

## WHEN WILL A COACH “GET IT”?

**By: Chuck Smrt**

Many compliance coordinators have a significant disagreement with the NCAA Committees on Infractions as to the expectations the committees have pertaining to the necessary monitoring activities that should be undertaken. However, one area of agreement between the committees and most compliance coordinators is a movement by the committees to place more responsibility on the head coach if violations occur in the coach's program. The problem is whether the head coach will understand and accept that responsibility.

In the spring of 2005, NCAA Bylaw 11.1.2.1 was enacted. It indicated that it is the responsibility of the institution's head coach to “promote an atmosphere for compliance within the program supervised by the coach and to monitor the activities regarding compliance of all assistant coaches and other administrators involved with the program who report directly or indirectly to the coach”. In the last 16 months, in four major infractions cases, head coaches have been cited for this bylaw in that they failed to promote an atmosphere of compliance because of the specific violations denoted elsewhere in the report.

Compliance coordinators repeatedly state to institutional officials in the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Department, and Admissions Office that compliance is a shared responsibility under the concept of institutional control. I believe that at many institutions, those individuals outside of the athletics department have a better understanding of a “shared responsibility” than many head coaches. For most head coaches, a shared responsibility for compliance is that they will not provide cash to prospects. Too many coaches completing practice, contact, evaluation, or telephone logs believe it is a burden and not a responsibility of their staff. Head coaches often are successful for several reasons, including managing every aspect of the program. If an assistant coach would fail to undertake a certain task, such as not submitting a required form for the head coach's radio show, “heads would roll”. Such monitoring and control over compliance activities by the head coach within the program usually is not present.

The compliance coordinator should utilize Bylaw 11.1.2.1 to assist in the institution's compliance efforts by: (i) educating head and other coaches that they have a responsibility and subsequently are liable if they do not meet that responsibility; and (ii) implementing tools that will evaluate whether the head coach met that responsibility. In TCG's compliance reviews, a frequent recommendation is that a head coach have specific compliance criteria in the coach's performance evaluation. For example, does the head coach's staff submit the monthly required forms by the specific deadlines, does that sport staff have a certain percent attendance collectively at the required rules education meetings, etc.

Many head coaches believe that they are fulfilling their responsibilities to the institution's compliance efforts if they do not cheat. Few believe that they have a responsibility to monitor the program, as most believe that it is the compliance office's responsibility to monitor. If the committees continue to make findings individually naming head coaches for a violation of Bylaw 11.1.2.1, the head coach will become a more active participant in the monitoring process and may even come to you to borrow a particular compliance monitoring form – wouldn't that be shocking?