

Sports

SMU officials want investigation sponsored by Methodist Church

DALLAS (AP) — Southern Methodist University officials called Wednesday for a church-sponsored investigation into conflicting statements between SMU board members and Gov. Bill Clements, who said he and other members continued illicit cash payments to football players.

Clements, who resigned as chairman of the SMU Board of Governors before taking office in January, said Tuesday that he and other board members decided to "phase out" the payments after the NCAA put the school on its sixth probation in 1985.

But current board members, who met on the issue Wednesday, said they were stunned by Clements' comments, denied any knowledge of payments to players and said anyone with such knowledge should resign.

"Everyone unanimously said they were not aware of any continuing payments," board chairman William Hutchison said after the meeting.

The board asked the president of the United Methodist Church's College of Bishops to appoint an "external committee" to investigate the accuracy of the board members' statements.

Asked about the members' continued denials that they knew anything about the payments, Clements said Wednesday: "Well I'd just keep talking to them if I were you. Everybody has to say what they're comfortable with."

The governor also denied the firestorm of reaction would have any political effect on his administration.

Clements' statements in his regular weekly news conference marked the first time anyone had linked top school officials to cash payments to players.

Last week, the NCAA abolished SMU's 1987 football program in the harshest penalty against any collegiate football program. The NCAA said a \$61,000 slush fund set up by a school booster was used to pay 13 players.

At the time allegations of the latest payments surfaced, SMU already was on a three-year probation that began in August 1985. In assessing

SMU's seventh probation last week, the NCAA said payments continued through December 1986.

Hutchison said Wednesday he "couldn't explain the contradictions between the board's statements and Clements' comments."

He said he spoke with Clements by telephone after the governor's news conference Tuesday and that Clements told him that "the Board of Governors as a board was not a part of this thing. The Board of Governors was not involved."

In a statement issued after the board's meeting Wednesday, members said anyone involved should "publicly disclose such information and . . . for the sake of the university resign from any position with the university."

Student body president Trevor Pearlman said Wednesday the SMU Student Senate will talk to attorneys this week about pursuing legal action "against all responsible parties and individuals" who mishandled the school's football recruiting.

"Students feel the worth of their degree is being undermined," Pearlman said.

In response to questions during his news conference Tuesday, Clements said for the first time that the board was aware in 1985 of cash payments and decided "that that program would be phased out."

But he did not elaborate on the time frame for phasing out the payments.

In an interview with the *Dallas Morning News*, Clements said the board decided to continue payments to 26 student athletes after "the advice of counsel and collaboration" with others.

He said "at least half" of the 17 board members "understand the details of what we are talking about

But the other half accept in good faith that we in a judgmental sense made the right decision in the interest of the institution."

The decision stemmed from a "moral obligation" to honor commitments to the players who were receiving money, Clements said.

But the *Dallas Times Herald* quoted an unidentified booster who was one of nine banned from associating with the university in 1985 as saying "strong threats were made by football players" that they would go to the NCAA if the commitments weren't honored.

In the interview with the *Morning News*, Clements implied the NCAA was aware of the decision to continue payments.

"The NCAA understood that we had a commitment to them we would never again recruit in the manner these other kids were recruited . . . We all understood each other," he said.

In the interview with the *Morning News*, Clements said the improper system for payments to SMU athletes began as far back as 1976 during the coaching tenure of Ron Meyer and former athletic director Russ Potts.

Potts denied it saying, "That's absolutely ludicrous . . . If such a thing was going on, I had no knowledge of that — absolutely none!"

Meyer, now head coach of the NFL's Indianapolis Colts, said, "I can't believe that. I was not aware of anything — nothing to my knowledge. Everything I was involved with at the time came out in the investigation . . . I think it's a matter of how far back you want to go."

Clements said the decision to continue the payments was made with the understanding SMU football would "return to a program of absolute integrity. That we gave that pledge to the NCAA and we also had commitments from the athletic director (Bob Hitch) and Coach (Bobby) Collins that they would abide by that decision. And that we would return to an absolutely clean program at SMU . . ."



Photo by Bill Hughes

Kim Labuschagne, Texas A&M's No. 1 singles player, follows through on a backhand in her match with TCU's Rene Simpson Wednesday. Labuschagne dropped the match 7-5, 7-6.

TCU hands Lady Aggies 7th straight loss as women's tennis team suffers 9-0 shutout

By Hal L. Hammons
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M women's tennis team continued its downward slide into the conference season in a 9-0 loss to Texas Christian Wednesday at the Omar Smith-Tennis Center.

The loss was the seventh in a row for the Lady Aggies, who are now 6-8.

After losing the No. 2, 4 and 6 singles matches, A&M was close to making the contest respectable.

Kim Labuschagne finally lost her No. 1 match to Rene Simpson in a second set tiebreaker, 7-5, 7-

6. Lisa Keller and Jenifer Jones both went three sets before losing.

Keller was beaten by Rhona Howett 2-6, 7-5, 6-2 in No. 3 action, and TCU's Marnie Ochoa defeated Jones 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 in the No. 5 match.

With a victory already in their grasp, the Horned Frogs did not let up the pressure in the doubles matches. TCU took all three matches in straight sets.

In the No. 1 match, Simpson and Teresa Dobson beat Keller and Labuschagne 6-4, 6-3. Howett and Margot van Velden beat

Jones and Laura Liong 6-4, 7-6 in the No. 2 match. A&M's Missy Kibler and Kelly Dorman lost to Ochoa and Kris Clevenger 7-5, 7-5 in No. 3 doubles.

In other singles action, Dobson blanked Liong 6-0, 6-0 in the No. 2 match; and No. 4 player van Velden beat Kellie Dorman 6-0, 6-3; Kibler fell to Melanie Breed 6-2, 6-1 in the No. 6 match.

A&M Coach Bobby Kleinecke said the team was really down because of the losing streak.

"We're a little bit down, and that's normal," Kleinecke said.

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