

Steroids spoil brains of sports' execs

With the latest disclosure that baseball czar Bud Selig is asking his players to approve a 50 game suspension penalty for any player with an initial positive test for steroids or any other drug on the banned drug list only proves that this whole matter has reached a ridiculous state.

First, the involvement of the federal legislature requesting the presence of a number of baseball players, the commissioner, and then the heads of the National Football League and the players association should have been considered as stepping over the lines of propriety relating to sports in this country.

President George W. Bush, who formerly was an executive for the Texas Rangers in the baseball American League, briefly mentioned steroid use in his State of the Union speech, but only briefly.

The members of Congress then took it upon themselves to form a committee and subpoenaed players to appear and discuss suspected steroid use in the various sports—baseball and football, especially.

Former St. Louis Cardinals and Oakland Athletics first baseman Mark McGuire's failure to answer the questions about his use of certain health drugs he



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

bought at the local nutrition stores was within his rights, and instead of being ostracized, he should have been commended. No one has come up with proof positive that androstenedione really aided him in hitting 70 home runs in 2000.

The congressional committee on steroid use also suggested to NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue that the sports organizations should get together and have uniform testing. That went over like a ton of bricks to Tagliabue and NFLPA president Gene Upshaw. Tagliabue told Chairman Tom Davis of Virginia that the NFL has always had very strong programs in place to rid its locker rooms of so-called performance enhancing drugs and that he did not see where it was necessary for his league to change many of its current policies.

Upshaw, an Oakland Raiders Pro Football Hall of Famer who played in three different decades, 1960, 1970 and 1980, agreed and said that during his career the use of steroids, or any other per-

formance enhancers, was not tolerated. As a teammate of the late Lyle Alzado, a former Raider and Denver Bronco who was accused of taking anabolic steroids, Upshaw was led to believe that steroids were deadly and not healthy.

Steve Courson, a former Pittsburgh Steeler and Tampa Bay Buccaneer offensive lineman, said he used some drugs that were called steroids but they only made him sick; so, he stopped using them before he retired.

The testimony of a citizen who came before the committee and testified that his son, a high school athlete, died from taking steroids only clouds the picture of whether the drugs are healthy or unhealthy, performance enhancing or not performance enhancing.

Still, Congressman Davis and Arizona Senator John McCain, with the current crisis in Iraq and the Mid-East, should get down to the real business at hand and forget about the controversy about performance enhancing drugs that still have not been

proven to be useful or not.

Getting back to Selig who wants the 50-day suspension without pay for the first positive test, he came up with a more ridiculous penalty for the second test: a 100 game suspension. And the third positive test should result in a lifetime ban?

Has the use of something like steroids become an even larger illegal offense than a player betting on his own team's games like Pete Rose did, or testing positive for marijuana or cocaine use like Steve Howe and others did? Howe was suspended at least

seven times by the Los Angeles Dodgers for his use of marijuana and other drugs, but never for life.

A first offense in baseball for steroid use is now subject to a 10-day suspension without pay. With today's current salaries, that's quite a bit of money to give up. A second offense gets a 30-day layoff without pay. The third one gets 60 days. And finally, after five positives, the commissioner can determine the punishment.

"Put me on record as saying 'that's ridiculous,'" said Los Angeles Dodgers player

Jason Phillips. "We still don't know what you can buy over the counter or what you can't."

"That's a lot of money to take from a player," said Tipper Jones of the Atlanta Braves. "It's a little unfair to take away a third of the season."

Other players say the policy in baseball is in place and it should be tried out before making any drastic changes like Selig has come up with lately.

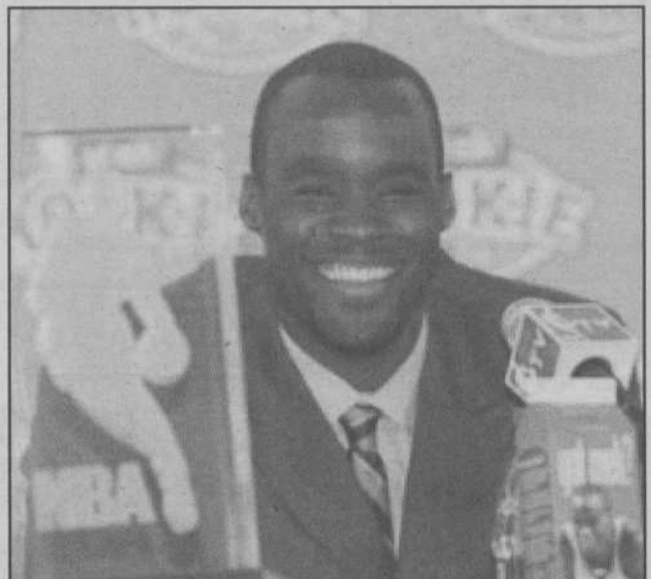
Next, they might even try to ban aspirin. It could be performance enhancing.

Okafor wins NBA's rookie award in competitive race

Special to Sentinel-Voice
Charlotte Bobcats forward Emeka Okafor has been named 2005 NBA Rookie of the Year.

Okafor narrowly edged Chicago's Ben Gordon for the honor, despite the fact that Gordon helped lead the Bulls to the playoffs for the first time since Michael Jordan guided the club to the NBA title in 1998.

The 22-year-old Okafor and Gordon played together at the University of Connecticut, where the two men were best friends and helped lead the Huskies to the 2004 na-



Emeka Okafor ogles his rookie of the year trophy.

tional championship.

Okafor, who was the second overall pick in last year's NBA Draft, had a terrific season for the expansion Bobcats. He averaged 15.1 points and 10.9 rebounds per game, while also ranking second among all first-year players in blocks by posting 1.7 per contest.

"Today is a terrific day for Emeka Okafor and the Charlotte Bobcats organization. Emeka is very deserving of the Rookie of the Year

award," Bobcats General Manager & Head Coach Bernie Bickerstaff said. "He is a young man who led all rookies in minutes, scoring and rebounding and did it all while being in traffic down in the paint. This is a great honor and something that can never be taken away."

The 6-10 Okafor was a three-time winner of the Eastern Conference Rookie of the Month Award (November, December, April) and also
(See Okafor, Page 20)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Huel Washington

CATCH AS CATCH CAN

Mitch Bowles hauls in a catch during the Outlaws semifinal game in the Spring 4A Adult Flag Football playoffs. The Outlaws came into the playoffs unbeaten and were expected to win it all. The Dawgs had other plans, upsetting the favorites 14-7. Outlaws player Troy Vaughn eagerly awaits for next season: "We'll be back."

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