Martin Dickau

The USFL’s breakable laws

When the United States Football League was first conceived and presented to the public, a few rules governing the signing of players were established. Many of us still remember the “team salary cap,” and the non- signing players who still had college eligibility remaining. The New Jersey Generals’ acquisition of Herschel Walker alone violated both “includ” restrictions and started an avalanche of ridiculous high salary offers to college players.

The USFL’s hierarchy realized that the public would not take too kindly these million-dollar deals, and some lame excuses about threatened suits by Walker’s lawyer, building up the talent pool, and adding credibility to the league started to trickle into the media. The public was still not satisfied, and the league leaders tried to come up with a more convincing course of action.

Most professional sports leagues have guidelines governing who may be drafted or signed. The National Football League requires that a player have either completed his college eligibility, graduated from college, or gone to college for five years. No exceptions. Other sports, notably basketball and hockey, have minimum ages which allow player entry immediately after high school.

The USFL has apparently decided that the American sports public is not only firm in its book, but gallbladder, as well. The NFL News reported that the league proposed new rules which are very similar to those of the NFL, with one major, and unpallatable, difference. The USFL will allow the criteria to be waived in “extenuating circumstances.”

As “extenuating circumstance” that immediately comes to mind is the player’s being good enough to be drafted. Another might be the USFL’s desire to lure potential talent away from the NFL. The rule is begging to be broken, and few can believe that it will not be.

The question then is why have such guidelines at all. If the USFL thinks that the only way to gain credibility as a professional league and fill the stadiums is to dip into the college ranks, there is no reason for it not to do so. The league should simply allow drafting and signing of players with college eligibility remaining and stop trying to hide its intentions and dupe the fans.

$21.00* per day
J2000 or similar group B car

GUARANTEED RATES WITH UNLIMITED MILEAGE

To Reserve A Car Call NOW!

**AIR CONDITIONING INCLUDED**