

Confusion clouds track controversy

By Mike Riplinger
Of the Emerald

Confusion seems to be the key word in the case of the three Oregon track athletes who face possible sanctions for violating rules by accepting equipment from two international sporting good companies.

And the man at the center of the controversy appears to be former Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman.

The athletes who allegedly received equipment from Nike and Adidas are Dean Crouser, 1982 national collegiate discus

and shot put champion, Brian Crouser '82 javelin champion, and Jim Hill, an All-American distance runner. Hill reportedly accepted a \$450 check from Nike for consulting on a shoe design.

Athletic equipment is commonly given to collegiate athletes through their respective school's athletic departments, but it is illegal to give equipment directly to an individual athlete without their school's knowledge.

"The NCAA policy is not to confirm or deny that an inves-

tigation is going on," said Ron Stratten, assistant director of enforcement for the NCAA.

A conversation Bowerman allegedly had with University officials last summer started the probe and resulted in a letter from Curt Simic, University vice president for relations, detailing the alleged violations to Bowerman.

However Bowerman, one of the founders of Nike, said in a phone interview Wednesday that "I certainly did not talk to Mr. Simic earlier this summer. I have received nothing that

would have to do with him."

Bowerman could not be reached Thursday at his son's home outside of Antelope, or at his home north of Eugene.

Simic's letter was sent to Bowerman and copies were sent to six other people, including University Pres. Paul Olum and Rick Bay, athletic director. The letter was not released publicly.

But the contents of the letter became public, prompting University officials to question who released the letter.

Ironically, Olum is currently at a meeting of the State Board of Higher Education in Corvallis, which is considering a policy and a code of ethics for inter-collegiate athletics. He said in a statement issued by Barbara Petura, director of the University news bureau, that he believes Bowerman sent the letters.

"I don't know why Bowerman is passing around these things," said Olum. "It's not up to me to judge his motive. People can judge his motive for themselves."

According to Bay, the allegations against the three athletes are part of a "personal grudge" by Bowerman.

"When Bill gets mad, sometimes he does things that he may regret later," said Bay. "This is a case where he got upset about the facility problem and a few other matters and struck back at us. It's a personal grudge."

Bay said the problems between he and Bowerman all stem from Bowerman's offer to give the University money to build a track facility.

"He offered the money, but he still wanted to run it. That is a clear violation of the IRS, which says if a gift is given to a university, it must be unequivocally given. Bowerman wanted to be able to tell us how we were to use it."

Bowerman and the Universi-

ty's athletic department also tangled over Oregon track coach Bill Dellinger's contract for a shoe design with Adidas.

"It's all intertwined," Bay said. "He doesn't like what happened over the facility and he doesn't like the fact that Bill Dellinger has a contract with Adidas — or the fact that I backed Bill with his contract."

Dellinger originally offered a new shoe design to Nike, whose shoes he endorsed at the time. His design was turned down. Dellinger then went to Adidas with the design and was offered a contract.

"Ever since the Adidas shoe with the webbing has become popular, Bowerman has become vindictive," Dellinger said in an interview Wednesday. "He is trying to discredit the University of Oregon track program."

Bay has looked into Dellinger's Adidas contract and found it "perfectly legal."

"He had every right to switch and take advantage of a good opportunity," said Bay. "Bowerman did the same thing with Nike, so I can't understand why he won't allow Dellinger to do the same."

The switch by the athletes' from Nike to Adidas prompted Bowerman's original interest, claimed Dellinger.

"This all goes back to the Pac-10 meet when Crouser switched shoes from Nike to Adidas," Dellinger said.

The matter was brought up at a July 6 meeting in Eugene that included Bowerman, Olum and Simic, according to the University vice-president. The meeting concerned the proposed Hayward addition.

"I'm not sure who brought it up, but I believe it was either Bill, or some of the people that were in Bill's group," said Simic.

When Simic was told that Bowerman said he didn't know of the allegations, hadn't received the letter, and had said he hadn't talked with Simic about the allegations, Simic expressed shock.

"I'm absolutely astounded. That's amazing. I'm just astounded," he said. "Of course we met with Bill. It had to do with the facility."

"At the time he showed a genuine concern for the program. As we talked it became clear that there might be some violations. So as soon as the

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