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VIDEO PROJECT ON TOPICS OF NCAA COMPLIANCE

by

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B.S., University of Evansville, 2013

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

VIDEO PROJECT ON TOPICS OF NCAA COMPLIANCE

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Master of Science

in the field of Professional Media and Media Management

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TITLE: VIDEO PROJECT ON TOPICS ON NCAA COMPLIANCE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Uche Onyebadi, Ph.D.

The NCAA Division I Manual is a very black-and-white ruling system that can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted. To help increase understanding and illustrate some of the rules, this video project was created to cover four of the topics within the manual. The goal of the project was to present to administrators, coaches, and student-athletes at Division I institutions, some of the NCAA rules in a new, creative manner that helps understanding and retention of some of the current NCAA policies. The videos cover four topics: the safety exception, prospect visits, sports wagering, and social media. Each video covers some of the biggest points under each topic and illustrates those main points with examples to go along with the host's description of the bylaw being discussed. The goal of this project is to start a discussion that could lead to creating more videos in the same style.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Division I Manual for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) consists of 302 pages and 30 bylaws. The bylaws cover everything from the time a prospective student-athlete first steps on campus to the eligibility of an athlete through their graduation. The NCAA wrote the bylaws in order to maintain a balance of competition between its institutions, but oftentimes people have trouble either understanding or remembering all of the bylaws. While everyone has the ability to read through the rulebook, the ability to understand the rules and remember all 302 pages is nearly impossible for any one person. The time it would also take to go through bylaw by bylaw and learn every rule isn't afforded to many people. For this project, the challenge was to find a way to present some of the bylaws in a way that was easy to understand and present them in a quick and entertaining manner.

This project was undertaken for two main reasons. First, in all my research through different compliance sources, I didn't find any similar kind of video project. While many compliance departments at Division I institutions use social media accounts to disseminate information and attempt to educate people, most compliance accounts only use pictures or text to relay their information. These videos could fit into a new 'niche market' in compliance education. Secondly, these videos can serve as a new tool to teach coaches, student-athletes, and athletic administrators all across the country. In general, many of the people involved in collegiate athletics, who are the ones who have to comply by the NCAA bylaws, don't have the amount of time that would be necessary to read through and understand every single topic in the Division I manual. These short

videos will serve that target audience, as they don't take a long amount of time to watch and precisely present the points that need to be understood.

In this project, I chose to highlight four important aspects of the rules: the safety exception, prospect visits, sports wagering, and social media. The justification for the choice of these topics is made in the next chapter on methods I used to accomplish the project. These four topics served as a diverse scope of the rules presented in the NCAA Division I Manual.

While these videos are targeted more to those that are directly involved within the athletic departments, the information is presented in a simple manner where they could also be sent out over mediums like social media for the consumption of the general public. The public could use the education on these topics because fans can also commit violations that affect the universities of which they're affiliated with, like the social media rules for example. These videos were created so that anyone who watched them would be able to understand them without any previous background knowledge of the NCAA bylaws.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

To accomplish the above challenge, I set out to make a series of videos covering a few of the topics and bylaws in the NCAA Division I Manual. I wanted these videos to be somewhere in the time frame of two to three minutes, be easily understood, and present the material in an entertaining manner in the hopes that the rules would be easily remembered. I thought videos would be a great way to help present the bylaws because they can take the texts of the Division I manual and illustrate them with video to help reinforce whatever is being discussed.

I chose to do the four videos over four different topics: the safety exception, prospect visits, sports wagering, and social media. I chose those four topics based upon a number of criteria, including their relevancy to today's compliance environment, examples of previous cases where an institution had broken that bylaw, ability to illustrate examples of the bylaws using video, and bylaws where the language can be easily misunderstood or interpreted incorrectly. While the videos would not encompass the entire Division I manual, or even every single little detail of the individual bylaw covered, the videos would serve to provide the baseline, mandatory understanding needed for each of the four topics.

These videos were produced on the campus of Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, Illinois over a period of 60 days. The different scenes were shot within the athletics facilities at SIU, with assistance coming from the coaches, student-athletes, and administrative staff. The equipment used to shoot and edit the videos came from the Saluki Video Services department at SIU. The cameras used in the shoots were a

Panasonic AG-HPX500P P2 camera and a GoPro Hero 3. The videos were edited using Final Cut Pro on a Mac desktop. Because the cameras and editing equipment were donated for use by the SIU Athletics Department, the total amount of funding necessary for the project was under \$50 dollars, which was funded by me. In total, each video took about 5-7 hours or work time to make from the very beginning of pre-production to the final edits.

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT

As stated in the introduction, this project covered four topics: the safety exception, prospect visits, sports wagering, and social media. In the chapter, an explanation of each topic, a description of the video, and some history are presented for each video.

Safety Exception

The first video in the series focuses on the safety exception, which falls under bylaw 17 of the Division I Manual. Bylaw 17 deals with playing and practice seasons for all NCAA sanctioned sports. Bylaw 17 was written, according to rule 17.01.1, to “minimize interference with the academic programs of its student-athletes (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014).” Much of bylaw 17 is broken down sport by sport, and defines what a “countable athletic activity” (i.e. practices, work outs, etc.) is for a sports’ season. During the summer, student-athletes and coaches are not to participate in countable athletic activities together. However, the safety exception provides the exception to that rule. The safety exception allows a coach to be at an individual workout when the sport the athlete participates in could potentially put the athlete into unsafe situation if they were left by themselves. For example, the swimming and diving section of bylaw 17, rule 17.21.7 states “A coach may be present during voluntary individual workouts in the institution’s regular practice facility (without the workouts being considered as countable athletically related activities)...The coach may provide safety or skill instruction (NCAA, 2014).”

For this video, the object was to illustrate some of the sports that do or don't have the safety exception as part of their playing and practice seasons rules. The safety exception isn't talked about very frequently, and it was important to give a comprehensive list, just in case someone's institution doesn't have some or all of the sports mentioned. Here is the breakdown of sports and the safety exception:

- With exception: Swimming and Diving, Track and field, Equestrian, Fencing, Gymnastics, Rifle, Rowing, Skiing, and Water Polo
- Without exception: Tennis, Volleyball, Basketball, Football, Baseball, Softball, Golf

In the sports with the exception list, most of them are straightforward for why it is important to have a coach there for safety reasons. For example, the sports that involve participating in water, i.e. swimming and diving, rowing, and water polo, could present a drowning scenario for the athletes.

While most of the famous cases under bylaw 17 do not directly fall under the safety exception, the rules being broken did put the student-athletes at risk. In 2009, the University of Michigan football program was accused and found guilty of failure to monitor its program. This stemmed from the discovery that some of the Michigan football staff "improperly conducted voluntary summer workouts and were present 'on occasion' for voluntary seven-on-seven scrimmages during the summer (Rosenberg, 2010)." The allegations originally made felt that the voluntary workouts were putting the student-athletes in danger; however the University of Michigan athletic department vehemently denied that. The football program was put on probation, docked its own

practice hours, and removed staff from certain meetings, as part of the punishment for breaking the rules.

The safety exception was chosen as a topic for the project because it is a relatively unknown rule to most people and provided a great concept for the video to go along with the bylaw. While the language of the bylaw presented in the video was not overly difficult to understand, it was important to illustrate some of the examples so that the rule would stick with the person who viewed it. To help the illustration, the host was put into some participatory situations of sports that have and do not have the safety exception. By using him, and exaggerating some situations in the sports demonstrated (swimming and diving, track and field, tennis, and volleyball) humor was employed as a method to ensure that the safety exception could be easily remembered.

Prospect Visits

To be competitive, NCAA institutions must attract the top prospects in the country to come to their school to be student-athletes. To govern the recruiting practices of all Division I schools, the NCAA has dedicated bylaw 13 solely to Recruiting. The NCAA is so stern in their rules for recruiting, that the very first rule under bylaw spells out the punishment for any rule broken in bylaw 13. Bylaw 13.01.1 states, “The recruitment of a student-athlete by a member institution or any representative of its athletics interests in violation of the Association’s legislation, as acknowledged by the institution or established through the Association’s infractions process, shall result in the student-athlete becoming ineligible to represent that institution in intercollegiate athletics (NCAA, 2014).”

While there are many different aspects to recruiting, the video focuses on some of the most important rules for when the prospect is on an official visit to the campus. Everything about a prospect’s visit is regulated so that schools recruit on the most even playing field as possible. The video focused in on five rules for official prospect visits:

1. Prospect visits cannot last longer than 48 hours.
2. Custom materials cannot be given to the recruit, such as personalized jerseys
3. Recruits cannot be put into simulated game situations.
4. Personalized food cannot be given to the recruit; however generic snacks are acceptable
5. Hard-copy tickets to events cannot be given to prospects, they must sign in through a pass list.

To illustrate the rules in this video, it made sense to just follow a prospect through an official visit to a campus. The main subject, Prospect Lebowski, goes on a visit to SIU, and the video's host takes you through what the institution can do while he is visiting the institution.

While this video covers specifically just official visits, recruiting violations are some of the most frequently reported to the NCAA. Early in 2013, St. Mary's College in California was hit with four years' probation in basketball for impermissible recruiting practices (Schroeder, 2013). Also in 2013, Mississippi State was put on probation and took some football scholarship reductions due to recruiting violations (Schroeder, 2013). In regards to official visit violations, the University of Arkansas was caught showing personalized jerseys to recruits back in 2010 because the recruits tweeted out photos showing the jerseys (Patterson, 2010).

While this video is not an exhaustive piece that covers the entirety of bylaw 13, this topic served as very good one to feature because the official visit rules apply to all NCAA-sanctioned sports. The rules are fairly stringent and are not subject to frequent changes. It is important for the institution or potential student-athlete to remember them in order to stay compliant. It was easy to illustrate this episode by walking through the visit with the made-up prospect character, and the video as whole should be a great educational tool to anyone interested in learning about official visits.

Sports Wagering

Quite frequently, the word gambling has such a negative connotation that people automatically tend to assume that anything related to it is wrong and/or illegal. However, that is not always the case, and that holds true within the NCAA. Sports wagering, also known as gambling, is covered in bylaw 10 of the NCAA Division I Manual, specifically in rule 10.02.1. In rule 10.02.2, the NCAA defines wagering as, “any agreement in which an individual or entity agrees to give up an item of value (e.g. cash, shirt, dinner) in exchange for the possibility of gaining another item of value (NCAA, 2014).”

While sports wagering is expressly forbidden by the NCAA bylaws, that does not mean all forms of gambling are illegal. As stated in the video, there is a general rule to follow in terms of sports wagering. If the sports is sanctioned for competition by the NCAA, or is the pro equivalent (i.e. Baseball = MLB, Basketball = NBA, etc.), betting on an event is a violation of NCAA rules. In the video, the examples are brought up of events like *March Madness* bracket pools and the *Super Bowl*, both of which are prohibited to be bet on. In the same manner, online fantasy leagues can be participated in, but such participation becomes a violation when there is a wager required to play in it. However, there are some forms of gambling that are acceptable by the NCAA. In the project video, there are two examples of acceptable forms of gambling. Most casino games, like poker, are permissible to be gambled on. In the same manner, animal racing, i.e. with horses and dogs, are permitted to be bet on.

There are a couple of recent examples of sports wagering being caught and punished in the NCAA. In 2003, the University of Washington fired then football coach Rick Neuheisel, for participating in, then lying to administrators about, NCAA basketball

gambling pools in which he took part (Glier, 2003). According to report on the situation, Neuheisel “reportedly won \$20,000 in a 2002 office pool when he correctly picked Maryland to win the men’s basketball national championship (2003).” Another case demonstrates the reasoning why the NCAA prohibits sports wagering. In 2011, two former players and a former assistant coach from the University of San Diego were indicted with seven others as part of a game-fixing scheme discovered by the FBI (Thamel, 2011). The official indictment claimed that guard Brandon Johnson had “attempted to influence and influenced the outcome of a USD basketball game for a monetary bribe (2011).” While this is an extreme case that rarely occurs, it is exactly what the NCAA is trying to prevent by outlawing all forms of sports wagering.

The subject matter in this video was very easy to reinforce with visuals. While the host explains what forms of gambling are and are not permitted by the NCAA, mock scenarios of those actual events are shown. While the subject matter of the video is not overly difficult to comprehend, this video serves to reinforce that sports wagering is a violation while demonstrating at the same time that not all forms of gambling are illegal. In scenarios with bracket pools and fantasy leagues, they can be participated in as long as there is nothing wagered to participate in the said league or pool. Being compliant when it comes to sports wagering is imperative, because it an event that takes place outside the realm of competition that can directly impact a coach, player, or administrator’s participation in NCAA activities.

Social Media

Fewer topics are more relevant in all facets of life currently than the prominent use of social media and electronic correspondence as forms of communication, and that holds true in regards to the NCAA. As new forms of social media emerge, coaches, fans, boosters, current student-athletes are discovering more and more ways to communicate with prospects in a manner that is quick, direct, and efficient, virtually without limits and with limited costs. As social media continues to evolve, the NCAA has laid out some general rules to try and define what is and is not permissible. The general rule for electronic correspondence is 13.4.1.4, which is within bylaw 13 that covers recruiting.

The video covers all the main points in bylaw 13.4.1.4. Broken down into a list of four topics. They are:

1. For most sports, unlimited e-mails can be sent starting September 1st of the prospect's junior year
2. Prospects may be friended or followed on social media, as long as the generic messages sent with the requests are not altered
3. Before the prospect signs their National Letter of Intent with the school, all messages between them and anyone affiliated with the school must be private
4. No personalized videos may be sent in any electronic correspondence to the recruit with their likeness, name, or image (NCAA, 2014)

While the above points are aimed more towards coaches, interaction over the Internet with prospects from fans and boosters can be an infraction for an institution. Therefore, before introducing those points in the video, the host says the line, "Leave

the recruiting to the coaches,” as a reference to inform fans that they should not interact with prospects on Twitter.

Because social media is still a relatively new medium for communication, there has not been an egregious amount of NCAA violations of the electronic correspondence rule just yet. However, in 2012, University of Oklahoma offensive coordinator Jay Norvell committed one of the first violations of social media rules when he sent public messages to recruits offering them scholarships (Elliott, 2012). The messages were meant to be sent using the direct (private) message feature on Twitter, but were accidentally sent as a public message on his twitter feed. Coach Norvell attempted to delete the messages, but they were captured and reported as minor violations.

As social media continues to grow and change, this video will probably be the first out of the series of four that needs to be updated. This video was also the most difficult to show visually because it is not easy to recreate online representations of the rules. However, a basic reference to the social media sites that was included as part of the video should be enough to make a correlation between the language in the bylaw and the video being used to reinforce it.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As years come to pass, invariably some, if not all of the videos of this series will need to be updated with new information. However, this project is structured not just to be updated, but also to build a basic template for anyone who wishes to further expand upon these four videos. More videos could be added on to it right away, depending upon if there was a demand for a topic that was not completed in the original four, or if a new legislation was made, that necessitated a video like these to explain and reinforce the main points in it. The hope is that these videos will educate its audience right away, while encouraging someone else to pick up from where the original four left off.

As for topics to explore in future videos, there are some very pertinent ones to NCAA proceedings right now. Bylaw 16 covers “Awards, Benefits, and Expenses for Enrolled Student-Athletes” and is the shield over what benefits are and are not permissible for student-athletes. There is the potential for multiple videos in that bylaw alone. Another video could be done on what kinds of materials and abilities athletes have when it comes to memorabilia and autographs. Georgia running back Todd Gurley was suspended in October 2014 for breaking rules in that subject (Staples, 2014).

This project was very enlightening for me personally. I accomplished the main goal of the videos for myself as I worked on the project, that being becoming more knowledgeable about NCAA compliance topics. As I was learning about compliance through the creation of the videos, I tried to take and apply my learning process into the making of the videos. I served as a test audience for the project to ensure that the message being told in the videos would be understood.

While making the videos, the biggest challenge was to ensure that the video provided to illustrate the bylaws complimented the script that was with it, instead of detracting from it. Using humor and impressions to give the bylaws some life was important to ensuring that the message got across in each video. However, I had to balance and make sure that the humor in a scene did not distract viewers away from the topic's message.

Each of the four videos described above, and the topics they covered, presented unique and individual challenges on how to properly get the message across. Some videos needed greater exaggeration on the examples, while others simply relied on the video as a visual aid to complement the language of the bylaw. While none of the videos completely encompasses the topic they were designated to cover, the general premise is presented in a concise, understandable manner, which is meant to educate anyone, from someone who was worked for 30 years in an athletics department, to someone who is starting their first day at an institution. The rules cover everyone, from players to coaches and administrators, and these videos are relevant to all three parties. The videos take the black and white rulebook and illustrate it, elevating and improving the understanding of NCAA compliance along the way.

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