

# SPORTS

## Fame, fortune, felony: The brief history of profes- sional sports criminals ...

By Chris Lafuria  
sports commentary

Pro athlete. Superhero. Role model. Well-behaved. If you believe that these words are synonymous, skip over this article. If you proceed to analyze this article, you may stumble upon the true history of criminal sports figures.

The naivete of the American public will be exposed when the list of troubled professional athletes is uncovered. My intention isn't to slander or to directly attack the characters of professional sports; however, I believe that the truth behind the temptations and deceit revealed by these proficient athletes should be discovered by the public.

The NFL is packed with colossal beasts whose intimidating statures are utilized on the field as well as off the field. In many instances, a football player can use his physique and fame to gain advantage in many compromising situations. Drugs, sex and violence are top among the list of crimes committed by pro football players.

Domestic violence and sexual abuse is a problem that has affected the United States for years. According to women's advocacy programs, every nine seconds in the U.S. a woman or wife is beaten by a male or husband. The NFL has become somewhat familiar with domestic abuse.

The likes of former Seattle Seahawk sack-master Cortez Kennedy, Baltimore Ravens all-pro linebacker Ray Lewis, former Houston Oilers QB Warren Moon, Buffalo Bills wideout Eric Moulds, former Vikings defensive genius John Randle and New York Giants defensive back Tito Wooten have all been arrested for domestic violence.

In addition, Denver Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer has been arrested four times for sexual abuse.

Many pro-athletes have found themselves in trouble with the law in cases involving drugs and alcohol. Former NBA stars Charles Oakley and Shawn Kemp have repeatedly been surrounded by a quandary dealing with drugs. While playing with the Toronto Raptors, Oakley stated, "You got guys out there playing high every night. You got 60 percent of your league on marijuana. What can you do?"

In the NFL, many players have been busted for illegal possessions. Oakland Raiders defensive tackle Warren Sapp was arrested for marijuana possession. Buffalo Bills star defensive was convicted of a DUI and also for refusing to comply with a blood test. Michael Irvin, a professional who is on top of the list for Hall of Fame candidates, was arrested for marijuana and cocaine possession. This shows how pertinent and customary drugs are to pro sports.

Other selections of violence and misbehavior have affected the lives of many athletes. Who can forget this past summer when Kobe Bryant was arrested for a suspicion of rape surfaced? Other examples include former MLB slugger Jose Canseco was arrested in tandem with his brother for beating up two men in a club. Former Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Yancey Thigpen was charged three times with armed robbery. Former NBA forward Scottie Pippen, 76-er star Allen Iverson, former NBA loudmouth Sir Charles Barkley and former NFL wide receiver Andre Rison have all been arrested for illegal weapon charges.

One of the most surprising criminal pasts belongs to an NFL star whose recent resurgence with the New England Patriots. Corey Dillon has had a history of trouble. Some of the charges he has faced includes a DUI, possessing stolen property, criminal trespassing, reckless endangerment, intent to sell illegal drugs, twice obstructing a public servant, resisting arrest, theft, assault, and malicious mischief. Fortunately, Corey Dillon has turned around to lead a rushing attack on one of the NFL's most productive offenses.

Many times, power becomes corrupt. Along with fame comes the same fraudulence that is often hidden to protect an athlete's character.

My purpose is to reveal the abundance of the criminal mischief in professional sports. Disobedience and mischief aren't directly synonymous with professional sports, but there are a solid few individuals who have proven that a position of fame can lead to bad behaviors.

Each respected league should throw a red flag when such malicious behavior is shown. Also, a great deal of misbehaviors can be avoided if the public was more aware of these conducts. An image is a terrible thing to have tarnished. Revealing misbehaviors and harsher penalties can prevent an

## Hockey team skates for playoff birth

By Samantha Cibula  
sports co-editor

A perfect winter for some entails enjoying winter sports including a much anticipated hockey season. A time for NHL fans to seek revenge on teams who last knocked their team out of the Stanley Cup. However, this winter isn't like winters of the past. The snow on the ground isn't as abundant as some would hope and hockey arenas around the country aren't being filled with our favorite NHL teams.

What is one to do without NHL games filling the flat screen TV this winter? For some fans, taking their mind off NHL has meant following college hockey more closely. We don't have a varsity hockey team to follow but instead we have a dedicated club team carrying the talents and dedication of a varsity team.

The Behrend men are on the brink of what could be a big season. A disappointing season last year left the men with only a pair of wins. This year the team came to practice knowing changes would be made in order to put their name at the top of their division. Head Coach Derrick Gates took matters into his own hands by changing the way the team practiced.

"Coach Gates has us more disciplined this year and our practices focus more on our endurance," said junior Joe Persang. "This year we are outskating other teams."

The perks of team changes in practices and attitude are seen in the 6-6-2 record. Last year their record placed them last in their division. This year

the team is looking to win their division.

"Our progress from last season is 110 percent," said Head Coach Gates.

A division win will give the blue and white a playoff birth. The men face Edinboro Saturday at 8:15 p.m. at the Igloo in a game that could change their season. If the men win, they will be setup for a playoff birth, but a loss will potentially take them out of playoff contention.

"We will have to see about playoffs," said Head Coach Gates "I think we can do it, but its up to the guys."

The team faced Edinboro early in the season but came up short of a win in a 5-3 game.

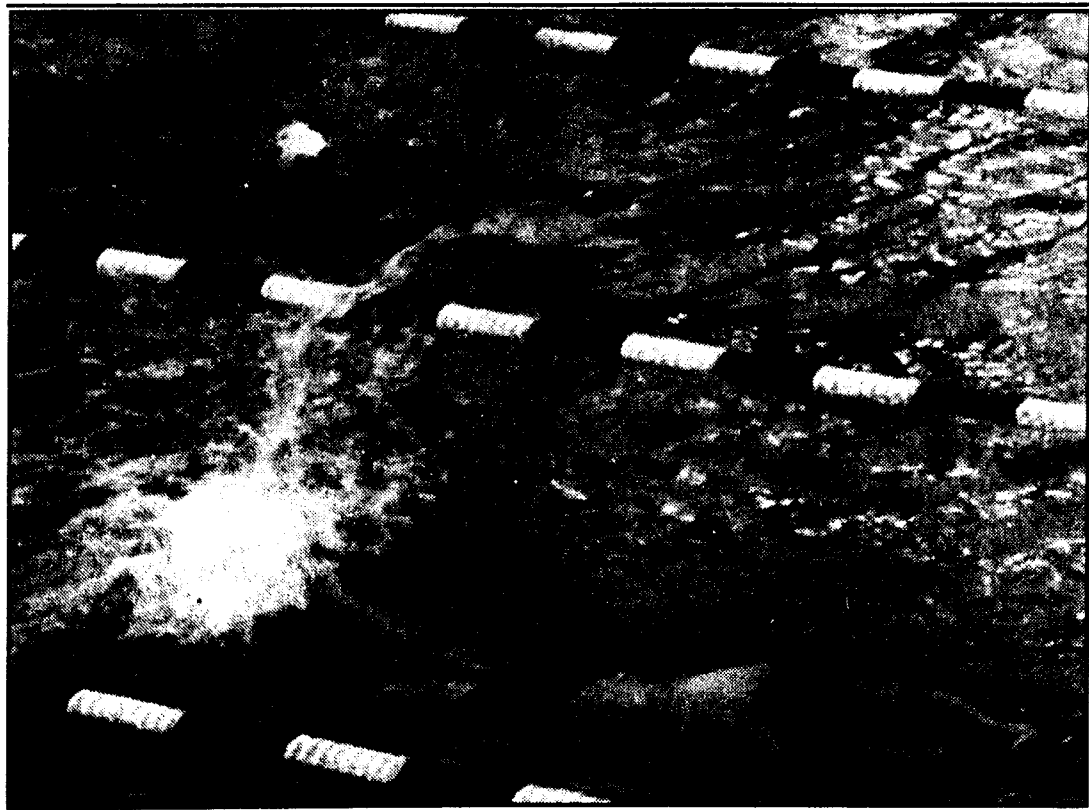
"Going into this game we haven't made many adjustments from our last meeting," said Head Coach Gates. "We just come to each practice and train harder, our attitude and condition have changed but our game is still the same."

A playoff birth will begin to ice the cake on a cutting edge season. A season that was the host of 11 p.m. to midnight practices and a \$500 fee out of each players pocket.

Unlike varsity sports, club teams are responsible for funding the bulk of their season. This includes practice time, buses, referees, equipment, meal money and more.

Although the NHL is on strike, the blue and white are joining college teams around the nation who are bound to let their talents be known. With playoffs on their mind the Lion's hit the ice Saturday with one common goal; and that is a victory.

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DAN SNEDDEN/BEHREND BEACON

After an intense training trip to Orlando the swim team prepares for weekend competitions and start to prepare for championships

## Swimmers focus in Florida

By Samantha Cibula  
sports co-editor

The start of the New Year for the men and women's swim teams meant heading to Orlando. Although the swimmers experienced nice climate changes Jan. 1-8, they didn't experience much sand castle building.

"We weren't close to a beach like we were last year but because of that we were able to do more when we weren't swimming," said sophomore Whitney Marshall.

The swim team originally planned to go to Vero Beach Florida but due to hurricane damages, the swim team had to change their plans. The blue and white trained at the Orlando YMCA Aquatics Center where they shared pool time with division II, III and I schools.

The training schedule was also different than what the team usually experiences. Coaches Jen Slack and Joe Tristan kept the team busy with five hours of training a day.

"We put in a lot of hard work," said junior captain Steve Schleicher. "We trained twice a day for two hours in the pool and then an hour of dry land."

A more intense training schedule was topped off with long course practices once a day. Typically the team practices in a 25-yard pool, but experienced training in a 50-meter pool.

"Training in a 50-meter pool is really different than the standard 25-yard pool," said sophomore Alexis Puhala. "The change made practices more difficult, but all the work we put in will payoff when it comes time for championships in February."

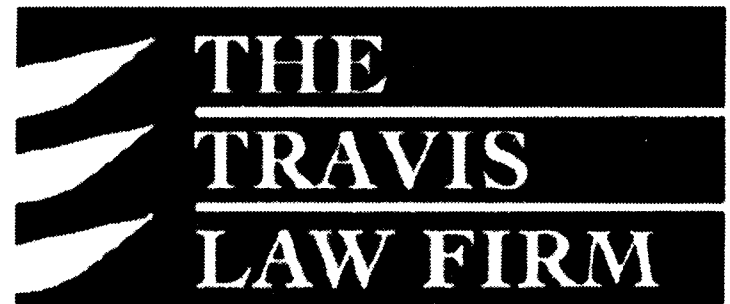
The intensity and mix of long and short course practices was doable because the team faced no outside distractions and were able to focus 100 percent on training.

"The intensity the team performed at was great," said Coach Slack. "The team did an excellent job training, I think we got the best results yet training-wise this trip."

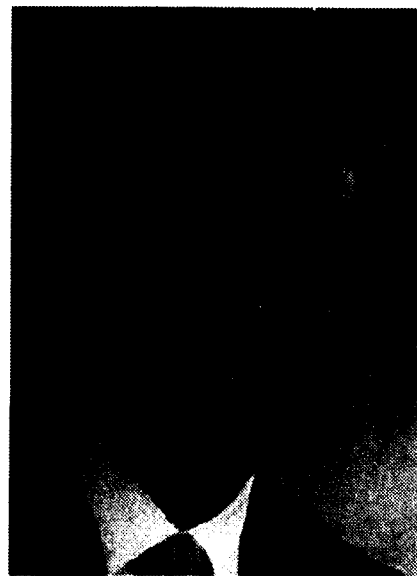
A trip to Universal Studios was mixed into the training trip.

"We went to Universal Studios and were asked to participate in the holiday parade," said freshman Amanda Wiest. "Because we participated in the parade, we got passes to the rides so we didn't have to wait in line."

Time in Florida gave the swim team a break from Erie and a chance to focus completely on training. Back at Behrend, the men and women will jump right back into competition Friday at Mount Union and then Saturday against Edinboro at home. The team hasn't competed since Dec. 4.



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