

THE SPORTS PAGE

NFL confronts drug abuse revelations

By KURT ROSENBERG

It hasn't been a particularly peaceful summer for the National Football League.

First it was Oakland Raider boss Al Davis, who single-handedly produced, directed, and wrote the screenplay for the NFL disaster flick, "Escape to Los Angeles."

Now, after all the battling over the percentage of gross revenues that the players association is seeking and nothing having been settled, it appears that an NFL strike may become a reality.

And soon, there will be another league, perhaps to serve as a replacement of sorts, if indeed a strike comes to pass. Although the United States Football League doesn't start play until next spring, it could present a challenge to the NFL somewhere down the line.

These problems have been major ones, by Pete Rozelle's standards or anyone else's. But when they are added up, they fall far short of approaching the biggest crisis currently plaguing the National Football League. Coke is it. Cocaine.

Since June, when Don Reese asserted in *Sports Illustrated* that "a cocaine cloud covers the entire league," player after player has come forward and publicly revealed his problems with drugs.

San Diego's Chuck Muncie was admitted to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program two times. Minnesota players Tommy Kramer, Randy Holloway and Scott Studwell also sought help. 1981 Heisman Trophy winner George Rogers, the NFL Rookie of the Year last year, disclosed that he spent \$10,000 on cocaine last season while playing for New Orleans. Charles White, 1980's Heisman recipient, got help just before drug addiction ruined his life, in his words.

Those are a few select examples. The latest scandal involves, of all teams, the Dallas Cowboys. An undisclosed number of Dallas players were questioned by federal agents for their alleged association with cocaine dealers. Tony Dorsett and Harvey Martin were named in the investigation. Even "America's Team" cannot escape cocaine's torrid path through the NFL.

Maybe Don Reese *did* exaggerate the magnitude of the problem, as many have suggested. But there are players and coaches who stand behind Reese, who will tell you that what he said was no exaggeration.

"We shouldn't be sweeping it under the rug," said Georgia Tech coach Bill Curry, who spent 10 years as an NFL player. "I think it has the potential to be epidemic if we don't do something about it."

Last year the league decided to do something about it. A program of education and medical assistance was instituted by each of the 28 NFL teams. A doctor with a background in chemical dependency oversees each team. In addition, NFL director of security Warren Welsh, his assistant, Charles Jackson, and former player Carl Eller, who serves as a drug consultant, are involved in the educational aspects of the program. They travel to the NFL training camps, making presentations and discussing the dangers of drug use.

"We know we have a drug problem and we're concerned with the effect that it has on the individuals and on the integrity of the game," Welsh said. "I think our program is a good one and the number of people who have come forward and used it shows that it is working."

But how effectively? Granted, it probably has helped some NFL players, but how many? The program has existed for more than a year. But the admissions of drug abuse didn't start flowing until about two-and-a-half months ago, right after *Sports Illustrated* hit the newsstands and broke the whole issue wide open. While the

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league's program deserves some credit for this summer's events, the fact is that Don Reese deserves a lot more.

Actually, it is incorrect to call it the league's program. It is really 28 distinct programs around the league with a few NFL representatives along for the ride to the training camps. "We don't have a program that is administered by the league office like some of the other pro leagues," Welsh said.

Since Reese's story was published, nothing significant has been done to expand or improve the current program, or to work toward transferring its control to the league itself. It seems that the NFL has spent more time and energy denying the accusations made in *Sports Illustrated*.

Commissioner Pete Rozelle refuted Reese's claim that the former player tried to contact the league about the extensive use of drugs by the New Orleans Saints, one of the teams he played for. Reese contended he tried to call Jackson to discuss the problem. He said Jackson never returned the call. "He never called me about a drug problem," Jackson has said. "Never in the history of his NFL life did he call me asking for drug help."

It hasn't been only league officials who have repudiated Reese's contentions. San Diego owner Gene Klein was another who took exception to the charges. Reese maintained in the article that San Diego has "a big drug problem." Klein called this "ludicrous ... total nonsense."

Oddly enough, the NFL Players Association, which should be showing more concern than anyone about drug abuse, has taken a similar stand. The NFLPA's executive director, Ed Garvey, was, at the very least, skeptical of the allegations made by Reese. At the time the story appeared Garvey said, "I just look at (the magazine) and wonder if *Sports Illustrated's* circulation is down. I mean, I thought it was the *National Enquirer* when I opened my mailbox."

And NFLPA President Gene Upshaw has said the article "gave players a black eye, the league a black eye, and everyone connected with it a black eye." Upshaw said that drug abuse by professional athletes is "a private matter."

Instead of worrying about invasions of privacy, the players association should be doing everything in its power to help its drug-addicted members whose lives are

being destroyed.

Instead of placing so much emphasis on their new television contract, which will bring each team \$14.2 million a year, the NFL owners should be concerned about the millions of dollars their employees are spending on drugs every year.

And instead of sticking their heads in the sand, the NFL executives should be attacking the problem by waging an all-out war on cocaine.

But to think that all that will happen in the immediate future is too naive, too idealistic. The players association is rigidly opposed to urinalysis testing, which would detect drugs in players' bodies. Urinalysis has been standard procedure for years in many other sports, including boxing, swimming, and track and field.

The NFL Management Council has advised the teams that the testing is not in violation of the collective bargaining agreement between the league and players, as the players association has contended. Still, the use of urinalysis in the NFL is not widespread.

Rather than merely labeling urinalysis as "okay," the NFL should make it mandatory. Dr. S. Joseph Mule, a leading authority on drug testing, said recently, "There is no question about the need for urinalysis in football if they want a clean game."

It's time for pro football to look at the situation logically. As the Raiders' Greg Pruitt said, "If you've got nothing to hide, why worry about urinalysis?"

Urinalysis is the first step that should be taken in the wake of Reese's revelations. The next step should be an expansion of the current educational program. Discussions and lectures should be held on a regular basis throughout the season, not just occasionally during pre-season training camps. And most importantly, the NFL has to take control of the problem and show some authority.

There is a deli in New Orleans that advertises a Saints Special: Ham & Cheese, \$2.50. With Coke, \$4.00. Until the NFL decides to take command of a problem that is already out of hand and could ultimately prove to be its downfall, the Saints Special will remain in effect.

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Colleges breeding ground for serious drug addiction

By KURT ROSENBERG

Don Reese's *Sports Illustrated* story simply brought to light what had been going on for some time. The revelations from other players which followed the article's publication in rapid-fire succession made people even more acutely aware of the problem. And by now, anyone who calls himself a football fan realizes that drugs are a pretty popular pastime in the NFL.

The same fans, however, may not be aware of how extensive drug use is at the college level. Of course, there is no way to determine exactly how prevalent it is. But the idea currently circulating is that college and even high school football may be breeding grounds for drug users who begin to foster a much more expensive habit, once they have the means to do so as professional athletes.

"They start at a very young age, probably prior to college," said former NFL player Carl Eller, who serves as a drug consultant to the league. "It's certainly a problem that is inherited by the NFL. That's just where it blossoms."

College coaches are much more conscious of the situation now than in previous years. Some will discuss it more willingly than others, but it seems that many have finally realized that to have a player (or players) with a drug problem doesn't violate the Ten Commandments.

"I don't know why we mealy-mouth around about it," Florida coach Chaley Pell said. "Drugs are a serious problem. We need to talk about it as openly as any other problem."

Bill Curry's professional career spanned a decade, so he can relate a number of stories about drugs in pro football. Curry is about to enter his third year as Georgia Tech coach, and now, he says, some of the same problems are present in the collegiate ranks.

"It's very serious," Curry said. "There are probably teams where nobody does it, but there are also teams where everybody does it. I think all coaches need to realize that it's getting out of hand."

Curry has a program at Tech that educates the players about the hazards of drug abuse. Trainers talk to the athletes about drug awareness and speakers from the FBI and the Georgia State Patrol are brought in to discuss drugs in terms of facts and figures. The program is just one facet of Tech's "Total Person Program," an overall improvement plan for the players which includes spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth.

As far as drug awareness goes, Curry said, "We're seeking more and better ways to let the players know what the dangers are. It's an ongoing educational process."

At UNC, there is a similar, if less ex-

tensive program than the one at Georgia Tech. The coaches, as well as visiting FBI agents, touch upon the same kinds of things that Curry emphasizes.

"We try to tell them that (drug abuse) is a problem and that it's a problem that they should steer clear of," coach Dick Crum said. "These things need to be brought to everyone's attention. I think every university tries to deal with it in its own way."

At the University of Nebraska, the dilemma is death with in a disciplinary fashion. Coach Tom Osborne has a standard rule that any player caught using drugs, even marijuana, is immediately dropped from the team.

So far, that situation has rarely arisen. "I think in the last nine years I've had about three cases like this," Osborne said.

Three cases where players have been caught, but who knows how many times members of Nebraska teams have used drugs undetected?

It seems that the concerns of some coaches about drug abuse are not limited to its harmful effects on the individuals involved. Perhaps unfortunately, the negative publicity that such revelations would bring to the school are an important consideration at colleges. Don Nehlen, the coach at West Virginia, also bans from further play anyone who is known to use drugs. His reasoning?

"I try to explain to our kids," Nehlen said, "that if any guy on our team gets caught selling dope or smoking marijuana, it would just completely annihilate our football program. It would make every kid on our team look like a drug addict. So we try to talk about it, bring it into the open, and hope and pray they don't do it."

Texas A&M coach Jackie Sherrill questions the value of drug programs that attempt to help a player once he has become addicted. It is impossible, he says, to change an individual after he has turned 18.

"If he's involved (in drugs) when he comes onto campus, and he's the type that's motivated by it, then he's going to be involved," Sherrill said. "You're dealing with emotional instability. The ones who have that problem are the ones that had the problem when they were growing up."

Sherrill may be overly cynical. Most people directly involved with drug abusers are more optimistic about rehabilitation. The growing number of NFL players who are being aided through various programs is evidence that, while not everyone can be cured, many can certainly be helped.

But that day is far from being around the corner. Said Curry: "I think we all have a long way to go in learning how to deal with this thing."

Pitching key to pennants as season winds down

By S.L. PRICE

The rise in the American League of the Milwaukee Brewers and the California Angels — two teams that are sitting in or around first place by virtue of clubbing their opponents into submission with an arsenal of big bats — points up the surprising lack of solid pitching in the American League.

In this, the most exciting and best season of baseball since 1975, 10-6 games come as no surprise and the sight of a pitcher going the distance is as rare as Jim Palmer in boxer shorts.

The Brewers boast a lineup strong enough that by season's end four hitters could have more than 30 home runs. Numbers: shortstop Robin Yount, a nine-year veteran at 26, 23 homers, 87 RBI, .329; Cecil Cooper, the most underrated first-baseman in baseball, 24 home runs, 90 RBI, .315; outfielders Gorman Thomas, with a major league leading 34 home runs, 94 RBI, .265, and Ben Oglivie, with 25 homers and 81 RBI, even while mired in a .237 batting slump.

Meanwhile, over in the AL West, the Angels, led by Reggie Jackson (31, 80, .280), first baseman Rod Carew (.315), third baseman Doug DeCinces (25, 83, .301), and centerfielder Fred Lynn (18, 75, .292) are challenging the Kansas City Royals' monopoly on that division's crown with only marginal hurling.

In fact, both California and Milwaukee could be the first division champs with staff ERAs of over 4.00 since the '79 Angels. The Brewers have just two solid starters in Pete Vuckovich and Jim Slaton, and last years MVP and Cy Young winner in stopper Rollie Fingers. In California, both Geoff Zahn and Steve Renko are having good years, but the Angels need one good short relief man to close the

door on any late-inning rallies. Again, both Milwaukee and California have the firepower to propel them into the World Series, but don't bet on it; neither one will be there come October. Pitching will be the deciding factor.

In the AL East, Earl Weaver and the best pitching staff in the American League will conjure the Baltimore Orioles into first by the end of September. Jim Palmer has not been beaten in his last fifteen starts, Mike Flanagan and Scott McGregor are obviously better than their .500 records indicate, and stopper Tippy Martinez is the best kept secret in the East. The Birds are rolling: they've won eight of their last nine games and first baseman Eddie Murray's bat is, after a slow start, finally heating up.

And the O's will be playing Kansas City for the American League championship. The Royals will slowly outdistance the Angels, again because of pitching. Larry Gura is having a fine (15-8) year and Dan Quisenberry is simply the best reliever in the American League. Dennis Leonard is finally healthy and a revitalized Vida Blue, along with rookie Bud Black, round out a shaky-but-better-than-California staff.

In the National League, where the power pitcher is still the dominant species, there are more strikeouts and less hits given up per inning. There should be no talk about the American League having better hitting than the National League; the AL just lacks good staff by staff pitching and the hitters have a field day all season long. The batting averages are consistently lower in the NL because the pitching is better, pure and simple.

Despite the amazing job done by 39-year-old Steve Carlton (16-9, 3.56) and Mike Schmidt's resurgence — 17 home runs since the all-Star break — the future lies in the Cards, the St. Louis Cards. Rookie-of-the-year candidate Willie McGee and speedster Lonnie Smith have both picked up the slack from George Hendrick

and Keith Hernandez, who are both having a sub-par year. Forty-three-year-old Jim Kaat (5-2, 3.16), Joaquin Andujar (9-10, 2.88), and Bob Forsch (12-7, 3.71) anchor the staff that fireball reliever Bruce Sutter (28 saves) brings safely into port; if Hendrick and Hernandez can turn on the power, the Cardinals could fly away with it all by the end of September. The Pirates are still a year or two away and the Expos just don't have the clubhouse chemistry, although they do have the best pitching staff in the NL East, to put it all together and make a serious bid for the title.

In the West, the Braves have waited a long time. They're going to wait at least a year longer. Sorry, fans, but the Braves will not hold out much longer against the best pitching staff in baseball. Fernando Valenzuela (17-9, 2.80), Bob Welch (15-8, 3.04), Jerry Reuss (12-10, 3.39), and stopper Steve Howe (6-2, 2.19, 11 saves) just pitch to prove the assembly-line effectiveness of the LA farm system. Garvey's hot, Dusty Baker's hot, and Pedro Guerrero is the best young outfielder in baseball. Dale Murphy will grab MVP honors and Bob Horner has finally come into his own as team captain. But Atlanta only has one game's worth of quality pitching, with Phil Niekro (12-3, 3.68) starting, Steve Bedrosian (5-6, 2.07) coming in middle relief, and Gene Garber (6-6, 2.65, 21 saves) cruising in to shut things down. Rick Camp and Bob Walk are marginal at best; the Braves are two more solid starters away from consistent contention.

AL Rookie of the Year: Minnesota's Kent Hrbek (19 Hrs, 73 RBI, .307) has been the only bright spot in an otherwise dismal year for the Twins.

AL Cy Young: Seattle's Bill Caudill (11-6, 2.14, 22 saves) has given up just 43 hits in 73 innings pitched. 'Nuff said.

NL Cy Young: Fernando.

AL MVP: Milwaukee's Robin Yount is the best all-around shortstop in baseball. He does everything well.

NL MVP: If Dale Murphy (31 HRs, 93 RBI, .292) doesn't get top honors this year, it would be nothing short of highway robbery. Without him, the Braves would be helpless.

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BASEBALL STANDINGS

As of Sunday afternoon

National League				
East				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
St. Louis	73	54	.575	—
Philadelphia	71	57	.555	2½
Pittsburgh	68	61	.527	6
Montreal	65	61	.527	6
Chicago	57	73	.438	17½
New York	50	77	.394	23
West				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Los Angeles	72	57	.558	—
Atlanta	71	57	.555	½
San Diego	66	63	.512	6
San Francisco	65	65	.500	7½
Houston	61	68	.473	11
Cincinnati	50	79	.388	22
American League				
East				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Milwaukee	75	52	.591	—
Boston	70	58	.547	5½
Baltimore	69	58	.543	6
Detroit	64	62	.508	10½
New York	64	63	.504	11
Cleveland	61	63	.492	12½
Toronto	61	69	.469	15½
West				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Kansas City	75	54	.581	—
California	74	55	.574	1
Chicago	68	61	.520	8
Seattle	60	67	.472	14
Oakland	58	72	.446	17½
Texas	50	77	.394	24
Minnesota	46	82	.359	28½

AP Football Poll

AP Football Poll	
Team (1st-place votes)	1981 Record Points
1. Pittsburgh (36)	11-1-0 1,092
2. Washington (15)	10-2-0 1,064
3. Alabama (3)	9-2-1 966
4. Nebraska (2)	9-3-0 949
5. North Carolina (2)	10-2-0 863
6. Southern Methodist	10-1-0 743
7. Georgia	10-2-0 698
8. Penn State	10-2-0 682
9. Oklahoma	7-4-1 638
10. Southern Cal	9-3-0 624
11. Clemson (1)	12-0-0 561
12. Michigan	9-3-0 552
13. Arkansas	8-4-0 471
14. Ohio State	9-3-0 423
15. Miami (Fla.)	9-2-0 396
16. Florida	7-5-0 357
17. Texas	10-1-1 236
18. Notre Dame	5-6-0 157
19. Arizona State	9-2-0 155
20. UCLA	7-4-1 150