



Tackling Illegal Drug Use

It is a sad state of affairs when a sports column has to focus on the use of illegal drugs. But in a time when some of the National Football League's best players have been sidelined because of illegal drug use, the issue cannot be ignored.

The main cause of illegal drug use in the NFL is, as I have said time and time again, that many players think they can get away with everything. From the time they first became football stars in high school and college, someone has always been there to help them out of trouble. They get the feeling they are above getting punished.

Which is not to say that illegal drug abuse is not discouraged. In college, the NCAA takes great care to educate college athletes on the dangers of illegal drugs. By the time players get to professional football, they have had four or five years of lessons on it. Then in the NFL, they get the same thing. The point is that players can't claim ignorance. They know they are not supposed to be using illegal drugs.

There comes a day when the players who think they can get away with everything must pay for their mistakes. And some pay with their football careers.

For example, Washington Redskins' defensive end Dexter Manley recently ended up with a lifetime suspension from football for use of illegal drugs.

It's a shame, because he's a guy who was really working to make some improvements in other areas of his life. If someone had stopped him a little earlier along the line and made him realize he could ruin his life, he might not be where he is today. He was never taught to look at the big picture of life. Now who is going to take a chance on Dexter Manley?

The use of steroids is another problem facing football. While I don't believe that the use of steroids is as widespread as some people claim, there's no question it has changed the face of the game. Players are getting bigger and bigger, and while most of it is due to better weight training and diet, some players go the steroid route. It's completely wrong, and I think steroids should be thrown in the same category as other illegal drugs.

While the NFL is not a harbor for abusers of illegal drugs—I'd say only 3 percent or 4 percent of the players use illegal drugs—it is a problem that won't go away until taken more seriously. My suggestion is to make the penalties more substantial. Don't teach these guys that they can get caught a couple of times and get away with a short suspension like the NFL does now. A mandatory lifetime suspension for the first incident of illegal drug use should be the rule.

Teach the guys "one time and you're gone." With a penalty like that, I guarantee you'll see an end to illegal drug use in the NFL. **ll**

Gale Sayers is considered one of the greatest running backs of all time. The former Chicago Bear is a member of the National Football League's Hall of Fame.

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Ellis Released

Seattle Super-Sonics All-Star guard Dale Ellis was released from Harborview Medical Center Tuesday after several days of treatment for broken ribs while the King County prosecutor's office began debating whether to charge Ellis with driving while intoxicated.



Dale Ellis

Ellis suffered three broken ribs and a collapsed lung early Friday morning when his 1989 Mercedes Benz struck a highway barrier.

Dan Donohoe of the prosecutor's office said police reports on the Ellis case were received Tuesday to charge him with DWI and reckless driving would be made by the end of this week or early next week.

Mary Rucker, Sonics spokeswoman, said Ellis was released from Harborview on Tuesday and officially placed on the team's injured reserve. She said Ellis was at home until any legal determinations were made.

His lawyer, Steven Hayne, has said Ellis would plead innocent to any charges. For first-time offenders, driving while intoxicated carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Houston's Ware Wins O'Brien Award

Andre Ware, the NCAA record-smashing All-American from the University of Houston, on Saturday was named the winner of the ninth annual Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award.

Ware, winner of the Heisman Trophy and the leader of the Cougars' run-and-shoot offense, will be honored Feb. 12 in a formal dinner at the Fort Worth Club.

Darian Hagan, the sophomore who led Colorado to the No. 1 ranking during the regular season, finished second in voting by media members.



Andre Ware

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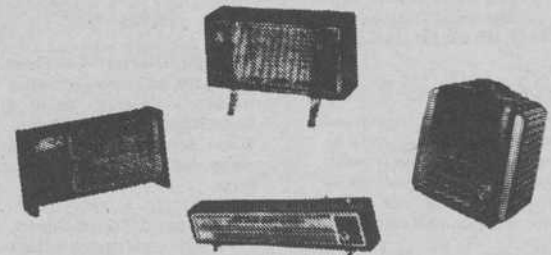


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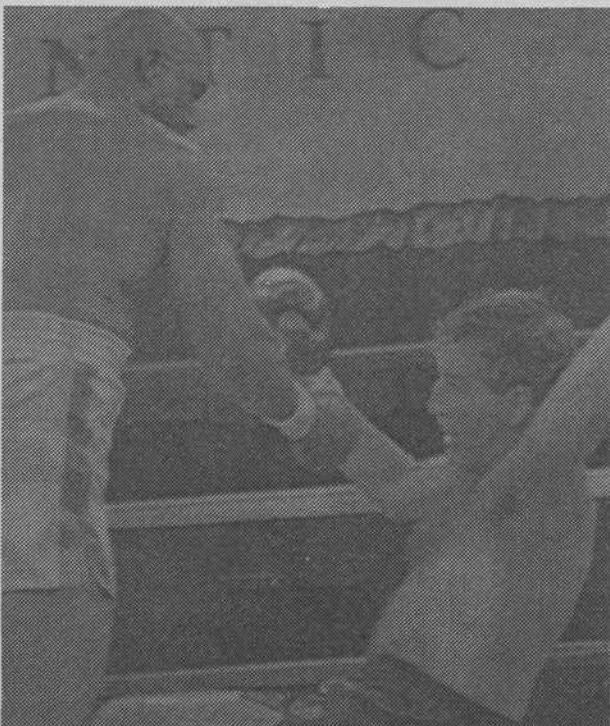
Foreman Talks Of Mike Tyson

George Foreman, who needed less than five minutes to dismantle Gerry Cooney Monday night in Atlantic City, predicted he would get rid of heavyweight champion Mike Tyson even quicker.

The 41-year-old, 253 1/4 pound Foreman, floored Cooney twice before knocking him out in the second round.

But now Foreman, who held the heavyweight title in 1973-74, has been talking about challenging the unbeaten, 23-year-old champion Mike Tyson. Foreman's 20th straight victory since beginning a comeback in 1987 shouldn't hurt his chance for a title bid.

"I'll probably knock him (Tyson) out alot faster because he won't back up," Foreman said.



George For man floors Gerry Cooney

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