

Author: Athletes' security depends on agent

By Brent Cobb
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

"When they smile, blood drips off their teeth," Ted Turner, Atlanta Braves owner on agents.

Perhaps Ted Turner overstated things a bit. But the fact is, professional agents don't have the best of reputations. Not with the men they deal with, nor with the college coaches who have to battle with them for the attention of their athletes.

After Mike Rozier admitted signing with an agent before the start of his Heisman Trophy-winning season at Nebraska, the rumors and misgivings about professional agents began in earnest.

The subject drew the ire of editorial writers who attacked Rozier and the agents. It gave the Mazda Sport Look (ESPN talk show) a popular subject for several weeks, with coaches like Jim Valvano of North Carolina State airing his negativism and agents defending their work and way of life.

Robert H. Ruxin, a Washington attorney specializing in communications and sports law, has written a book exploring the issues and problems with sports agents.

As its title suggests, "An Athletes Guide to Agents" is more for the potential target of the agents, the athlete himself. Ruxin points out that a good agent can help an athlete attain financial and mental stability during and after his career. An incompetent or dishonest agent can ruin an athlete's playing career and threaten his

financial security for years afterward.

According to Ruxin, the agent's basic function in sports lies somewhere between offering advice or help in negotiating a contract to overseeing the athlete's financial affairs.

The potential for increasingly larger salaries in sports and the athlete's increased power in bargaining has brought about the need for agents who can capitalize on larger financial gains.

NCAA rules governing amateurism forbids an athlete to agree, either orally or in writing, to be represented by an agent or organization in the marketing of his athletic ability or reputation until after the completion of his last intercollegiate contest, including post-season games. The rules also forbid an athlete from accepting expenses or gifts of any kind (including meals and transportation) from an agent who wishes to provide services to the athlete. The NCAA allows an athlete to talk to an agent, providing he neither agrees to be represented nor accepts anything of any value from the agent.

In an interview with UPI, Lincoln Star, Oct. 30, Leigh Steinberg, an agent-lawyer representing Steve Young who received an estimated \$40-million contract with the USFL's Los Angeles Express, said at least 500 new agents have emerged in the past two years. This increase is responsible for an increase of competition among agents earlier in the season.

"At least one-third of the top athletes in college football and basketball are signing early every year," Steinberg estimates.

The USFL's draft in early January, he said, puts the pressure on the athlete who may be legally ineligible to sign with an agent until just days earlier.

Steinberg said he thinks a re-evaluation of the NCAA scholarship regulations might ease some of the financial burdens of the student athlete, especially those in the lower class who can't work during the season and have to rely on scholarship money. Steinberg said he thinks the extra \$100 a month that some of the agents offer would then become less attractive to the student athlete.

Once the athlete has a good understanding of NCAA rules and

regulations, he should find an agent.

That really isn't much of a problem. Ruxin writes that in George Roger's Heisman year at South Carolina, about 300 agents tried to represent him.

Jim McFarland, a Lincoln attorney and former UNL football player, said the ideal agent has skills in several different areas and has an honest approach.

McFarland said agents should understand the steps to becoming a professional athlete, so they can advise clients of possible problems and changes. The agent also should tell athletes which team or coach they would be most successful with.

Agents also should have negotiating skills — not necessarily to get the most money possible, but to know when to be hard-nosed or accomodating. According to

McFarland, many athletes are competitive by nature and want the agent who has the reputation for being hard-nosed. But that also can be a disadvantage if agents are so stubborn that they refuse all lesser offers. An athlete may then be forced to sit out for some length of time, disrupting their relationship with the other players, the coaching staff and possibly jeopardising their reputation and athletic career.

Many agents also offer investment counseling services. Some athletes consider agents who offer investment counseling an added bonus, even though some athletes have been taken advantage of. For example, an agent might offer the athlete a low rate of representation, then take a big percentage of the athlete's investment profits.

Continued on Page 15



judson automotive

factory trained
foreign car specialists
27th & T
Lincoln, Nebraska
475-9022

EAST NEW ORLEANS



At intersection of I-10 and Hwy 29
Only 5 mins from Superdome

SUGAR BOWL SPECIAL!

\$149.77 double occupancy
4 Days and 3 Nights
OR
\$49.77 Single
\$55.77 Double
per night
Call 1-800-251-9752 for reservations
Jaccuzzis, king beds suites available

LUNCHEON SPECIALS

Mini-Pizza with All You Can Eat Salad Bar.
Medium Drink or a Frosty Mug of Beer.



All For Only \$3.34
Offer good 11 am-3 pm
Mon. thru Sat.
Lower Level Glass Menagerie

FLY FROM OMAHA and ride the LINCOLN-EPPLEY XPRESS

Limousine service
between Lincoln and
the Omaha airport.



Reservations Required
24 hours in advance

Lincoln phone 423-8800

"YOUR QUICK HOP TO THE NONSTOP"

Holiday Season Schedule
(Dec. 17, 1984 - Jan. 6, 1984)
All listed runs operate every day.

Call for special schedule on
Dec. 24 & 25, Jan. 1.

LEAVE HILTON (DOWNTOWN)	LEAVE COO'S	ARRIVE EPPLEY	DEPART EPPLEY	ARRIVE COO'S	ARRIVE HILTON
4:35 a.m.	4:50	6:00	6:05	7:15	7:30
6:10 a.m.	6:25	7:35	7:40	8:50	9:05
8:30 a.m.	8:45	10:00	10:05	11:45	12:05
9:15 a.m.	9:30	10:40	11:55	1:05	1:30
11:20 a.m.	11:40	12:50	1:40	2:50	3:05
1:45 p.m.	2:00	3:10	3:40	4:50	5:05
2:45 p.m.	3:00	4:10	4:50	6:10	6:25
3:45 p.m.	4:00	5:10	5:50	7:00	7:15
6:45 p.m.	8:00	8:30	9:40	9:55	
9:00 p.m.	10:15	10:35	11:45	12:00	

Pre-payment required for all travel from
December 15 - January 15.

BASIC ONE WAY RATE EITHER DIRECTION \$14.00
ROUND TRIP (Must be purchased as such) \$24.00
CHILDREN & SPOUSES TRAVEL 1/2 FARE

P.S. Thanks, Lincoln, for your
tremendous response.

Maurtice Ivy...

Continued from Page 13

Riggins made a recruiting trip to Omaha to visit Ivy and her family. On Central's prom night, Riggins came to the Ivy's home and spoke briefly with Maurtice, who was on her way to the dance. Upon returning home, Ivy learned that Riggins had stayed at her house and talked to her parents until 1:30 a.m.

"I was shocked," Ivy said. Riggins said Ivy possessed pure athletic skill and would have fit into the San Diego offense per-

fectly. "We run a fast break offense here," Riggins said. "We like to have our guards push the ball up the floor. I think Maurtice would have fit right into our game plan."

Riggins, who coached Powell at Lincoln High in East St. Louis, noted Ivy's track skills, particularly in the sprint events, as an asset to her basketball skills.

"In our program, we try to take outstanding athletes and make them into great basketball players," Riggins said. "She has all of the attributes of a great basket-

ball player." Hill agrees.

"Maurtice has all the physical tools," Hill said. "She just needs to be patient with the injury. We recruited her as one of the best high school players in the nation, so I can't see why she can't become one of the top collegiate players."

Ivy said that despite the early setback, she will help make Nebraska's program a winner.

"I've been training real hard to get my leg back into shape," Ivy said. "I'm going to come back and come back strong."