

# Law School Addresses Crisis in Sports Representation

*Prof. Frank Remington  
Ed Garvey*

The University of Wisconsin Law School, in conjunction with Sports Seminars, Inc. will host the first national Institute for the Representation of Athletes (IFRA) from August 11-17 in Madison.

The Institute is the culmination of a three-year joint effort by Ed Garvey and Frank Remington to address the crisis in sports representation. Garvey, a lecturer in sports law at the Law School, is the former Executive Director of the National Football League Players Association, as well as a past Deputy Attorney General for the State of Wisconsin. Remington, Jackson Professor of Law, is the immediate past chair of the NCAA Infractions Committee and a former faculty representative to the Big Ten Conference.

The primary goal of the Institute is to train a pool of competent professionals who will provide qualified, ethical, and reasonably priced representation to athletes. The Institute will address the increasingly prevalent problem of unscrupulous, incompetent representation, a problem exemplified by the stories emanating from the federal trial of sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom on racketeering and fraud in Chicago.

The University of Wisconsin Law School has supported the planning of the Institute program with a \$10,000 grant from the Bruce Thomas Legal Ethics Fund. "Because so many sports representatives are attorneys, the problems in the sports world ultimately impact upon professional ethics," says Frank Remington. "The grant is both logical and timely."

The focus of the Institute may be summarized in three words: prevention through education. Through a dual emphasis on training a corps of competent sports representatives and educating the student athletes, the Institute will seek to eliminate the sports agency problem at its source, thus preventing the athletes and academic institutions from suffering future harm.

Those who attend the Institute in August will face an intensive four day presentation of the material relevant to the prospective sports representative. At the end of the four days, an examination will be administered; only those who successfully complete the exam will be certi-



fied to participate in subsequent elements of the program.

"Our plan is simple," says Frank Remington. "We have developed a three-phase program which involves the major actors in sports representation: prospective agents, student athletes, and officials from intercollegiate athletics.

"First," Remington continues, "the Institute will focus on training a group of ethically aware, qualified representatives. Participants will receive instruction in the law and economics of sports, the regulation of intercollegiate athletics, the role of the contract representative, and a practicum in contract negotiation. The last two days of the Institute will be targeted at collegiate athletic officials, to familiarize them with the techniques to be used in securing responsible representation and to create a campus resource for the athletes to consult. Second, through a series of on-campus seminars, we will educate the student athlete in the realities of entering professional sports and selecting a sports representative. Third, we will develop a 'day-on-campus' program, to facilitate an open forum through which the student athlete may meet and interview prospective agents."

The second phase of the comprehensive program—the student athlete seminar—was successfully tested through a presentation to the Wisconsin football team in April, 1988. Through the cooperation of coach Don Morton and the UW Athletic Department, Garvey, Remington, Clarence Underwood, Deputy Commissioner of the Big Ten, and Alan Page, member of the pro football Hall of Fame



and Assistant Attorney General for the State of Minnesota spoke to the athletes on NCAA regulations, professional sports, and the process of selecting an agent.

Statistics reveal that the odds against a professional sports career are overwhelming—even for outstanding athletes—yet surveys indicate that the majority of student athletes still believe it is attainable. "The seminar program is valuable to them, even if a pro career is not in their future, because they learn how to effectively choose a professional representative," maintains Coach Morton.

"The program will not work without the cooperation of coaches like Don Morton," Garvey adds. "We must reach and educate the athlete before he retains his first representative. With the average professional career approximately four years, the first contract they sign might very well be their last."

"We are confident we have created a comprehensive program which will directly address the recurring scandals in sports representation," Garvey emphasizes. "The faculty of the Institute will be comprised of experts from professional sports, intercollegiate athletics, sports representation, economics, and labor law. The curriculum will provide the participant with the information and skills necessary to successfully represent athletes. Finally, we will promote the creation of an open atmosphere in which a student athlete may select his representative."

"All we need to make this work," concludes Garvey, "is enough people with the desire and commitment to become qualified, ethical sports representatives."