

Sports

Allegations still hover over A&M

In-house investigation into recruiting moves into 7th month

By DOUG HALL
Sports Writer

If anything cast a dark shadow on Texas A&M's 1985-86 football season, a season which included its first Southwest Conference championship since 1968 and a Cotton Bowl victory over Auburn, it was the alleged recruiting violations charged against A&M by two Dallas media outlets.

In September, WFAA-TV of Dallas accused Kevin Murray, the Aggies' starting quarterback, of accepting cash payments and the use of a lease car. Then, in December, the *Dallas Times Herald* accused A&M of illegal activities, including cash payments and special car deals that dated back to the years of former Aggie coach Tom Wilson.

A&M Athletic Director Jackie Sherrill, Wilson's successor as head football coach, said at the time of the WFAA accusations (Sept. 17-19) that the Athletic Department was turning the matter over to other University officials. Those officials were the A&M Athletic Council, which then launched an in-house investigation into the Aggie football program.

Now, after six months, Dr. Thomas Adair, chairman of the A&M Athletic Council, said the committee is still continuing its investigations, but declined to say when its findings would be revealed.

"We have initiated an investigation into all intercollegiate programs at A&M because we were asked to do so by the president (of the University)," Adair said.

When asked if his committee's investigation encompasses the charges made against Murray and those reported by the *Times Herald*, Adair said the investigation is a result of the press coverage A&M received about the incidents and includes "all matters concerning recruiting at Texas A&M."

Ted Hajovsky Jr., who serves as A&M's general counsel, is also involved with the in-house investigation.

Hajovsky said Tuesday that the in-house committee has hired private attorneys to help interview players, former players, coaches, former coaches and anyone in connection with the A&M Athletic Department.

Hajovsky added that after certain phases of the investigation are completed, the various parties will confer and clear up any inconsistencies in their reports.

Although Hajovsky failed to indicate when results from the investigation would be made public, he did say that the NCAA currently is not involved with the case.

Southwest Conference Commissioner Fred Jacoby also said his office is not currently involved with any investigation into the A&M Athletic Department and that the SWC's only role in this type of matter is to act as a "go-between" with the NCAA and the school in question.

When asked if he knew when



A&M quarterback Kevin Murray (14) became the center of controversy when WFAA-TV of Dallas

accused Murray on camera of accepting cash payments and use of a car from an A&M alumnus.

Photo by JOHN MAKELY

those results would be turned over to the NCAA, Jacoby said he was not aware of a deadline or time limit on the investigation.

David Berst, director of enforcement for the NCAA, said he was prohibited from making public statements on the subject and that he could only issue statements through a university's president and athletic director.

However, Berst did say that the NCAA has the authority to conduct

its own investigation or to allow the particular university to handle it internally.

Berst said if the NCAA chooses to conduct its own investigation, it will file a preliminary letter of inquiry with the University.

Following the Dec. 8-10 *Times Herald* reports, which were released 10 days after A&M clinched the Southwest Conference championship with a 42-10 Thanksgiving Day victory over Texas, A&M President Frank E. Vandiver said

some of the newspaper's allegations had already been investigated by the NCAA and the Southwest Conference.

Since that second week in December, when Vandiver's statement accompanied those by Sherrill which refuted the *Times Herald* allegations saying many of the players they interviewed had "axes to grind" against A&M, the Athletic Department has issued no further statements concerning the investigation.

Ex-players level more charges against Texas

DALLAS (AP) — University of Texas boosters and sports agents have given Longhorn football players cash, liquor, meals, free dental and legal services, and discounts at apartments and bars — all violations of the NCAA extra-benefit rules, *The Dallas Morning News* reported in its Wednesday editions.

Former players said boosters and agents, whom they usually met through coaches, routinely approached players with offers of cash and favors from the day they first

walked onto the practice field, the *News* said in its copyright story.

In interviews with 28 former Texas players, whose careers spanned a period from 1978 to 1985, 11 said they accepted cash payments — in some cases amounting to more than \$10,000 — while they were playing football at Texas.

"My senior year it just got hotter and hotter," said Tony Degrate, a standout defensive tackle from 1982 to 1984 and winner of the 1984 Vince Lombardi Award.

"From alumni walking up to me in the locker room, to my room, shaking my hand and giving me a bill (money)," Degrate said. "Then at the end of the year, they'd call me — guys in business suits with briefcases — and I'd say meet me in a restaurant. At 11 o'clock at night. In a restaurant. Not in my room."

Head football Coach Fred Akers said he was not aware that his players had received any benefits beyond the tuition, room, board and books

provided by their athletic scholarships.

"I am really, I am surprised," Akers said. "I am surprised, and I intend to turn this over to the NCAA. ... if I know of something that is true — or suspect that it is — I'll sure turn it in."

Jeff Leiding, an All-America linebacker who played at Texas from 1980 to 1983, said he received cash payments from various alumni and boosters throughout his career.

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