



The Interpreter

August 2007

Compliance Corner

Ex-Ball State coach's lawyer denies rules violations

Associated Press

MUNCIE, Ind. -- Former Ball State basketball coach Ronny Thompson's attorney denies that the coach committed any rules violations as alleged by the NCAA in a letter to university officials.

The NCAA asked Ball State officials to investigate new accusations surrounding the men's basketball program, including an allegation that the women's volleyball coach was fired for reporting suspected infractions.

The latest allegations were outlined in a letter from the NCAA dated two days before Thompson's resignation on July 13, following a 9-22 record in his one season at Ball State. School officials said then Thompson and his staff broke NCAA rules by attending voluntary off-season workouts in both 2006 and 2007, then lied about their involvement this May.

Washington-based attorney Matthew Keiser said Thompson, the son of former Georgetown coach John Thompson, did not resign over those self-reported secondary violations.

"No NCAA Division I coach would quit their job over a secondary violation," Keiser told The Associated Press on Monday night. "In fact, Ronny's letter to the university stated he had been subject to a racially hostile work environment and that they had made conditions so intolerable that he couldn't continue to work there."

Messages seeking comment regarding Keiser's remarks were left late Monday for Ball State athletics department officials.

School officials have said they were investigating the source of notes slipped under the office doors of Thompson and other staff members in June that included racial slurs along with "cheaters" and "liars."

The NCAA's letter seeks additional investigation by the school into other suspected violations involving Thompson and his staff. The Star Press first reported Monday on the letter, which it obtained under an open-records request to the school.

The allegations described by the NCAA include that:

- Thompson may have provided financial assistance to someone involved with a basketball player at another university whom the coach was recruiting to transfer to Ball State.
- The possible recruiting violation was brought to the attention of associate athletics director Pat Quinn, who tried to investigate before being reprimanded by athletic director Tom Collins for pursuing the matter.
- Thompson provided Nike shoes to athletes as a reward for improved grades, which could be considered an extra benefit.

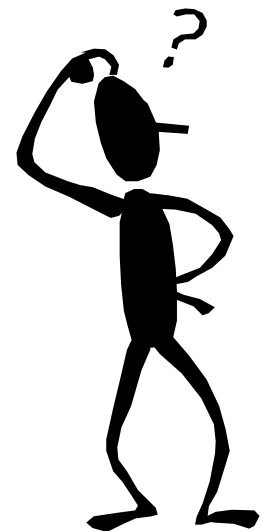
The letter also said the NCAA had been told that Ball State President Jo Ann Gora directed Collins to fire women's volleyball coach Randy Litchfield after 18 seasons on Thompson's request.

"It was reported that Thompson's request and Litchfield's termination were in response to NCAA violations by the men's basketball coaching staff that Litchfield's staff reported to the institution," the letter said.

Collins said the school has hired a Kansas City law firm to handle the NCAA's request and that he hoped the allegations would not hinder the search for a new basketball coach.

"We want to get to the bottom of it," he said. "And as quickly as we can get answers, we'll get them back to the NCAA." (ESPN Online, August 6, 2007)

What NCAA institution was put on probation in April of 2003 for major violations that included: extra benefits, recruiting, financial aid, employment, supplemental provision and a failure to monitor arising out of impermissible employment of numerous football and men's basketball student-athletes? *Answer on page 4*





Hot Topic: Recent Interpretation



On July 11, 2007 the NCAA released this official interpretation concerning the recent ban on text messaging and recruiting:

“The committee determined that it is not permissible for institutional staff members to use a service or software that converts electronic mail (e.g., e-mail) sent by an institutional staff member into a text message when received by the prospect.” [References: NCAA Bylaw 13.4.1.2 and NCAA Proposal No. 2006-40]



From the Interpretation File



Educational Column -NCAA Division I Bylaw 11.7 - Limitations on the Number and Duties of Coaches - Participation of Non-coaching Staff Members in Practice

NCAA Division I institutions should note that any individual who participates in any manner in the coaching of a sport in practice, games or organized activities directly related to that sport must be counted as a coach as stipulated in the limitations for that sport in NCAA Division I Bylaw 11.7. In addition to competitive equity, the intent of the coaching limitations is to restrict the actual coaching of student-athletes to those individuals who are identified as coaches. Other athletics department staff members, including managers and non-coaching staff members with sport-specific responsibilities (e.g., administrative assistants, directors of operations), do not have to be identified as coaches provided they do not engage in any on- or off-field coaching activities and are not involved in recruiting activities.

Managers

The former NCAA Interpretations Committee clarified during its February 11, 1993 meeting that it is not permissible to hire a manager to perform only on-court or on-field activities (e.g., ball shagging, bounce-passing drills, throw batting practice). Non-student managers may not perform any on-court or on-field duties that could be considered coaching without counting in the coaching limitations stipulated in Bylaw 11.7. Student managers may perform limited on-court or on-field activities provided they also perform traditional managerial functions (e.g., run clock at practice, laundry, fill water bottles). Finally, under no circumstances can a manager provide skill instruction without being counted in the coaching limitations.

Non-coaching Staff Members with Sport-Specific Responsibilities

These individuals may not perform any on-court or on-field duties that could be considered coaching (e.g., ball shagging, bounce-passing drills, throw batting practice) without counting in the coaching limitations stipulated in Bylaw 11. For example, if a director of softball operations throws batting practice, the director of softball operations must be counted toward the coaching limitations in Bylaw 11 even if no skill instruction is provided. While non-coaching staff members with sport-specific responsibilities should not be involved in any manner with practice activities, it is permissible for these individuals to observe practice without having to count toward the coaching limitations.

[References: Bylaw 11.7 (limitations on the number and duties of coaches), official interpretation (reference: 2/11/93, Item No. 9), and the 2004 Hot Topic #2]



In the News....



Clemson reports nine secondary violations to the NCAA

Associated Press

Clemson's ex-rowing coach Susie Lueck gave one of her athletes lodging and transportation -- one of nine NCAA secondary violations the school reported on Friday, July 27th.

One violation, dated March 27, detailed how a former student-athlete's father and "representative of athletics interest" provided free medical treatment to an athlete. Once the athlete came back to campus, the team's "head coach provided lodging and transportation to and from campus," according to the report.

Clemson announced Lueck's dismissal April 6, less than two weeks after the NCAA violation.

The rowing infraction was among the less serious Level II violations reported to the ACC.

Three of the nine violations were categorized as Level I, which get reported directly to the NCAA. The first, dated Feb. 9, was when an assistant coach provided transportation for a prospect's family from their home to Clemson for an official visit. The assistant was given a letter of reprimand and the prospect declared ineligible.

Another came when the school didn't submit a certified audit verifying football attendance before the NCAA deadline. A verified report was later sent on to the governing body.

The last Level I violation involved an assistant who made off-campus contact with a junior prospect. The assistant received a letter of reprimand and withheld from off-campus recruiting for two days as punishment.

Three other Level II violations involved head coaches receiving letters of admonishment.

One detailed how the school released the name of a prospective student-athlete before it had gotten a signed national letter of intent. The violation was dated Feb. 8, the day after football prospects can officially sign with their colleges.

Another, dated May 10, concerned a team receiving a per diem for breakfast while the team competing at an ACC tournament stayed at a hotel with complimentary full breakfasts. A review of the team's travel expenses uncovered a second instance of athletes receiving breakfast money despite an available hotel breakfast.

The third came when the ACC office found several team members had exceeded by one the maximum dates of competition. The coach thought a dual match as an extension of the tournament, the school said in its report.

Two other transgressions involved Clemson assistant coaches. In one case, the assistant attended an "impermissible non-scholastic activity" of a prospect. The coach was given a letter of reprimand.

The last was when an assistant coach being replaced by another coach did not return to campus as required before going back to recruiting activities. That coach received a letter of admonishment from the school.

(ESPN Online, July 27, 2007)

To avoid scandals, ACC performs background checks on refs

Associate Press

The Atlantic Coast Conference has performed background checks for the past year on game officials in three sports in an effort to prevent gambling scandals like the one faced by the NBA.

The dominant issue was the background checks, which conference commissioner John Swofford said were approved by university presidents two years ago and began last year on officials in football and men's and women's basketball.

"It's not a catchall, end-all by any means, but it does show a proactive way of looking at this and hopefully raising red flags if there are any to be raised," Swofford said.

About 75 of the roughly 225 officials in those sports will be investigated each year, and every official's background will be checked once in a four-year period, said Shane Lyons, the league's associate commissioner for compliance.

Swofford said the ACC and Big Ten are the only conferences to implement the checks, which cost \$135 apiece.

The ACC-ordered probes, performed by an independent agency, include an investigation into any ties to gambling on sports, officials' credit histories and criminal and driving records at the local, state and federal levels. The NCAA performs similar checks on officials working its basketball tournaments and bowl games, he said.

None of the officials investigated showed any warning signs that might have led to a removal from officiating games, Lyons said.

"There wasn't anything that we saw that concerned us, that stimulated our belief that we should take this route," Swofford said. "But this whole issue of gambling is so prevalent in our society. ... We just simply want to do everything we can proactively to have that kind of integrity in our officials as well as our student-athletes."

He said the ACC wants to avoid the gambling scandal faced by the NBA.

Former referee Tim Donaghy is under federal investigation for allegedly betting on games he officiated. Authorities are examining whether Donaghy made calls to affect the point spread in games on which he or associates had wagered thousands of dollars over the past two seasons.

The ACC "tried to educate [athletes] to stay away from any type of gambling activities," Lyons said. "With that, we talked about the officials as the next step to protect the integrity of the game." (ESPN Online, July 24, 2007)



Recruiting Calendar

Football August 1-31	Quiet
Men's Basketball August 1-31	Quiet
Women's Basketball August 1-31	Quiet
Baseball August 1-31	Cont/Eval
Softball August 1-31	Cont/Eval
Volleyball August 1-31	Contact
Track and Field August 1-11 August 12-31	Quiet Cont/Eval
All Other Sports August 1-31	Cont/Eval

Interpreter On-Line

The Interpreter can be found on-line at www.seminoles.com by clicking onto "NCAA Compliance", in the left column. The Interpreter icon is under the "What's New??" section. Past issues are archived here.

The Interpreter is published by the Compliance Staff. All comments should be directed to **The Interpreter**, P.O. Drawer 2195, Tallahassee, FL 32316, or by phone at (850) 644-0963.

Answer from page 1
The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville was put on probation for violations of several NCAA Bylaws in their football and men's basketball programs.

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REMINDER:

**The Ban on text messaging
began at midnight
August 1, 2007!**

