



## Toledo games were fixed, FBI says

Football player recruited point shavers; Macomb bettor is target but denies role

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To win sports bets, a Macomb County gambler wined and dined University of Toledo athletes at Detroit restaurants, took them gambling at Greektown Casino and gave them cash, groceries and cell phones, federal agents say.

All the athletes had to do was play in a way that helped the gambler beat the bookies' point spread.

A criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Detroit said Toledo running back Harvey (Scooter) McDougle Jr., 22, recruited football and basketball players to participate in the scheme, which was spearheaded by a Sterling Heights gambler identified as "Gary."

Gary Manni, reached by phone Friday at King Cole Foods, a grocery store in Detroit, acknowledged that he's the Gary in the complaint but denied bribing McDougle or anyone else to shave points.

Manni said he's a professional gambler but added, "I didn't bribe nobody," then hung up the phone.

His lawyer, Neil Fink of Birmingham, declined to comment.

Manni has not been charged in the case and said the FBI hasn't contacted him.

The complaint, made public Friday, says Gary, McDougle and others bribed Toledo athletes to influence the final scores of specific games so Gary and the others could place winning bets with illegal sports bookmakers.

There was no indication in the complaint that players purposely lost any games, but that they controlled the final scores to enable Gary to win his bets against the point spreads.

One player was offered \$10,000 to sit out a football game, the complaint said. McDougle told the FBI that he received a car, telephone and other things of value from Gary, but insisted that he never changed the way he played to affect the outcome of games, the complaint said.

One of the games McDougle allegedly helped fix was the 2005 GMAC Bowl against the University of Texas-EI Paso, which Toledo won, 45-13, the complaint said. McDougle allegedly asked Gary to bet \$2,000 for him on the game. McDougle didn't play because he was recovering from major knee surgery.

FBI agents arrested him Friday morning and brought him to Detroit. McDougle, dressed in a gray heavy cotton Rockets sweatshirt and pants, then appeared in court alone before Magistrate Judge Virginia Morgan.

She advised him of the charges, set a preliminary examination for April 20 and released him on a \$10,000 unsecured bond.

Morgan warned McDougle that anything he said about the case -- including to FBI agents -- could be used against him. Deputy Federal Defender James Gerometta, his temporary court-appointed lawyer, declined to comment.

### He's suspended from team

McDougle is charged with conspiring to bribe to affect the outcome of a sporting event, which carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine upon conviction.

No other players were identified in the complaint, so it's unclear how many players or other Toledo teams were involved, or whether teams from other schools are being investigated.

A university spokesman told reporters on the Toledo campus Friday that McDougle, a senior, has been suspended from the team.

"We will evaluate the allegations in the complaint and will fully comply with federal authorities in their investigation," said Tobin J. Klinger, senior director of university communications.

Former teammates were shocked by the news.

"That does not sound like the Scooter I know," said Ted Rath of Monroe, a senior linebacker on last year's team.

"If you're part of the University of Toledo football team, you're not a person who would accept money like that," Rath added. "You have to be a type of young man that has morals and is not going to go that route."

He also said point shaving goes against everything that Rockets coach Tom Amstutz preaches. "He runs a clean program," Rath said. "He preaches daily about becoming better football players and better men."

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Morris, who handles organized crime investigations, wouldn't comment on the case.

### **What FBI says about scheme**

The scheme is believed to have begun in fall 2003, according to an affidavit written by FBI Agent Brian Max.

It said the FBI intercepted calls to and from Gary's home from November 2005 to December 2006 in hopes of finding out the extent of his illegal gambling and sports bribery operations and who was involved. During one intercepted call, agents learned that Gary and others were bribing Toledo players, Max said in the affidavit.

The complaint shows Gary met the players through an associate's Toledo cell phone store, where university athletes shopped. Gary eventually was introduced to a Rockets football player, who introduced Gary to other athletes.

On Dec. 2, 2005, FBI agents spotted Gary with McDougle and other Toledo players at a Detroit restaurant before they headed to the VIP area of the Greektown Casino, Max said.

After evaluating the players, Gary would ask them to participate in a point-shaving scheme in exchange for cash and gifts, the affidavit said. He asked players he could trust to recruit other athletes for the scheme, Max said.

Players who agreed to participate were told about the betting line -- the point spread for a particular game -- the affidavit said.

"Once Gary and the players knew the line, they would decide if they could beat the spread," the complaint said. "If they were picked as an underdog by 10 points, they would decide if they could beat the 10-point spread. If they were picked as a favorite by a certain number of points, the players would decide if they would most likely win by that much.

"Once Gary consulted the players, he would decide how he wanted them to play the game to affect the outcome," the affidavit said.

On Nov. 5, 2005, the FBI intercepted a call in which Gary told someone who was then a Toledo basketball player that McDougle "had taken care of" certain players on the football team who would be helping Gary to influence that day's game, the affidavit stated.

The next month, the FBI intercepted another call in which McDougle told Gary that he would contact other football players to see whether he and Gary would make some money on the GMAC Bowl against Texas-El Paso, Max said.

In another call that month, McDougle asked Gary to place a \$2,000 bet for him on the game, Max wrote. During the call, Gary allegedly told McDougle that another player would be helping out.

During an interview with the FBI on Dec. 14, 2005, McDougle admitted knowing Gary and that Gary regularly gambled on Toledo football and basketball games, the agent said.

McDougle told the FBI that another Toledo football player had introduced him to Gary. McDougle said he provided Gary with information about Toledo games so Gary could bet on

them, Max said in the affidavit. McDougle said he also was aware that Gary had offered other teammates up to \$10,000 to sit out games.

McDougle admitted introducing Gary to other players so Gary could recruit them for the scheme, the affidavit said.

### **A problem in college athletics**

The scandal is nothing new in college athletics. On Thursday, a former Arizona State student pleaded guilty in Phoenix to federal charges that he conspired to bribe two Arizona State basketball players to miss shots so that he and three other gamblers could beat the projected point spreads on four games in 1994. He faces the same penalty as McDougle.

The allegations came as no surprise to Justin Wolfers, a University of Pennsylvania economist, who published a research paper last year that concluded point shaving was a factor in about 500 of the 40,000 NCAA basketball games played from 1989 to 2006.

He said it usually occurs with strongly favored teams whose players, though unwilling to throw a game, might be willing to accept bribes to limit the number of points they score to help gamblers win on the point spread.

He said the spread could be controlled by one or two players on a basketball team and by the quarterback, running backs or coach on a football team.

"If you're a 12-point favorite and someone says, just win by 10 points, it's a win-win for both the corrupt athlete and the gambler," Wolfers said. "The player isn't giving up anything he cares about, which is winning the game."

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