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Burwell: Mizzou owes the NCAA no favors

BY BRYAN BURWELL, Post-Dispatch Sports Columnist | Posted: Wednesday, August 24, 2011 12:05 am

As we all wait for the NCAA to finish up its crack investigation of the University of Miami scandal, which may include unleashing scores of investigators into South Beach, months of intense research, endless hours spent buried in paperwork — or simply reading all the sordid details in the Yahoo! Sports blockbuster — I can't help but wonder why anyone at the University of Missouri should abide by the NCAA's request that they patiently wait until their crack I-team uncovers all the dirt.

The NCAA has done Missouri absolutely no favors in this mess. Unless we're all missing some less than obvious morsel, at the very least it seems like a lot of people misled Missouri officials when they were conducting their due diligence in the hiring of new basketball coach Frank Haith five months ago. According to university chancellor Brady Deaton, members of the basketball coaching search committee talked directly to people from the NCAA and the University of Miami last spring, and no one indicated anything remotely was questionable about Haith, who was then the Miami basketball coach.

The NCAA says it has been conducting an investigation for five months, so that would mean they were buzzing around the Hurricane scandal last March. So it's not unreasonable to assume that Hurricanes officials were aware something was up during the NCAA Tournament, too. So somewhere in this process either before or after Haith was hired, several important officials with direct ties to the NCAA and the Miami athletics department possibly misled Mizzou officials or flat-out lied to them, or members of the search committee simply asked all the wrong questions.

"Everything came back very, very clear, very positive and left us reassured that this was an individual that would provide the leadership that we desired at the University of Missouri, so we feel good about the vetting process," Deaton said last week. "The investigation that had begun at some point, was an investigation, as I understand, perhaps of football, and had not reached over into this side at all. No evidence of this came up during the vetting process."

Giving the NCAA and Miami the benefit of the doubt, let's assume Haith wasn't a target of the investigation during Missouri's coaching search. Maybe that's why his name wasn't mentioned. But that still doesn't explain why when Haith's name did surface during their probe, the NCAA didn't feel like it owed his current employer the most basic professional courtesy to inform them immediately that something was happening. And now Mizzou is suffering collateral damage from a flawed investigative process.

The NCAA doesn't want Mizzou to interfere with the ongoing process, which means Deaton, director of athletics Mike Alden, Haith and the entire Tigers basketball team are being forced to wait on somebody else's timetable.

That's not right. That's not fair. That's completely unreasonable.

Deaton said he had been in contact with NCAA president Mark Emmert about the issue and that MU would honor the NCAA's request in an Aug. 16 letter not to conduct its own investigation, but he also said, "That doesn't mean we're just sitting back waiting."

I don't know what that means exactly, but Missouri should have every right to get to the bottom of this on its own timetable. A week ago, Deaton told reporters that he is certain the NCAA is 'sensitive to our concerns, and we'll be closely linked with them as we look ahead."

From what I've seen, I'm still waiting to see exactly when, where and how the NCAA has been sensitive to Mizzou's concerns.

There is so much wrong with the way this has gone down, and it is just the latest in a long line of nonsensical misadventures that prove the NCAA is hopelessly plodding along with no redeeming value. This is the same organization that could spend six hours interviewing the chancellor of UMSL about a part-time, \$5,000-a-year golf coach running a fantasy sports operation and put the school on a two-year probation for that silliness, but couldn't find a few minutes to spare to give the Mizzou chancellor a heads-up on something far more serious — accusations that a \$1 million-a-year, full-time basketball coach was accused of complicity in a \$10,000 payoff to a player — until after everyone else in the world could read about it on the Internet?

So what sense does this make, and where exactly is that 'sensitivity'?

What's really sad is that none of these foolish and troubling moves are even in column A on the list of reasons the NCAA as it is currently constructed just needs to just go away.

The list is so long and the reasons so plentiful why the NCAA is worse than a joke. The NCAA and its partner in crime, the Bowl Championship Series illegal cartel, do only two things well: rake in billions of dollars for the biggest universities and avoid sharing their revenue with the smaller schools or the players who help generate the big bucks.

If I were Mizzou, I wouldn't wait on the NCAA to do anything. I would handle my own business on my own terms.

The Star's editorial | Haith's credibility problems imperil his future at MU

Frank Haith's credibility as the University of Missouri's men's basketball coach has taken a hit. Combine that problem with Haith's previously unimpressive won-lost record on the court, and his continued employment in Columbia is in doubt.

Haith's problems are tied to the latest scandal to engulf big-time, big-money college sports, which appears uncontrollable by anyone, including university presidents and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

A Yahoo Sports investigation found that a University of Miami booster, Nevin Shapiro, had provided that school's athletes with gifts, cars and sex parties. Among the allegations: Haith, Miami's coach for seven years, knew that one of his players had inappropriately received \$10,000 to attend that school.

An NCAA investigation into this mess could take months, putting Missouri officials in an uncomfortable position with Haith, who gets \$1.5 million a year.

Ease Haith out now, and he could collect millions in severance before ever coaching a game at MU.

Stick with Haith, and the university could get a black eye if an NCAA probe confirms the Yahoo Sports allegations.

Earlier this month, Haith basically told his bosses at MU that he didn't know Shapiro.

But Yahoo Sports published two photos of Haith with Shapiro, including one event where Shapiro reportedly gave \$50,000 to Miami's basketball program. And then there were the 85 phone calls or text messages over five years between Haith and Shapiro that the website found.

Haith's apparent attempt to mislead MU officials will give athletic director Mike Alden more reasons to give up on his new coach.

Another option remains: Haith could resign, take a small payout and let Missouri try again to get a good basketball coach. In the sordid world of college sports, of course, that's probably a pipe dream.

Why boys bottle it up and girls can't keep quiet: The different ways the sexes deal with problems

By Claire Bates Last updated at 5:14 PM on 23rd August 2011

Boys are notorious for refusing to talk about their feelings. Now researchers say it's not because they are embarrassed but because they view the activity as a waste of their time.

A team from the University of Missouri conducted four different studies that included surveys and observations of nearly 2,000 children and teenagers.

They found that girls had positive expectations for how talking about problems would make them feel, such as expecting to feel cared for, understood and less alone.

However, boys had far more neutral reactions to talking. While they didn't express any worry about it they clearly felt it would be unproductive.

Study leader Professor Amanda Rose, said it overturned many traditional views about the differences between boys and girls.

She said: 'For years, popular psychologists have insisted that boys and men would like to talk about their problems but are held back by fears of embarrassment or appearing weak.'

'However, when we asked young people how talking about their problems would make them feel, boys didn't express angst or distress about discussing problems any more than girls.'

'Instead, boys' responses suggest that they just don't see talking about problems to be a particularly useful activity.'

Professor Rose said the findings could be reflected in future romantic relationships, where women often wanted to talk about their problems, while men withdrew instead.

She said: 'Women may really push their partners to share pent-up worries and concerns because they hold expectations that talking makes people feel better.'

'But their partners may just not be interested and expect that other coping mechanisms will make them feel better.'