

NJCAA puts Barton County on probation

GREAT BEND (AP) — All athletic programs at Barton County Community College except for men's basketball have been put on probation by the National Junior College Athletic Association and the Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference.

The probation, announced by the NJCAA on Wednesday, stems from a work-study and financial aid scandal that led to indictments against seven former coaches and former athletic director Neil Elliott. It prevents any program except for men's basketball from participating in postseason competitions, including regional and national tournaments.

The men's basketball program already has completed a maximum two-year probation.

"Due to the noncompliance of NJCAA bylaws that came to light during the recent court cases, the NJCAA and the Jayhawk Confer-

ence felt it necessary to hand down a punishment to all teams at Barton County outside of men's basketball," Wayne Baker, NJCAA's executive director, said.

Only one of the cases went to trial in U.S. District Court — that of former track coach Lance Brauman, who was convicted on five felony counts. Other coaches and Elliott entered guilty pleas to reduced charges.

Although the federal investigation had focused on Barton County's basketball and track programs, Baker said there was enough "testimony that alluded to other programs with potential work-study problems" to warrant a department-wide probation.

Baker declined to discuss which programs may have been involved or whose testimony prompted the decision, but he said the scandal represented a "lack of institutional

control" at the college from 1998-2003.

During that time, Barton County won 23 national championships. According to NJCAA bylaws, the school will be able to retain those titles.

Baker said that if the college follows proper procedures, including filing online eligibility transcripts, it can ask for the postseason ban to be lifted sometime during the 2006-07 academic year.

Barton County President Carl Heilman issued a statement Wednesday saying that the school respected the NJCAA's decision, but he questioned whether the unethical actions of a few individuals was cause to punish other innocent programs.

"Although Barton County Community College may have lacked athletic programming accountability, this is not indicative of the college as a whole or the value that is placed on students and their learning success," the statement read.

Coaches at Barton County were accused of using work-study and campus employment programs to pay athletes for work they didn't do, of falsifying academic records and of causing false academic transcripts to be sent to other schools, among other things.

Prosecutors said the work-study scheme was devised to bypass conference rules against offering full athletic scholarships in Kansas junior colleges.

Bryce Roderick, the conference commissioner, said the scandal has been "the darkest moment in KJCCC history."

The school's current athletic director, Kurt Kohler, called news of the probation "a sad day in our history."

"There were a lot of innocent parties at Barton County that were affected," Kohler said. "Obviously things went on, but we'll take the opportunity to move on, to clean up and make sure we're on the right track."



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Staley Edmundson accepted the KXXX-Colby Free Press Bowl Spectacular football trophy Thursday for the town of Levant. Football fans submitted who they think would win the college football bowl games held in December and January. Of all the towns represented through the entries, Levant fans had the most games correctly picked. The contest will return this year.

Colby college names new sports information director

Colby Community College athletic director Carl Adams announced Trent Rose as the sports information director for 2006-07.

Rose teaches English and journalism for the college. He is also the advisor for the student newspaper.

"We are very pleased that Trent has agreed to assume the sports information duties," said Adams. "He is a graduate of CCC and has experience writing articles and publicizing sporting events."

Rose, an Oakley native, graduated from Colby Community College in May 2000. He continued his education at Fort Hays State Uni-

versity, graduating in December 2002 with his undergraduate degree in communications studies. He is a December 2006 candidate to receive his master's degree from FHSU in communications studies.

Rose was a member of the Colby Community College's student newspaper staff for two years. He served as the sports editor, copy editor and editor-in-chief for the FHSU student newspaper while completing his degree.

His wife Brenda is a third-grade teacher at Colby Elementary School. Trent's parents are Debbie and Randy Rose of Oakley.

Wranglers move nearly done

WICHITA (AP) — Wichita Wranglers president Jonathan Dandes says a few lawyers' signatures are all that is holding up an announcement about moving the Double-A baseball team to a fast-growing northwest Arkansas community.

The Wranglers, a farm team for the Kansas City Royals, are negotiating with officials in Springdale, Ark., where voters last month approved a bond issue to build a 6,000-seat stadium for a minor-league team.

Dandes, also the president of Rich Baseball of Buffalo, N.Y., said the Wranglers have been a financial drain for most of their 18 years. But he said the company wants to maintain its ownership of the highly successful National Baseball Congress, which is holding its annual World Series at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium.

"We're trying to do the best for everyone concerned," Dandes told The Wichita Eagle by telephone from Buffalo. "We want to create some win-win situations."

Dandes and Wichita City Council member Paul Gray said talks are under way about how to keep the NBC in Wichita. There also is talk about attracting a team from an independent league to fill spring and summer dates at Lawrence-Dumont.

Dandes said he would recommend luring a team from the Northern League, which has a club in Kansas City, Kan.

"In my opinion, that's a very good brand of baseball," Dandes said. "And it requires less of an investment, less operating costs and less attendance."

Neither Dandes nor Gray anticipated a problem with the city's lease agreement with Rich Baseball, which runs through 2009.

Dandes said Thursday he hopes the Wranglers can play the 2007

season at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium before moving to Springdale. But if the team can find a place to play its Texas League schedule next year, Dandes said he would be open to having the team leave after this season.

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