

SPORTS

SPREWELL BANISHMENT REVIEWED

Some people, including many blacks, think the one-year suspension of Latrell Sprewell was suspiciously tough.

Would the three-time All-Star have received as long a suspension if he was white? Or what if the coach he attacked was black?

The racial angle is being injected into the debate over the NBA's longest non-drug suspension, and Sprewell's agent added to the controversy Sunday.

Appearing on ABC's "This Week," agent Arn Tellem said: "I think when you look at it, I don't think the issue of race can be ignored. I think that's the best way to answer. I think it must be looked into."

"You have a white coach who has a history of having problems with players in the NBA. Obviously, the players that he's had problems with are black players."

However, Billy Hunter, executive director of the NBA Players Association, said, "I don't think that that's the issue at all."

"I think what you've got is a league that's predominantly black and an administration that's predominantly white," he said on NBC's "Meet The Press."

"If there are individuals who wish to read the race card or race issue into it, they can do that, but I haven't found any evidence of that. What I've found is that, in this instance,



P.J. Carlesimo

there's been a rush to judgment. I think the league has overreacted," said Hunter, who is black.

Sprewell received a one-year suspension Thursday, a few hours after the Golden State Warriors terminated the final three years of his four-year, \$32 million contract for attacking coach P.J. Carlesimo at practice last Monday.

Witnesses said he grabbed Carlesimo in a choke hold and threatened to kill him. About 15 minutes later, Sprewell returned to practice and confronted the coach again before being pulled away.

The players' union has filed grievances against the NBA and the Warriors, arguing that the penalty was excessive. The case will be heard by Fordham Law School Dean John



Latrell Sprewell

Feerick no earlier than Jan. 4.

Sprewell and Tellem have consulted with attorney Johnnie Cochran, who successfully defended O.J. Simpson on murder charges.

Sprewell is expected to make a statement Tuesday or Wednesday. Carlesimo did not return phone calls Sunday.

Commissioner David Stern and the Warriors were applauded by many, including several black NBA players, for meeting force with force and sending a message that the league would not tolerate what it called "premeditated assault."

"I think there was a public outcry, at least a concern in the public that things were sort of getting out of control, and I think the league had to demonstrate that they are in control,"

Hunter said.

"I think that the league is posturing because of the strong possibility that the current collective bargaining agreement was going to be blown up, and so I think that what they want to do is to send a message to the players that they're in control."

Tellem did not specifically say the confrontation between Sprewell and Carlesimo was a racial incident. But he pointed to other incidents involving the coach, including divisive splits last season with black players Rod Strickland and Isaiah Rider of the Portland Trail Blazers.

"I can say this," Tellem said. "(Carlesimo) has a highly confrontational style of communication and there has to be a level of mutual respect between player to coach, but also coach to player. And I don't think that occurred here."

"I think it's really an issue of fairness, first and foremost, regarding the penalty imposed," Tellem said. "It seemed like every day this week he was getting imposed with another penalty. It was almost like the 10 plagues."

"The second issue is what limits are there any limits on the behavior of coaches? How far can they go in treating players as far as highly confrontational, in-your-face challenging the players. At some point there has to be some limit on what a coach can do to a player."

Ducks vs. Falcons set for December 20

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) announced that the University of Oregon has accepted a bid to play in Las Vegas Bowl VI presented by Reno Air on December 20, 1997 at Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas.

Oregon will face the U. S. Air Force Academy in college football's first post-season bowl game.

"We are thrilled to have the University of Oregon in the Las Vegas Bowl," said Rossi Ralenkotter, LVCVA Vice President of Marketing. "We have selected two outstanding football teams in Oregon and Air Force, and we are excited about the prospects for December 20. This match-up will begin a new era of college football in Las Vegas," he added.

The match-up featuring Air Force and Oregon is the first under the new bowl format that matches a Western Athletic Conference team and an at-

large opponent. The payout for each participating team is \$800,000, the largest in Las Vegas Bowl history.

The eleven-member Las Vegas Bowl VI presented by Reno Air Selection Committee, made up of LVCVA executives, members of the Las Vegas Bowl VI working committee, representatives from major Las Vegas hotel/casino properties and major sponsors, and other business leaders, chose Oregon based on a number of criteria.

"The Las Vegas Bowl Selection Committee took into consideration many factors," said Roy Woolfer, Chairman of the Selection Committee. "Oregon has put together a solid season, and we believe they will attract many fans on December 20."

Las Vegas Bowl VI presented by Reno Air will be played in a favorable time slot on Saturday, December 20. The game will be televised on ESPN2 beginning at 3:00 p.m. (PST).

Rose Bowl going out in style

The final Rose Bowl under the exclusive Big Ten-Pacific-10 format will go out in style.

In its last game before joining the alliance, the Rose Bowl will pit Michigan, aiming for a national title, against Washington State, playing in the game for the first time since 1931.

"It's going out the way it should, with two great teams playing," Lloyd Carr, coach of the top-ranked and unbeaten Wolverines, said Wednesday during a press conference with Washington State coach Mike Price.

"You're looking at the most excited football coach in the country. My first experience in the Rose Bowl was in 1980 when I came here as an assistant to coach (Bo) Schembechler. I've always felt that the Rose Bowl ... was

the greatest experience a college football player could have."

Carr has been to the Rose Bowl seven times as an assistant. Price, in his ninth year as the Cougars' coach, is familiar with the game only from watching it on TV.

"The last time we were here ..." Price said, grinning and breaking off the sentence to drag out a leather football helmet. "It happens once every 67 years, whether you like it or not."

Michigan (11-0) could clinch the national championship with a victory over the Cougars (10-1).

"To be No. 1 is always gratifying because you work hard to get there," Carr said. "But along with being No. 1, there's a pressure, and it makes you a bigger target."

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NW Network founder named Johnson hired by Seahawks

The Seattle Seahawks have named Michael Johnson their Information Systems Director. Johnson comes to the Seahawks after serving as the founder and Senior Consultant for Common Sense Network Solutions in Seattle, a professional computer consulting service specializing in Microsoft and Compaq products. Prior to starting Common Sense Network Solutions, he worked as the Network Administrator for Providence Health Plans, also in Seattle.

Johnson graduated from South Dakota State University in 1990, with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering. He is a Microsoft Certified System Engineer and Trainer and a Compaq Accredited System Engineer. After graduation, he went to work at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Keyport, Wash-

ington, as a Systems Engineer. Johnson served also as a Lead Engineer, Test and Evaluation Program Manager, Periodics Program Manager, and Network Support Engineer at the Warfare Center.

In 1995, he was the Northwest Nominee for Black Engineer of the Year/Most Promising Engineer award. A native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he attended Central High School, Johnson and his wife, Linda, live in Renton.

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