

NFL Analyst Tony Dungy's 'Gay Player' Comments Put Him in Hot Water

NFL television analyst and former coach Tony Dungy backed off on Tuesday from comments he “wouldn’t want to deal with” the diversions arising from drafting the league’s first openly gay player, saying he was referring to media attention surrounding such a move.

Dungy, who was head coach of the Indianapolis Colts when they won the Super Bowl in 2007 and previously coached the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, had aroused criticism over the remark about defensive end Michael Sam, which was published in the *Tampa Bay Tribune* on Sunday.

“I wouldn’t have taken him,” Dungy told the paper. “Not because I don’t believe Michael Sam should have a chance to play, but I wouldn’t want to deal with all of it.”

“It’s not going to be totally smooth ... things will happen,” he added.

In a statement on the NBC sports website on Tuesday seeking to clarify his remarks, Dungy said the increased media attention, not Sam’s sexual orientation, would be a distraction for his teammates and team management.

“I was not asked whether I would have a problem having Michael Sam on my team. I would not,” the statement said.

“I do, however, believe that the media attention that comes with it will be a distraction. Unfortunately we are all seeing this play out now, and I feel badly that my remarks played a role in the distraction,” he wrote.

Sam, who was drafted in May by the St. Louis Rams in the

seventh round, could become the league's first openly gay player if he makes the team's 53-man regular-season roster this summer. He was the Southeastern Conference defensive player of the year and announced in February he is gay.

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