," Davis said. "It is an unfortunate situation for Maurice, but we do have strict standards for entrance for all our student-athletes at A&M."

Sanders was unavailable for comment.

Averaging 8.1 points and 6.5 re-

bounds per game during his three years at Marshall, Sanders' last year with the Thundering Herd was surrounded by controversy.

Sanders and two Marshall teammates were suspended from that university for a year for disruptive behavior. Sanders was arrested in April for allegedly hitting a woman but charges were later dropped.

Officials at Marshall refused to say whether the incident had anything to do with their decision to suspend Sanders.

Even with the recent setback in the rebuilding program, Davis remained confident that the loss of Sanders wouldn't hinder A&M basketball drastically.

"Life will go on without Sanders," Davis said. "We've staggered our rebuilding, so something like this won't really affect the rebuilding process."

Earlier this year, the Aggies lost senior center David Harris after he failed to meet A&M and NCAA academic requirements. Davis and A&M athletic officials were trying to place Harris in a NAIA or NCAA Division II school so that the SWC leading shotblocker could continue his educational and basketball pursuits.

Missed opportunities



Photo by Ted Albracht

Marcus Drew misses a tackle on James Goodman during the A&M rugby club's practice. Both are members of the club which practices Tuesdays and Thursdays at the A&M polo fields.

SEC causing more waves in 1990s '80s dominance raises question for new decade

ATLANTA (AP) — Miami was college football's team of the 1980s. But what about the conference of the decade?

The strongest claim belongs to the Southeastern. During the 1980s, the SEC had the best winning percentage against outside opponents (.690) plus the most bowl appearances (56), bowl victories (29) and Heisman Trophy winners (Herschel Walker of Georgia and Bo Jackson of Auburn).

Although the SEC produced only one national champion (Georgia, 1980) during the decade, that was as many as any other conference. The SEC also led all leagues in Top 20 appearances, and was the only conference with three teams in last year's final Top 10.

"Most conferences have got two really strong programs, but top to bottom there isn't one close to the SEC," Florida State coach Bobby Bowden said.

Florida State is an independent, but the Seminoles are considering joining the SEC. The league just lured Arkansas from the Southwest Conference and further expansion is expected.

Arkansas coach Jack Crowe said the Razorbacks will have a much harder time winning in the SEC than they did in the SWC.

"We're going from first place in the Southwest Conference to fifth in the SEC," he said.

Tennessee, Auburn and Alabama

"We're going from first place in the Southwest Conference to fifth in the SEC."

—Jack Crowe, University of Arkansas Football Coach

tioned for the SEC title last season and this year's race should be just as close.

Auburn has to replace quarterback Reggie Slack, but the Tigers return their two top rushers, highly touted offensive lineman Ed King and a hard-hitting defense.

"We're not a finished product by any means," coach Pat Dye said. "But we have the makings to be a good football team."

Tennessee, coming off a surprising 11-1 season, will feature running back Chuck Webb, the league's second leading rusher last season.

Alabama, under new coach Gene Stallings, should have an explosive offense with quarterback Gary Hollingsworth and 1,000-yard runner Siran Stacy. But the Tide has to fill some huge holes on defense created by the departure of linebacker Keith McCants, noseguard Willie Wyatt and cornerback John Mangum.

Mobley predicts SWC future

From Staff and Wire Reports

There's a saying in Texas — If you don't like the weather, wait a minute and it'll change. The same could be true about NCAA conferences.

Texas A&M President William Mobley told a group of Amarillo business leaders Tuesday that although the Aggies haven't made any decisions on discussions that it will leave the Southwestern Conference, the conference must change and adapt to the loss of Arkansas.

"I do believe the Southwest Conference will have to change itself, probably adding schools if it is to be a viable conference, given the fact that other conferences are changing," Mobley said.

"But Texas A&M has made no decision. There's an awful lot of speculation, some of it partially well-founded, some of it totally missing the mark. We have not asked to be invited to join another conference. Right now, our primary focus is on the ongoing study of the Southwest Conference."

A&M Regent Billy Clayton said Monday the A&M Board of Directors was receptive to leaving the SWC.

"I think the sentiment of the board is A&M, Arkansas and the University of Texas have been basically underwriting the athletic programs of the Southwest Conference," Clayton said. "With Arkansas leaving (to join

the SEC), the burden is squarely placed on A&M and the University of Texas. I think we've got to make a move."

Clayton said Mobley briefed the board on the prospect of A&M's possible departure at a regents meeting July 28. Although Clayton said specific alternatives to the SWC were not discussed at that meeting, he described the regents as receptive to the idea of bolting the SWC for a stronger conference.

Clayton, who was speaker of the Texas House for eight years from 1975-83, said Mobley asked him at the meeting to assess the political ramifications of A&M and Texas deserting the conference.

"I told them certain members of the Legislature would say whatever they could on the matter, but the decision must be based on whatever is best for Texas A&M University," Clayton said. "The athletic departments at Texas A&M and the University of Texas are funded strictly by local athletic funds. Educational funds are appropriated by formula, and I don't think that could be or would be changed by the Legislature based on an athletic matter."

State Rep. Robert Junell, D-San Angelo, and state Sen. Bill Sims, D-San Angelo, have threatened to file a bill in the Legislature next year that would require any state school leaving the Southwest Conference to forfeit half of its athletic television revenues.

Boycott of LPGA tourney called off by NAACP

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. (AP) — A planned boycott of this week's LPGA Big Apple Classic was averted when an NAACP official on Tuesday pronounced himself satisfied that the host Wykagyl Country Club would speed efforts to recruit black members.

Napoleon Holmes, the president of the New Rochelle office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, called off the protest after meeting Monday with tournament organizers. Last week, Holmes had asked sponsors of the tournament to withdraw their support because the club has no black members.

Club president William Thompson said in a letter to Holmes that "there are no barriers to black membership."

"Our membership has evolved considerably over last 10 years to reflect general social changes in our society. Today Wykagyl has Jewish and Christian members, women members, as well as members from the Japanese and Korean communities. The logical next step is to broaden our membership base to include black members."

Thompson said that blacks play at

Wykagyl as guests of the members, but no blacks have ever applied for membership.

"We would welcome such applications and encourage our members to recommend those of their black friends they believe would be interested in becoming members," he said.

Winston Roth, the NAACP's regional director, said he did not feel that Wykagyl actively discriminated.

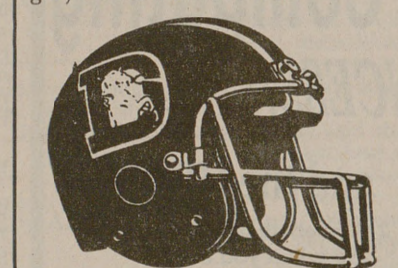
"We don't have anyone who has complained that they have not been allowed to join," Roth said. "Our concern is not only whether there is a history of discrimination but also what they're trying to do to get black members. So we ask the clubs what they are doing as affirmative steps to get black members."

Holmes said he was satisfied with Thompson's position and welcomed regular reports on Wykagyl's progress in recruiting.

William Blue, commissioner of the LPGA, said he, too, was satisfied with Wykagyl's response. And he said that the LPGA, like the PGA Tour, would examine membership policies before assigning tournament sites.

Reeves returns to camp after surgery

GREELEY, Colo. (AP) — Denver coach Dan Reeves returned to training camp Tuesday, refreshed and ready to lead his Broncos after undergoing surgery for blocked arteries.



"I'm going to be as mean and ornery as I've always been," the usually low-key Reeves said. "As far as my heart is concerned, I'm going to continue what I've been doing."

The 46-year-old coach was sufficiently warned to take better care of himself. He said he'll

watch his diet and try to get his cholesterol level down. Otherwise, it's business as usual.

"I feel real fortunate that everything went smoothly," Reeves said. "I'm back full-time; there are no restrictions."

"It was a good warning. I was one of the lucky ones. I'm going to get back on an exercise program and watch my diet. I can do everything the way I've always done."

"I don't feel like my job has anything to do with it and neither do the doctors. Although, none of us know that for sure," he said. "There's no question there's stress in everybody's job and there's stress in this job."

Last Thursday, Reeves was flown to Redwood City, Calif., after doctors discovered the blocked arteries. He underwent an atherectomy and was expected to spend the next three to four weeks recovering. But Reeves was back in less than a week.

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