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Kansas fires athletic director
Move made as Jayhawks attempt to keep Williams

By Doug Tucker
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The University of Kansas fired Athletic Director Al Bohl on Wednesday.

Bohl had numerous clashes with popular men's Basketball Coach Roy Williams, whose Jayhawks lost to Syracuse in the NCAA championship game earlier this week. Bohl was hired in 2001 to replace Williams' close friend and longtime Kansas athletic director Bob Frederick.

Bohl's job seemed to be in jeopardy since rumors surfaced in February that UCLA would pursue Williams for its head coaching job after the season.

Speculation intensified after North Carolina Coach Matt Doherty resigned before the Final Four. Williams, a Tar Heel alumnus, passed on the job three years ago.

"I would not resign," Bohl told The Associated Press. "I was fired."

Despite the widely reported rift between Williams and Bohl, and the current opening at North Carolina, Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway denied he fired Bohl to convince Williams to stay.

"We have to trust him (Williams) to make the right decision now," Hemenway said.

Williams said Bohl tried "extremely hard," but also acknowledged that differences existed.

"It is always sad for the individual involved when a situation such as this occurs and a change is made," Williams said in the statement. "We had difficulties, and we were not as cohesive as the athletic department needs to be. This made the

atmosphere somewhat difficult."

Hemenway appointed A. Drue Jennings, a Kansas graduate, former football player and the former chief executive of Kansas City Power & Light, interim athletic director.

Hemenway said he discussed leadership of the department with Bohl during the past few months, as well as with coaches, other athletic department staff members, alumni and donors.

"On the basis of these conversations and my own evaluation of the situation, I came to the conclusion that a change of leadership was needed at this time," Hemenway said, adding that he made the decision before the end of the basketball season.

"We had difficulties, and we were not as cohesive as the athletic department needs to be. This made the atmosphere somewhat difficult."

— Roy Williams
Kansas head basketball coach



especially angry that Allen was fired during the season. Just a few months before Allen was fired, Williams was a prominent coach at an ethics seminar and endorsed a proposal urging schools not to fire a coach whose sport was in season.

"And then it happens at my very own school," Williams said at the time. "How embarrassing."

Bohl countered, "Roy is the basketball coach, and I am the director of athletics. I was hired to fix this football program, and that's what I'm going to do."

Bohl's support among alumni and important contributors was affected when his clash with Williams went public.

During a pep rally at the Final Four in New Orleans, Bohl was booed by Kansas fans. He was later asked if it were possible for him to be effective while being unpopular.

"The cheers far outweighed the boos," he said. "Yes, they booed. Are you kidding me? You guys have been writing

like it's a case where Bohl's got to go, and Roy's going to stay here. Hey, it's been pretty good music that we've been to the Final Fours. Those people - they don't even know Al Bohl."

Williams said Tuesday he planned to meet with former North Carolina coach Dean Smith, and it was expected he would again receive an offer to return to Chapel Hill. Bohl had pledged to do all he could to keep Williams at Kansas.

"For sure, what we do in basketball is the result of Roy Williams and our team," Bohl said earlier this week. "It doesn't matter how maliciously I'm attacked in my character, I'm going to keep going forward."

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Masters set to begin
amid controversy

By Doug Ferguson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Tiger Woods didn't have to hit a single shot for the show to begin at this year's Masters.

As Woods played his final practice round Wednesday at soggy Augusta National, attention shifted from his bid for an unprecedented third straight green jacket to a cramped room.

More than 60 men, all wearing the coveted symbol in golf, flanked chairman Hootie Johnson in a stubborn defense of the club's all-male membership.

"If I drop dead this second, our position will not change on this issue," the 72-year-old Johnson said. "It's not my issue alone."

Beyond the gates of Augusta National lurks a foreign sensation: controversy.

About a half-mile down the street from Magnolia Lane, local officials have set aside a 5.1-acre grassy lot for demonstrations — and not just for Martha Burk and her National Council of Women's Organizations, who have pressured the club for the last nine months to add its first female member.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson plans to protest with Burk.

They will be joined by two groups protesting Burk, another protesting Jackson, a one-man faction of the Ku Klux Klan supporting Augusta National and a man who calls his group "People Against Ridiculous Protests."

Anyone who thought Augusta National might cave in to pressure and allow a woman to wear a green jacket was met — again — by utter defiance during a 22-

minute news conference.

"There may well come a time when we include women as members of our club, and the remains true," he said. "However, I want to emphasize that we have no timetable, and our membership is very comfortable with our present status."

Johnson cut loose his sponsors to keep them out of the fray.

"I think it's kind of sad," said Burk. "He's firmly planting his seat in the last century."

Players have been dragged into the debate, too.

Woods would like to see Augusta National admit women members, although the world's No. 1 player concedes he has no influence on club matters.

Already the most dominant player in golf, Woods looks better than ever after taking two months off for surgery on his left knee.

"It's not a golf course where I feel like I'm learning something every time I play it, or I have to go out there and learn something," Woods said. "I feel as if I have a pretty good understanding of how to play each and every hole."

Ernie Els has moved up to No. 2 in the world by winning three times in the last 16 months, including the first two PGA Tour events. Right behind is David Love III, who is coming off a final-round 64 to win The Players Championship.

For Els and other players, the biggest distraction is not the controversy swirling around the club; it's the name that is so often attached to the leaderboard.

"Let's face it," Els said. "Tiger's going to be there."

Unlike previous Masters, even that won't guarantee him better than the only show in town.

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