

HOMOPHOBIA

Players fined for posts on Michael Sam

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MONTREAL — The Canadian Football League fined two players undisclosed amounts Tuesday for making inappropriate comments about openly gay football player Michael Sam.

Montreal Alouettes wide receiver Arland Bruce was fined for a crude posting on social media urging Sam to "submit to God."

Winnipeg Blue Bombers defensive tackle Bryant Turner Jr. was disciplined for a reported anti-homosexual tweet that has since been deleted.

"The comments made by these players are extremely disappointing and do not represent the CFL's views or the views of the vast majority of our players," CFL commissioner Mark Cohon said in a statement.

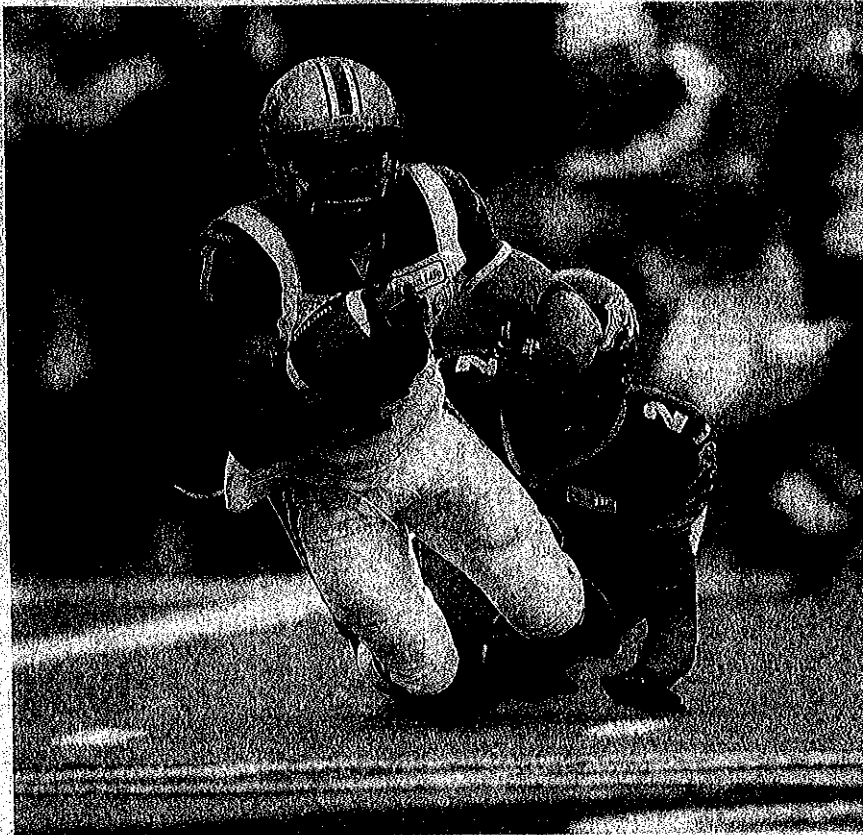
"The CFL is supportive of openly gay athletes in professional sports and we commend the courage shown by Michael Sam. During the off-season, we have been working with an organization that specializes in this subject and look forward to announcing a formal partnership with them in the near future."

Patrick Burke, co-founder of the You Can Play movement that hopes to eradicate anti-homosexual attitudes from sports, called Bruce's posting "disappointing."

Burke tweeted that his group "has been in contact with the CFL for months now and are in touch about this."

It is CFL policy not to disclose the amount that players are fined.

Several pro football players have come out in support of Sam since the University of Missouri defensive lineman made public that he is



Montreal Alouettes wide receiver Arland Bruce was fined an undisclosed amount Tuesday for a crude posting on social media urging gay NFL prospect Michael Sam to "submit to God."

FRANK GUNN/The Canadian Press

homosexual, but others have

questioned having an openly gay player in their leagues.

Bruce's posting, in which he misspelled the word gay, asked Sam if he was scared to touch women and added "you gaez man up and do some MFN pushups and get on your knees and submit to

God fully."

The 36-year-old Bruce, a three-time CFL all-star and two-time Grey Cup champion, has played 11 seasons with Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, B.C. and Montreal. The Olashe, Kan., native is going into his second season with the Alouettes.

Turner's tweet reportedly said: "Michael Sam locker room gonna come with complimentary robes."

Turner posted an apology in a series of tweets on Tuesday that read: "I would like to apologize for my inappropriate and insensitive tweet. My tweets are solely from me,

and I accept full responsibility for my actions. I am sincerely sorry for any shame that I may have caused the great city of Winnipeg, the CFL or the wonderful Blue Bomber organization."

Turner has played three seasons with the Bombers. He had seven sacks in 14

games in 2013.

The Alouettes released a statement saying they "unambiguously denounce the regrettable comments made by Arland Bruce III. The statements and feelings expressed by Bruce III are disappointing and do not reflect the opinions and values of the Montreal Alouettes Football Club."

In the same statement, Alouettes general manager and head coach Jim Popp said: "Our organization supports all types of diversity. Every individual is unique and free to make his or her own choices. We evaluate players, coaches and support staff based on their skill set and not by gender, colour, religion or sexual orientation. The Montreal Alouettes have a simple criteria to determine who can be a member of our organization. We seek individuals who will make a positive contribution to our team goals and to the Montreal community."

Popp later said that no decision has yet been made on whether Bruce will remain with the team. He did not rule out releasing the veteran. "As an organization, we'll discuss the matter thoroughly and decide what to do next," Popp said.

The Bombers' statement said team president Wade Miller and general manager Kyle Walters have spoken to Turner.

"It is unfortunate that Bryant made this comment through social media," it said. "Any athlete with the ability and determination has the right to succeed in their sport."

The 24-year-old Sam is expected to be picked in the early rounds of the NFL draft after a season in which he was a first-team all-American and was named MVP of his team.