

Athletes producing in classroom



Courtesy UVU Sports Information Dept.

Chris Benson and the Wolverines baseball team were one of several programs to be recognized on a national level for academic success.



Kira Terry/UVU Review

Wolverines wrestling sent three members to nationals and boasted All-American, all while maintaining the ninth-highest GPA in the nation.

Wolverines amassing academic honors

By CASEY HALL
Sports Writer

Wolverines have been winning honors are year, not for what they have done on the court or field, but for what they have done in the classroom.

Of the 15 sports programs at UVU, 13 of them had a team GPA of 3.0 or higher. The two that didn't make the 3.0 mark had a GPA over 2.5.

Associate Director of Athletics Megan Kennedy doesn't expect those two programs to stand pat, either.

"We expect them to improve," Kennedy said.

UVU requires that all student athletes take 15 credit hours a semester. The NCAA only requires 12. UVU Athletics emphasizes that all student athletes strive for a 3.0 gpa and must continually work towards their degree.

"We make sure to keep

them moving forward in their education," Kennedy said.

It isn't something recent to happen to UVU athletics. The university has a long tradition of preparing their student athletes for the future. In each of the last four semesters the athletic department has combined for a GPA of 3.2 or higher.

Earlier this summer the Pacific Coast Softball Conference Commissioner Ellen Moore announced the 2011 PCSC honor roll, with 14 softball players from UVU making the list. Meghan Yocom led the team in with a 3.98 GPA.

"The girls always shine," Kennedy said.

This has been especially true for the women's basketball team. One year after finishing with the nation's highest GPA, the Wolverines finished fifth for 2010-11.

UVU men's baseball team's Billy Burgess and Cole McWhorter were nominated for the Capital One Academic All-District Eight First Team.

Burgess was named UVU's scholar athlete of the month in April. Business major McWhorter has a cumulative GPA of 3.92.

UVU men's wrestling was ranked ninth by the Nationals Wrestling Coaches Association for the second time, and ranking one spot higher than Cornell University. The team had a combined GPA of 3.13, exceeding the standards that University expects from them.

The Capital One Academic All-America At-Large Team, presented by the College Sports Information Directors of America, announced Flint Ray as a District 8 Second Team selection. This is the second time Ray had made the list.

With the many academic goals UVU Athletics achieves, it's safe to say the program strives to be second to none.

"We are very proud of our accomplishments," Kennedy said.

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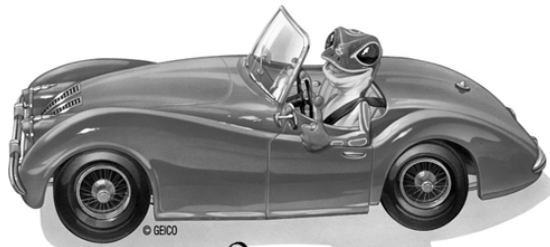


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National Spotlight

NCAA cracking down

By JONATHAN BOLDT
Asst. Sports Editor

The line that defines NCAA compliance has been blurred and skirted around ever since winning has taken precedence.

The most flagrant violation (as well as the most harshly punished) has been what is known simply as "The Death Penalty" regarding Southern Methodist University (SMU) and their football team.

In 1986 SMU faced allegations of having paid players on a regular basis. Following an NCAA investigation, it was found that SMU not only paid players, but also lied to investigators when the controversy surfaced.

The punishment has been the harshest penalty imposed on any team in any sport in NCAA history. Their entire season was cancelled in 1987 and the team could only have limited practices in shorts and no pads until the spring of 1988. They were prohibited from playing any of their home games in 1988.

Instead of subjecting themselves to the league's punishment, SMU ended up cancelling the entire season of their own volition. They were also banned from live television as well as participating in bowl games until 1989.

While nothing has come close to this type of punishment, there have still been

those that choose to cheat and risk the penalties that may come. This risk is taken in large part due to the vast amounts of money that come with a winning, high-profile team.

The payout for a BCS game last year was \$18 million to be split between the two teams and their respective conferences. That doesn't factor in ticket revenue for the season, TV contracts, or merchandise sales.

Recently there have been several teams that have come under investigation for anything ranging from giving a recruit a jersey to flat-out paying players or their families.

USC has received the harshest penalty, having their national championship from 2005 taken away as well as losing scholarships and any ability for post-season play for three years.

Not only did they lose team accomplishments, but Reggie Bush had his Heisman trophy stripped as well.

Louisiana State University, the University of Alabama, North Carolina University, Ohio State University and 2010 national finalists Auburn University and University of Oregon have all been targets of NCAA investigations.

Ohio St. has been the most visible in their exploits this year. What seemed like a

minor issue of players selling their memorabilia resulting in a five-game suspension turned into a massive cover-up that has kept evolving. Coach Jim Tressel admitted to his part in the cover-up, leading to his resignation.

What looked like a one-time offense is turning into a career-long string of offenses that keep mounting. His violations range from rigging equipment lotteries at summer camps to turning a blind eye to major violations, covering up known offenses, and lying to investigators.

The most recent news of violations within college athletics was last week's announcement that Georgia Tech had been placed on four years probation. The punishment was issued for what at worst was \$330 paid to Demaryius Thomas, now a wide receiver for the Denver Broncos.

Georgia Tech was fined \$100,000 and stripped of its last three games from 2009 season, including their ACC championship and Orange Bowl appearances. They did not lose scholarships or the chance for postseason play, however.

The full extent of what these teams have been doing may never be known, but one thing is for certain: the NCAA has appeared to have woken up.

Cheaters beware.



Gilbert Cisneros/UVU Review

Frimpong has dreamed of winning a gold medal since he was a small child.

GOLD FROM A1

"The chance to keep running and training for my dream here was a great opportunity," he said. "You always hear about American being a land of opportunity. Here I could condition, train and compete."

Ironically, Dutch authorities contacted Frimpong just as he was leaving to notify him they had indeed been mistaken, and he was now a legal Dutch citizen. Frimpong, however, chose to follow through with his decision to attend Utah Valley University.

After redshirting in 2009, Frimpong has quickly developed into a staple for the Wolverines track and field team, competing the 100, 200 and 4x100 meter sprints.

With his own personal finish line in sight, the Ghana native will undoubtedly approach it as he has each time before.

At full speed.

"I want to go out there to show people nothing can hold you back," Frimpong said. "Only I can hold myself back."

Updates on Akwasi Frimpong's career, as well as his chase for a gold medal, can be found on akwasifrimpong.com.