

Another former Husker arrested

■ **FOOTBALL:** Abdul Muhammad signed for a package that contained four one-pound bricks of marijuana

The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — A former Nebraska football player has been ordered to stand trial on charges of possessing marijuana with intent to deliver.

Abdul Muhammad, 23, is free on \$1,000 bail after his Jan. 23 arrest in Omaha. He was arrested at a mail store after signing for a

package that contained four one-pound bricks of marijuana.

Muhammad appeared Tuesday in Douglas County Court for a preliminary hearing. Judge John McGrath ruled that there is enough evidence to send the case to trial.

During the hearing, Police Officer John Newell said the package containing the drugs was addressed to "Darryl Gideon," and Muhammad signed for the package using that name.

Muhammad indicated to officers that he was picking the package up for a friend, Newell said.

But when asked by police who Gideon was and where he lived, Muhammad could not answer.

"He said he didn't know," Newell said of Muhammad's response.

Muhammad declined to comment after the hearing. His lawyer, Karen Shanahan, said Muhammad will plead innocent to the charges in district court.

Muhammad was the leading receiver on Nebraska's 1994 national championship football team. He later was an undergraduate assistant coach at Nebraska.

Gloves: Norton has never boxed before

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bition in any sport is considered a professional and has rendered himself/herself ineligible to participate as an amateur."

Dallas tournament officials had not been informed of the ruling and did not comment. Messages left for Norton's attorney also were not returned.

The 6-foot-2, 245-pound Norton signed up Sunday for the super heavyweight novice division.

Norton, who at 30 is one of the oldest of the tournament's 350-plus contestants, was among four entrants in his class. He was to have fought a first-round bout Thursday or Friday with the finals being Saturday night.

Norton has never boxed before, save for some celebratory punches thrown on the football field. The

competition involves three one-minute rounds using 10-ounce gloves and protective headgear.

Two years ago, Norton reconciled a once-bitter relationship with his father, Ken Norton Sr., who beat Muhammad Ali in 1973 and briefly held the WBC's heavyweight crown in 1978.

Ross said he feared letting in Norton would open the door for other athletes while taking away opportunities from more deserving boxers. He compared it to basketball, where Dream Teams of NBA stars now compete for Olympic medals instead of amateurs.

"I'd hate to see this get out of hand," Ross said from the federation's Colorado Springs, Colo., headquarters. "Someone could get in the way of some 18-year-old and keep [us] from giving them a chance to achieve."

Coach: Rumors of Hill's dismissal ring true

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However, he and Penny Hardaway denied reports that one or both of them had gone directly to Gabriel and — as the team's highest-paid players — were responsible for the firing.

"Win, lose or draw it's always going to fall on myself, and it's going to fall on Horace. But we just have to take the heat," Hardaway said. "Whatever comes, comes. But I know it isn't my fault [and], it isn't Horace's fault the reason why this stuff is happening."

Rumors about Hill's dismissal had been swirling since NBC-TV reported Sunday that he would be fired after that afternoon's game in Chicago.

After Monday night's 124-110 loss at Charlotte, Gabriel left open the possibility that a change would be made.

Hill, who led the Magic to 50, 57 and 60 victories the past three seasons, received a three-year contract extension last season worth \$750,000 a year.

But with O'Neal now playing for the Los Angeles Lakers and injuries to key players like Hardaway and Nick Anderson preventing Hill from using his regular lineup for much of this season, the team struggled.

"Brian Hill has done a tremendous job in leading us through one of the most successful periods in Magic history," Gabriel said.

"However, at this time, with this particular team, it was the organization's feeling that in order to take the next step, a change in the leadership at the coaching level was needed."

Aubato, 106-228 as an NBA

coach, said while it was difficult to replace someone so close to him, he supported management's decision.

"We don't deal with kids with crewcuts ... like I did when I started [where] ... you tell them to dive through the wall and they do it," the interim coach said. "[Now], they tell you to do it."

Hill became the second coach in the team's history, replacing Matt Guokas on the day of the 1993 draft. He compiled a 191-104 record in three-plus seasons and earned playoff berths each year.

But even though Orlando won the Atlantic Division and reached the Eastern Conference finals the past two years, he couldn't shake a perception that he was only successful because the Magic had so much talent.

Houston swept Orlando in the 1995 NBA Finals. Critics also pointed to Magic's inability to win even one game in a first-round loss to Indiana in 1994 and last year's Eastern Conference finals against Chicago as examples of Hill's shortcomings.

Losing O'Neal to free agency figured to give Hill a chance to prove his critics wrong. But Hardaway missed 23 of the team's first 28 games and the team went 2-12 without the All-Star guard while backcourt mate Nick Anderson sidelined in December.

Between Jan. 1 and the All-Star break, Orlando was one of the most successful teams in the league. The Magic were an NBA-best 9-1 in the 10 games before the break but haven't won since.

Hill shrugged when asked why the players now felt they couldn't

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— Horace Grant
Orlando Magic Co-captain

play for him.

"That's the puzzling part for everybody, including myself. How we could come back and everything fall apart so quickly. ... Sometimes players just need to hear another voice. It might be saying the same thing, but at least it's different."

"I don't think we lost confidence," Grant said. "... We both weren't getting it done. You have to take your hat off to Brian. He gave us some great years. ... I feel bad for him as a person and his family."

The dismissal is the sixth coaching change in the league since the start of the season. The others were in Denver, Phoenix, San Antonio, Vancouver and Washington.

Gabriel did not rule out making another change before the end of the season. He said the team, which also plans to offer Hill an unspecified position within the organization, will weigh its options before deciding when a permanent replacement will be hired.

The general manager declined to accept questions about possible candidates.

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