

Minnesota hoops gets four years' probation

By John Akers

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The NCAA has put the University of Minnesota men's basketball program on probation for four years and cut an additional scholarship as penalties for academic fraud in the program, according to published reports, which were confirmed by a school official who requested anonymity.

The Gophers will not be banned from another year of postseason play, the reports said. In what appears to be a victory for the university, the NCAA infractions committee imposed little more punishment than what already had been self-imposed by the school, the Star Tribune and the Saint Paul Pioneer Press reported Monday night.

The school official confirmed the substance of the newspapers' reports to The Associated Press on Monday night.

The NCAA commended Minnesota for its investigation and comprehensive self-punishment, which included an offer to repay 90 percent of its money for playing in the 1994, 1995 and 1997 NCAA basketball tournaments, according to the reports.

But the NCAA ordered that team records from the NCAA tournament and National Invitation Tournament — and the tournament records of players engaged in academic fraud from the 1993-94 season through 1998-99 — be vacated. That includes the Final Four season of 1997, the Star Tribune reported.

Former coach Clem Haskins' record will also be stripped of those tournament victories and any mention of the Final Four appearance, the only one in school history.

"I think honestly it was better than we expected in some respects ... the report itself indicates it was the university's strong response and the university's thorough investigation that led to the decision not to impose further postseason play sanctions," the school official said.

The NCAA Infractions Committee's report found that Jan Gangelhoff, a former office manager in the university's academic counseling unit, completed coursework for at least 18 basketball players — and that former academic adviser Alonzo Newby arranged the work with Haskins' knowledge, the Star

Tribune and Pioneer Press both reported.

"The violations were significant, widespread and intentional," the NCAA ruled, according to the Star Tribune. "More than that, their nature — academic fraud — undermined the bedrock foundation of a university and the operation of its intercollegiate athletics program."

"It's never good news to have the NCAA say this is one of the worst academic fraud scandals in 20 years," the school official said. "The good news is they took into account the good measures the university has already taken."

Mark Rotenberg, the university's general counsel, declined Monday night to respond to the NCAA's assertions, which were to be formally received by the school Tuesday.

The scandal broke in March 1999 when Gangelhoff came forward to say she had written more than 400 papers for as many as 20 basketball players between 1993 and 1998.

Minnesota officials highlighted the self-sanctions in April at a hearing before the NCAA Infractions Committee, and pointed out that ties had been severed to most of the people most closely linked

to the scandal. That included Haskins, who accepted a \$1.5 million buyout about five months after the story broke.

The NCAA committee has weighed those facts against what has been called one of the most serious cases of academic fraud in recent history.

Other high-profile penalties handed down in the past 10 or 15 years — such as sanctions against UNLV, Kansas and Kentucky — dealt mostly with recruiting violations. The Minnesota case is rare for the scope of the on-campus fraud.

Second-year coach Dan Monson has compared waiting for the NCAA decision to being like a child waiting for the spanking he'll get when his father gets home.

But the scandal has been more than frustrating for Monson and other Minnesota officials. It has hurt recruiting.

Center Rick Rickert of Duluth, Minnesota's top high-school prospect and one of the nation's top recruits, has delayed announcing his college choice until Wednesday. He is considering Minnesota and Arizona, but said it probably would take a favorable decision by

the infractions committee to sway him toward the Gophers.

"I think [the decision] will play somewhat of a part, but I think he's still leaning toward Arizona," said Rickert's mother, Susan. "If there's more to [the sanctions], it's for sure he won't go [to Minnesota]. That just wouldn't be right for him. But if there isn't, maybe he'll go. We keep talking about it, but it gets old after a while."

The scandal prompted a nine-month, \$2.2 million investigation by the university. Federal prosecutors are still looking into the case.

Minnesota and the NCAA allege that Newby steered players to Gangelhoff and that Haskins rewarded her. Investigators also say that Newby helped get grades or classes changed to keep several players eligible and that Haskins told players to lie after the story broke.

Haskins admitted — after several denials — that he paid Gangelhoff \$3,000 to tutor a student after she was ordered to stay away from the team. Minnesota is suing to retrieve the \$1.5 million buyout given Haskins, claiming he broke school and NCAA rules and violated his contract when he admitted paying Gangelhoff.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 24). What you learn through the grapevine gives you the advantage. Make networking a fine art and succeed brilliantly. Your friends give you a shove in the right direction in October. Follow through in November. Private information leads to a treasure in December. Get what you've always wanted for your home in February. Heed a partner's old-fashioned suggestion in May. Use your wits to add to your security in June. A foreigner's compassion inspires you in July, and your friends help you with a worthy project in September. Here's permission to hide out and rest next October.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is an 8 — Today you're liable to be activated, motivated and jet-propelled. A job that recently seemed frustrating could suddenly make sense — partly 'cause you're getting better at it. A friend's support helps, too.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 7 — Your common sense is in high demand. Others need it more than you do, so be generous. You can afford to; you have plenty. What you miss, your partner can provide. The two of you are the pragmatic duo! Engineers and builders of castles in the air!

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is an 8 — Romance could be in your near future, maybe even tonight — or today. Don't let it interfere with work, however. Don't let a person who loves to collect bargaining chips find out about it, either. Unless it's all on the up and up, of course.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 6 — Moving people over to your house soon? Need the place whipped into shape, fast? You'd better get your friend in a pinch, and that same person will help you. Stop trying to do everything, OK? Share.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 7 — It's time for you to buy yourself a new toy. If it's educational, it's money well-spent. You won't necessarily get the best education in school. You

might learn more at home. Instead of TV, how about reading tonight?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 7 — Work, money, responsibility — they're all linked together. You're up to the challenge. A distant friend could be a big help. This person's got more experience, so ask for coaching when you need it. Then, climb up that ladder to success.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is an 8 — You're getting stronger and more confident. That's partially because you've been doing your homework. Well, you just got luckier, too. Keep a close eye on your finances. Be stingy. It's OK. It's a good skill to acquire.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 7 — You're a natural collector of information. You could find out a lot more soon. It won't take much digging. Ask a few leading questions. A couple of people would love to tell you more than you want to know.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is an 8 — You can gain a lot from friends. If you're not playing on a team, maybe you should be for fun, games and new ideas. You might find just the person you've been looking for to fill a special need. A keeper.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 7 — An opportunity for advancement could open up soon. You could do the work you love and make the paycheck of your dreams. You're not going to find it if you don't look, though. Start by asking a person who knows a lot.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 7 — What you're looking for is available at a price you can afford. You just need to look a little further away. You might even find a great deal on a travel package. Use your skills and imagination — and anything is possible.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 6 — A distant friend may invite you to visit, but it's too early yet. You can start planning, saving and learning, however. A bit of a jaunt this weekend looks possible, too — sort of a trial run.

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