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# U.S.C. Sports Receive Harsh Penalties

By LYNN ZINSER

Citing major violations by U.S.C.'s football and men's basketball programs, the N.C.A.A. on Thursday barred the Trojans' football program from bowl games in the 2010 and 2011 seasons. U.S.C. will also be forced to vacate all victories in which the Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush participated beginning in December 2004 — including the Orange Bowl victory that produced the Trojans' Bowl Championship Series title in January 2005 — and will be docked 10 scholarships in each of the next three seasons.

The harshest penalties stem from improper benefits given to Bush and the basketball player O. J. Mayo, which the N.C.A.A. committee on infractions said struck at the heart of the association's amateurism principle.

The university was cited for lack of institutional control. The two head coaches — Pete Carroll in football and Tim Floyd in basketball — were not cited individually for violations. Both have left the university within the last year.

The Bowl Championship Series has not decided whether to vacate U.S.C.'s championship for the 2004 season, said its executive director, Bill Hancock. The B.C.S.'s presidential oversight committee will meet soon for that decision, Hancock said. If the title is vacated, he said, there would be no B.C.S. champion for that season.

Because Bush was ruled ineligible at least by December 2004, questions have been raised about the Heisman Trophy he won in 2005. A spokesman for the Heisman Trust, which oversees the award, said it would "issue a statement at the appropriate time" and would have no further comment until then.

The announcement of the N.C.A.A. penalties was made at a news conference by the infractions committee chairman, Paul Dee of the University of Miami, and the report was made available on the N.C.A.A. Web site.

These were the stiffest penalties given to any university since the N.C.A.A. issued the "death penalty" to the Southern Methodist football program in 1986, shutting it down for two years.

The committee accepted several of the penalties Southern California had imposed on its men's basketball team, including vacating its victories from the 2006-7 season and forfeiting one scholarship. U.S.C. had also barred the basketball team from the 2010 postseason. The university will also return the \$206,200 it received for participating in the 2008 N.C.A.A. tournament.

The women's tennis program was also penalized because a player used a university credit card to make \$7,000 worth of international phone calls.

Southern California must also disassociate itself from Bush and Mayo. Carroll left in January to become coach of the [Seattle Seahawks](#) in the [N.F.L.](#) Floyd resigned last June.

The university said it would appeal some of the penalties that it thinks are excessive.

Although the report cited Floyd for continuing to recruit Mayo after he was advised to stop, Dee said Floyd was not cited individually for any violation. He also said no consideration was given to the fact that Southern California recently hired Lane Kiffin, who was an assistant from 2001 to 2006, as the head coach to replace Carroll.

"That's an independent issue not involving this committee," Dee said. "That was not a part of it."

Kiffin said he took "the same stance as our university" on the penalties, according to The Associated Press. "There is some guilt, but the punishment is too severe," he said. "That's why the appeal process is taking place."

Carroll said in a video statement that he was "absolutely shocked and disappointed in the findings of the N.C.A.A."

The infractions committee discussed barring Southern California from football telecasts but decided the other penalties "adequately respond to the nature of violations and the level of institutional responsibility."

The committee's report detailed improper benefits received by Bush and his family after they became partners with two men to form New Era Sports and Entertainment. New Era provided housing, air travel, an automobile and other benefits to Bush's mother and stepfather, Denise and LaMar Griffin.

"The general campus environment surrounding the violations troubled the committee," the infractions report said. "At least at the time of the football violations, there was relatively little effective monitoring of, among others, football locker rooms and sidelines, and there existed a

general postgame locker room environment that made compliance efforts difficult.”

Bush, who now plays for the [New Orleans Saints](#), and Mayo, who plays for the [Memphis Grizzlies](#), have denied any wrongdoing while at the university.

Dee also addressed the length of time it took the N.C.A.A. to address violations that stretch back more than five years. He said it was an inordinately complicated case because the basketball violations happened as the football violations were being investigated, and the two cases were consolidated. The committee took an uncharacteristically long time to issue its ruling after the hearing was conducted in February.

Dee said that without any power to compel cooperation, the investigation was difficult.

Southern California is the first Football Bowl Subdivision program to be barred from bowls since Alabama in 2002 and 2003.

The penalties will be a significant setback to the Southern California football program for several years, said Dennis Franchione, the coach at Alabama when it was announced that the program would face the two-year postseason ban and the loss of 21 scholarships over three years. Franchione left for [Texas A&M](#) later that year.

“It’s a three- to five-year process to get back to where you were,” Franchione said. “We were able to recruit a lot of walk-ons at Alabama. Some panned out and we put them on scholarship. With U.S.C. being a private school, I’m not sure what their ability is to do that.”

The penalties did not have an immediate effect on the Southern California football team’s incoming freshman class, which was ranked No. 1 by Rivals.com, or its 2011 recruiting class. Xavier Grumble, an incoming freshman tight end from Las Vegas, and Antwaun Woods, a defensive tackle who will be a high school senior in Woodland Hills, Calif., said they would still attend U.S.C.

*Pete Thamel and Thayer Evans contributed reporting.*