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NCAA Sanctions

Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden once said, “Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are; your reputation is merely what others think you are.” It appears that this coach was wise, beyond words. Apparently, he had insight to the scandals that would rock the world of NCAA athletes and coaches. Coaches of collegiate athletic programs should be role models for their players and a positive example for the university where they are employed. Far too many coaches today are falling short by leading a program that has engaged in unethical practices to gain superior student athletes.

In NCAA basketball, there is a major “clean up” task at hand. In the last three seasons, several major infractions have occurred that have rocked the coaching world. While a coach is the one that is viewed as the leader and one to be looked up to, several have fallen short of that role. Tim Floyd at Southern California was investigated for paying a friend of then player, O. J. Mayo, a sum of \$1, 000. John Calipari, who now coaches at Kentucky and is the highest paid coach in the sport, left Memphis University in the midst of a huge scandal that he created. Apparently, this coach was not about exhibiting the integrity that the NCAA states as one of its core values. He had grades falsified and had another student take tests for then superstar Derrick Rose, who is now a rising star in the NBA. These steps were necessary so that Rose would continue to be eligible to play and lead the team to many victories. Coach Kevin Sampson was

found guilty of recruiting violations at Oklahoma and Indiana. He was forced out of his job at Indiana. The NCAA has announced a joint effort with several head coaches to form the Division I Men's Basketball Ethics Coalition. While one can applaud the NCAA for wanting to clean up the coaching profession, it is a sad day that a committee has to be formed to do so. Adults should take this role of leadership seriously and decide to win or lose with integrity. It appears that winning, at any cost, is the main objective (Garcia).

College football is an area where there seems to be a constant investigation into some program. Coaches are constantly in the spotlight for doing the wrong thing in order to acquire the recruit who may become the next superstar for their schools or for covering up misdoings by the star players. Squeaky-clean coach Jim Tressel, who resigned from his post as the head coach at the Ohio State University, is one of the latest in the seemingly never ending list of coaches who fall short in the ethical practices. Coach Tressel tried to cover up the fact that several of his players traded jerseys and jewelry for tattoos and money. He lied to the NCAA investigating committee and tried to cover up the fact that he had emailed these same athletes about their wrongdoings. Tressel also did not suspend the players involved in this scandal and allowed them to participate in the bowl game of 2011. These players were some of the best players on the team; without them; the bowl game may have been a loss. Tressel was once viewed as a coach with integrity who used his religious faith to aid in his decision making. However, this scandal at OSU proved that the character and integrity stressed by the NCAA appeared to be absent with the coach and several player. The heat from this scandal eventually forced Tressel to resign and left fans nationwide wondering what else did the "clean" coach help hide so his program could flourish (O'Brian).

The Penn State sexual abuse scandal refers to allegations that former Penn State University Football assistant coach Jerry Sandusky sexually assaulted or had inappropriate contact with at least eight underage boys on or near university property. After an extensive grand jury investigation, former coach, Jerry Sandusky, was indicted on 40 counts of child molestation dating from 1994 to 2009. However, the abuse may date back as far as the early 1970's. It was said that, "per the findings of the investigation, several high-level school officials were charged with perjury and were suspended and dismissed for allegedly covering up the incidents or failing to notify the authorities." During the shock of this scandal, longtime head football coach, Joe Paterno was dismissed from his position and University President Graham Spanier was forced to resign. Mr. Sandusky has denied the allegations.

Sandusky was an assistant coach under Head Coach Joe Paterno for the Penn State Football program for thirty-one seasons from 1969-1999. For the last twenty-three of these years, Sandusky was the team's defensive coordinator. It was stated that in 1977, Mr. Sandusky founded the charity called "The Second Mile." This charity was formed to help troubled young boys in State College, Pennsylvania. Sandusky's name had previously been linked to allegations of sexual abuse. In 1998, he was investigated for sexual abuse by the University Police, local police in State College, and Centre County Pennsylvania Police.

The first lawsuit has been filed against former Penn State Coach Sandusky. It has been reported that the accuser stated that Jerry Sandusky sexually abused him "over 100 times as a child." While Mr. Sandusky maintains his innocence in the 40 charges of sexual abuse over a period of 15 years, the doubt continues to build in the eyes of the public. In 1998, a mother reported to university police that her son said he had showered in the football locker room with Sandusky. In 2000, a university janitor told a school superior he had seen Sandusky performing

oral sex on a young boy-again in the shower. Fearing for their jobs, both men maintained their silence. Finally in 2002, an alleged locker room shower rape of a young boy by Sandusky was witnessed by graduate assistant, Mike McQueary. McQueary has now admitted to police that he witnessed, “anal intercourse.” Back in 2002, McQueary reported something very different to Head Coach, Joe Paterno. He stated that he witnessed Sandusky simply, “horsing around (ESPN).”

No formal police investigation was ever conducted into any of these allegations until recently. It is sickening to think of what all of these young boys may have endured. This is a prime example of a program falling short ethically. This coach was someone that these young men looked up to and respected. He apparently took advantage of this trust and seized an opportunity to feed some horrible sick desires. His actions will forever put a mark of doubt and shame on the squeaky clean image of the Football Program at Penn State University.

Longtime Syracuse University Basketball Assistant Coach, Bernie Fine, is in the midst of a horrible sexual abuse scandal. This coach and program will be forever marred, whether the allegations are found to be true or not. Once again, it appears that a coach, using his position of authority, has overstepped the moral lines. Already, three accusers have notified authorities and made claims of improper conduct and sexual abuse at the hands of Fine. Perhaps some of the most troubling evidence in this case is taped phone calls between an accuser and Fine’s wife. She admitted knowing that the abuse was going on in their home and at Syracuse University. Laurie Fine is even quoted as saying, “I believe there might have been others....” However, the wife of Coach Fine is also quoted as saying, “He thinks he is above the law (Schabner).”

The issue at hand in all of these cases is that there are coaches who are making poor judgments. Many have made decisions that not only affect them and their families, but the

athletes they have recruited, their universities, and the communities where they are employed. Sometimes, these decisions permanently leave scars of humiliation and embarrassment. It is completely unethical for a coach (at any level) to use his position for personal gain. Just because one is in authority does not give one the right to abuse that position. Rules are rules; they are not optional. Whether a coach has committed a recruiting violation or whether he has committed sexual abuse, these decisions are wrong. These decisions have impact and disappoint fans, players, university employees, and families. John Wooden emphasized “Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are; your reputation is merely what others think of you.” This quote surely needs to apply to the life and actions of not just NCAA coaches, but everyone we meet (ESPN).

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