

Ducks doing time

NCAA penalty means less television money

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

"The University of Oregon has been placed on probation for a two-year period, effective December 22, 1981, by the NCAA's Committee on Infractions as a result of violations occurring primarily in the conduct of the institution's intercollegiate football program." — Statement from the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) office on Dec., 23, 1981.

That was one of the gloomier days in the history of University of Oregon athletics. The day that the NCAA slapped a two-year probation on Oregon's football program.

The probation was expected, and the penalty, to most people, seemed quite justified. But one big question lingered in the air at the University's athletic department: How is the probation going to affect the University's football program?

Oregon athletic director Rick Bay has indicated that the football team may not be hurt as much as some people had originally thought.

"The probation will definitely hurt us, but I don't think quite as severely as many people had planned," said Bay. "We will be hurt in two main areas — television revenue and not being able to play in a post-season game, if we would have qualified for one."

Television revenue is always an added bonus to major college football teams. Recently ABC had been the only network to televise collegiate football, but with a new contract for next season, CBS will join in and broadcast some college gridiron contests.

"That really hurts because we will not have the opportunity to go on T.V. and play," Bay said. "With the new contract, more teams will be able to play on television because of both ABC and CBS doing games. We will not be in a position to even be considered next year."

"Even if you don't have a successful football program, you still may be on T.V. A good example was California last year. They went 2-9 and were on T.V. twice."

Bay estimates that Oregon could lose approximately \$200,000 a game from not appearing on television. Even though television money is not budgeted, it's extra cash that every athletic department can use.

But Bay says that Oregon still will receive some television money.

"We will get a share of T.V. money when the other conference schools are on television," Bay said. "We will also get a share of T.V. money when our conference schools play in bowl games."

Oregon's current probation is much like the probation which has hit the UCLA basketball

program this year.

Both penalties call for a two-year probation. The major difference between the two penalties is that UCLA has appeared on television in its first year on probation while the Ducks cannot. But the Bruins cannot make any post-season appearances.

Next year, both teams can play on television and participate in post-season action. But the NCAA will still keep a watchful eye out.

Another area hit by the probation is scholarships. This year the NCAA allowed Oregon to offer a maximum of 25 scholarships compared to the usual 30. But it didn't really have any effect of the Ducks this year, because they could only offer 25 anyway as a result of a small senior class.

"You never like to lose scholarships," Bay said. "But we are lucky, we have so many underclassmen that the scholarship limitations didn't really affect us."

In the second year of the probation, the Ducks will still lose scholarships, but the number will be only two. In addition, the Oregon basketball team will lose a scholarship for next year, bringing its number of available scholarships from 15 down to 14.

The penalties arose out of Oregon's now-infamous credit scandal and secret travel funds maintained by assistant football and basketball coaches. "There were several areas the NCAA looked at," Bay said. "The way the hearings are conducted, the NCAA does not demand proof of guilt. We cooperated with them, we didn't want to cover up anything. Once the NCAA finds something major, they continue to dig."

"The unearned credits and the secret travel accounts were the two major things that the NCAA looked at."

Bay indicated that he and Oregon football coach Rich Brooks pressed for the early hearing in December because of football recruiting.

"The original plan of the NCAA had us appearing in February," Bay said. "But Rich and I talked it over and we thought it would be best if we knew what the penalties were and get them out in the open so the recruits would know what they were getting into."

Bay also believes that, contrary to popular opinion, most schools do not cheat.

"The feeling out there is everybody does cheat," Bay said. "I think that's just an excuse by people who are trying to keep their own shop clean."

"The NCAA is persistent to crack down on things. I don't believe for a minute that the NCAA plays favorites. I know those guys personally and I know they wouldn't do that. They may miss a few things, but overall they do a thorough job."

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