NCAA boss: Colleges cleaning up their act

By Ed Sherman Chicago Tribune

MISSION, Kan.—Dick Schultz is trying to sell a theme, but thus far he hasn't found many buyers.

The NCAA Executive Director says that integrity and intercollegiate athletics can co-exist in the same sentence. In fact, Schultz maintains that the vast majority of major athletic institutions play the game by the rules. He adds that the NCAA has made significant progress in eliminating the problem areas.

The reaction, though, has been predictable. The public has as much faith in Schultz's statements as it does in anything Exxon says concerning the oil spill in Alaska. This hasn't been a great year, public relations-wise, for Exxon or the NCAA.

Yet despite a deluge of criticism for his views, Schultz has not wavered in his one-man campaign. "If I don't speak up for college sports, who will?" Schultz asks. The volunteers are few. There

haven't been many positives stem-

ming from a period in which college athletics has endured some of its worst-ever headlines. There was the scandal at Oklahoma, the scandal at Kentucky, the scandal involving sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom. Two recent Sports Illustrated covers paint a picture of college sports: one showing Oklahoma quarterback Charles Thompson being arrested for selling cocaine, the other blaring the headline, "Kentucky's Shame."

Schultz, though, argues the picture isn't complete. The situation in college athletics isn't nearly as black as the critics portray it.

"It's very difficult to convince people of that," Schultz said. "Whenever we have problems, the focus narrows. People believe that's the way the whole world is. They think all athletes have problems, and that's simply not true. We have 286,000 collegiate athletes, and there's only a minority of them who have run into problems. There would have to be 2,000 of them just to break the 99th percentile. There are probably 350 athletes at Oklahoma, and for every one of these kids who is in trouble, there probably are 25 who are doing everything right.

"That's the thing I'm trying to battle. Everyone using a broad-brush to portray all of college athletics. Being guilty by association. We probably won't win that battle until we end up with a perfect situation."

Schultz has taken many lumps for those views. One critic said he had "standards lower than the gradepoint average of some college athletes."

Schultz said he expects to hear such criticism from those who don't know the complete story. Part of the recent negative impression, he says, stems from the NCAA's rapid-fire Athletic programs on NCAA probation

School (sport)	Years on probation	Major violation(s)
Alabama A&M (soccer)	Indefinite	Exceeded grants-in-aid limitations
Arizona State (men's, women's track)	2 years, ends Nov. 10, 1990	Improper payments, transportation for athletes
Cincinnati (men's basketball, football)	3, ends · Nov. 3, 1991	Exceeded scholarship limits, gave aid to ineligible athletes
Cleveland State (men's basketball)	3, ends April 21, 1991	Gave financial assistance to recruit
Eastern Washington (men's basketball)	2, ends Nov. 24, 1989	Recruiting improprieties
Houston (football)	3, ends Dec. 31, 1991	Payments to athletes
Kansas (men's basketball)	3, ends Nov. 1, 1991	Improper benefits to transfer athlete
Kentucky (men's basketball)	3, ends May 19, 1992	Payment to recruit, use of ineligible player
Marist College (men's basketball)	2, ends Jan. 1, 1990	Improper benefits, inducements to athletes, recruits
Memphis State (football)	3, effective dates to be determined	Excessive payment to player for summer job
Minnesota (men's basketball)	2, ends March 10, 1990	Improper benefits, inducements to athletes, recruits
Oklahoma (football)	3, ends Dec. 27, 1991	Payment to recruit, transportation for athletes
Oklahoma State (football)	4, ends Jan. 9, 1993	Payments to athletes
Southern Methodist (football)	3½, ends Sept. 1, 1990	Payments to athletes while program on probation*
Texas A&M (football)	2, ends Sept. 20, 1990	Payments to athletes, improper inducements to recruits
Virginia Tech (men's basketball, football)	2, ends Nov. 6, 1989	Exceeded scholarship limit, gave athletes academic favors
West Texas State (men's basketball)	3, ends Jan. 6, 1992	Recruiting improprieties

* As a repeat offender, SMU received a so-called death penalty with the football program being shut down for two years.

Note: Georgia Tech's men's tennis team was ruled ineligible to compete in the NCAA championships in 1989 and '90 for providing excessive compensation and extra benefits to players. The program is not technically on probation, however.

Chicago Tribune Graphic; Source: NCAA, news reports

disclosure of infraction cases within the last year. Here's Schultz's ver-

"We ran into a situation where we had a backlog of cases [investigations] that have been building up over a five-year period. With an increased enforcement division, we've its football team received. been able to deal with that backlog. We knew we'd run the risk of the public perception being that everything is rotten. But the truth is that these were cases that have been spread out over a period of time. Now we've got the backlog cleared

In fact, Schultz goes on to say that the NCAA enforcement division won't be in the spotlight much during the upcoming months, although it was again Thursday when sanctions were levied on the Memphis State football team. While enforcement chief David Berst hardly is spending his days on the golf course, he does see a difference.

"I can't say we're less busy, but

we're finding the reports of major violations are down," Berst said.

There are several reasons, Schultz says. First and foremost is that penalties for violations are stiffer than ever before. Just ask Southern Methodist about the "death penalty"

"There are two messages out," Schultz said. "One, there are no sacred cows. Two, if you cheat and get caught, the penalties will be

Perhaps equally as important is that university presidents and top administrators are getting more involved than ever before. Schultz cited Kentucky President David Roselle for his participation in the investigation of the Wildcat basketball team. It probably saved Kentucky from getting the death penalty.

"For many years, if there was an investigation, the institutions took the view, 'Prove it if you can, NCAA," Berst said. "Now if we get involved in an investigation, the in-

stitution wants to know what's going on as badly as we do. The climate is changing. I don't know how rosy a picture to present, because I don't know if it will stay this way. But for now, I do see a window of opportunity to enhance integrity."

For his part, Schultz has been on the road 160 days a year in an effort to spread the word. A licensed pilot, Schultz flies an NCAA-leased plane to college campuses to preach integrity firsthand. He thinks people are hearing the message.

"I'm not saying that we don't have problems, but the NCAA hasn't been sitting idly by," Schultz said. "There's a definite commitment to integrity. We're getting a positive feedback. I think we're seeing presidents and other top administrators stand up and be counted."

With the college football season approaching, several important topics will be dominating the news this fall. Here are Schultz's views on:

Propositions 42 and 48, which call for tightening of admission standards: "Membership is split down the middle. There have been some changes in Prop 48. The research isn't all in yet, but it appears to have been effective."

Making freshmen ineligible: "I wouldn't be surprised to see some conferences like the Big 10 and Pac-10 take a firm stand [in favor of the rule]. There's been a lot more conversation on it than ever before. I'd be surprised if it passes during the 1990 NCAA Convention, but it might a year away. You never know."

On paying athletes: "I'd support legislation that would provide more financial aid based on need to cover cost of attendance [at a university]. I'm not in favor of an outright stipend. I don't think the payment will eliminate the problems of the unscrupulous agent. I think it'll just raise the ante."

On economic problems: "Fifty percent of the schools are operating in the red. For years the solution has been to raise prices and play more games to enhance revenue. We can't do that anymore. We've virtually exhausted those avenues. Athletic departments have got to put in more cost controls. They can't be just revenue-producing conscious. They haven't done a good job at controlling costs."

On drug testing: "Drug testing is a deterrent to drug use. The numbers speak for themselves. Of the thousands of student athletes we've tested, only 1.5 percent have tested positive and then were declared ineligible. But I don't think drug testing is a solution to the problem. We've spent a lot of money on drug education programs. I hope the institutions are using it, because that's the only solution."

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PRO FOOTBALL

Eagles, Browns will put their best fight foward in London

From Chicago Tribune wires

LONDON—Never mind that Al "Bubba" Baker was on the sideline with an aching left knee for the last two days of drills against the Philadelphia Eagles here. The Cleveland Browns defensive end says he wouldn't miss Sunday's American Bowl exhibition (Channel 5, noon) at Wembley Stadium. It all started Tuesday before the

teams' first scrimmage. Eagles coach Buddy Ryan was asked about a magazine quote in which he supposedly used an unprintable verb to describe how Browns coach Bud Carson had "fouled up" Kansas City's defense in 1983 as Chiefs defensive coordinator.

Ryan said he stopped worrying long ago about all the controver-

sial quotes attributed to him. Carson directed a few choice verbs and adjectives at Ryan.

Then Eagles tackle Ron Heller threatened legal action against Baker for poking him in the eye last season. Heller said he suffered permanent eye damage. Baker said he was fined and suspended and that Heller refused his apology.

Wednesday, Browns defensive end Darryl Sims blew out his knee, and several skirmishes erupted. Thursday, more fisticuffs.

"They've basically announced what kind of game they want," Baker said. "In my 12 years in this league, I've never seen anything like it. I'm insulted."

Should be fun Sunday.

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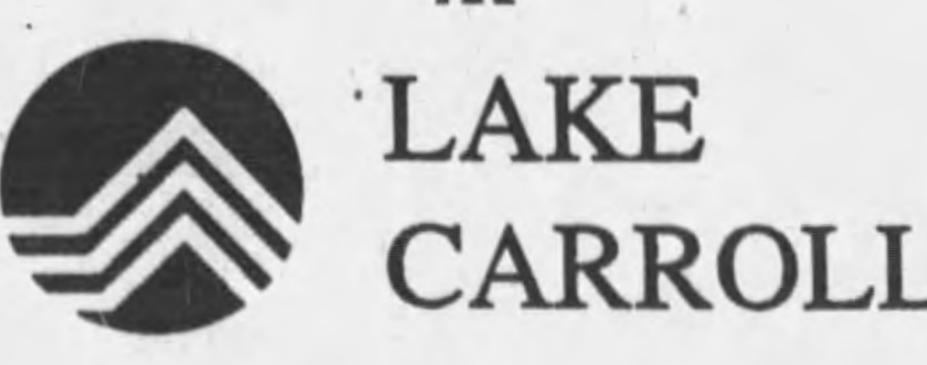
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