

# Are college athletics past the point of no return

Illegal recruiting and payments have placed several schools on NCAA probation.

By Nick Georgandis  
THE BATTALION

On June 12, in big, bold letters across the cover of Sports Illustrated were the words, "Why the University of Miami should drop football."

Despite the excitement surrounding the NBA and NHL playoffs, SI chose to run a seven-page, open letter to Miami President Edward T. Foote II, requesting that he do away with a program fraught with infractions against the NCAA and the laws of the United States.

The NCAA is currently investigating allegations by former Hurricane players that rapper Luther Campbell and other Miami boosters paid players for scoring touchdowns and delivering "vicious hits."

A year ago, SI ran a similar cover featuring a Florida State Seminole helmet. The cover read "Tainted Title," and referred to FSU's national football championship of 1993, and how it may have been won with ineligible players.

What is wrong with college athletics today? "A big problem is that the NCAA needs to come up with a way to punish people involved in the problems," said Texas A&M Director of Athletic Development John David Crow. "The way it's going now is that the players responsible are already gone when the school gets punished, and that denies a lot of good kids the

right opportunities." Recruiting violations and illegal player payments have become the norm in nearly every conference in the NCAA.

Texas A&M's football team has been on probation twice since 1988.

The second time, a multi-player scandal that saw suspensions of starters Greg Hill and Jessie Cox - along with three other players - resulted in A&M's inability to represent the SWC in the 1994 Cotton Bowl, despite having the best record in the league.

During a span of two years, Hill, Cox and seven other A&M players received a total of \$17,855 of unearned wages at summer jobs provided by former A&M booster Warren Gilbert.

During the spring of 1994, Cox transferred to Texas Southern University and Hill declared his eligibility for the NFL draft.

Auburn missed out on a chance for a national championship in 1993 because its team could not appear on television or in a bowl game due to probation.

The trend of college mishaps quickly has made its way into the media, especially the movies. Films such as *Blue Chips* and *The Program* have shown audiences the inside of illegal doings on campus in the past few years.

*Blue Chips*, which was released in 1993 and featured NBA players Anfernee Hardaway and Shaquille O'Neal, was the story of a basketball coach - played by Nick Nolte - giving in to his boosters' requests to buy players.

"The story is probably timelier today than it was when Ron (Shelton) first wrote it," *Blue Chips* director William Friedkin said in the movie's press release. "The competition for those athletes

has become much sharper as the price has gone up with television revenues and product endorsements being so lucrative."

Both movies showcased a popular view of many student-athletes who take illegal payments for playing. The argument is that since scholarship athletes are not allowed to have other jobs, the universities should pay them for what they do.

"... And the NC-double Assholes won't let us have jobs. They ought to be paying us anyway," said Alvin Mack, a linebacker played by Duane Davis in *The Program*.

The Southwest Conference is one of the most well-known



This cartoon first ran in The Battalion in early 1994, shortly after running back Greg Hill left school to en-

ter the NFL draft. Hill was one of the players in the 1993 Warren Gilbert-summer job scandal. One suggestion to quell illegal payments is to pay players a flat rate performance.

A&M's Director of Intercollegiate Compliance Tedi Ellison said that a plan has its advantages, it would also punish many schools.

"There has certainly been a lot of talk about a plan," Ellison said. "However some athletes don't have that kind of money, and get into the issue of paying better players how much each school can pay its players."

Crow said recruiting players not only athletic ability but also by their personality be instrumental in solving the problem of college athletics. "There will be exceptions, kids that don't make money," Crow said. "I don't think there is that can be done about it except to recruit the right type of players. I think that most of the day, especially the ones in this area are doing a good job of that."

### PIGSKIN PROBLEMS: A BRIEF HISTORY

- 1986: Southern Methodist University's football team receives a one-year "death penalty" from the NCAA for repeated recruiting violations. The school self-imposes an additional year onto the punishment.
- 1988: Texas A&M Head Football Coach and Athletic Director Jackie Sherrill resigns in the midst of an NCAA probe. A&M is put on probation by the NCAA and the team cannot be on television or go to a bowl game in 1989.
- 1990-92: A total of nine players work for A&M booster Warren Gilbert at various summer jobs, earning a total of \$27,800. Of that total, \$17,855 was unearned money.
- 1993: Despite finishing with a perfect record, the University of Auburn is not considered for the national championship because it is on probation.
- 1994: Sports Illustrated runs an expose on the 1993 National Champion Florida State Seminoles titled "Tainted Title." The article includes allegations of several Seminole players looting an area-Foot Locker of thousands of dollars of merchandise.
- 1995: Sports Illustrated runs an open letter to the president of the University of Miami, asking him to disband the school's largely successful football program based on its inability to follow NCAA and other regulations.

## FREUDIAN *slip*

Coming to the Dixie Theater near you!  
It's in downtown Bryan on Main St.  
Thursday, June 22, 1995  
Doors & bar open at 8. Show starts at 9:30.  
\$5 cover (18 and up)  
It's improv like you've never seen.  
(Especially if you've never seen improv.)

All students, faculty and staff  
are invited to  
attend a public hearing  
to discuss  
an increase of  
the General Use Fee

Wednesday, June 21, 1995  
3:30-5:30 p.m.  
MSC Room 292

Office of the President, Texas A&M University

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#### \*\*\* Parking Update \*\*\*

Several campus parking lots are scheduled for surface repairs this summer. To facilitate this process the parking lots involved will need to be cleared of all parking for approximately one week (3-5 days) for base repairs, and again at a later date for one week to resurface and repaint, if weather permits. Below is a list and schedule for the parking areas involved:

PA 55	Wednesday, June 21 *The parking spaces on the street between Teague and PA 55 will remain available. (Relocate to PA 51, shuttle service provided)
PA 54 & 88	Monday, June 26 (Relocate to PA 51, shuttle service provided)
PA 51	Friday, June 29 (Relocate to PA 50)
PA 59	Saturday, June 30 (Relocate to PA 48)
PA 50	Wednesday, July 5 (Relocate to other commuter (blue) parking areas, suggeste areas are PA 89 behind tennis courts, PA 48 south of Kyle Field, PA 62 on Wellborn Rd. next to Kyle Field)
PA 46	Monday, July 17 (This is during Fireman's Training Schools, relocate to PA 48, PA 47, PA 91, PA 62, PA 69)

Please note that this information may be subject to change. When you arrive on campus and your assigned parking area is closed, please park in the alternate parking area indicated above.

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