

Characteristics of NCAA Conference Codes of Ethics

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Intercollegiate athletics are not immune from breaches of ethical conduct and acts of poor sportsmanship. Unethical behavior is becoming all too common among coaches, student-athletes, and spectators. Recent examples include Lock Haven's women's soccer coach asking his team to lose so that a rival team would be eliminated from the playoffs (Langdon, 1997); a Nebraska receiver admitting to an illegal kick that led to a win (Kennedy, 1997); and 25% of Division I football players admitting in an NCAA study that they bet on sports (Girard, 1998). In the past year, spectators at respected universities such as Stanford and Northwestern brought notoriety to their schools through their verbal taunts of opposing players, and fans at Maryland and Oregon State were guilty of inciting physical violence at basketball games (Killion, 1999). Moreover, reports of widespread academic fraud at major universities, such as the University of Minnesota (Wertheim & Yaeger, 1999),

and the off-the-field behavior of leading Heisman Trophy candidate Peter Warrick (Layden, 1999) brought more public attention to unethical behavior in college athletics. Surveys indicate that about 75% of Americans believe that college athletics are "out of control" (Frey, 1994). Compounding these problems is the fact that many athletic administrators are either unable to influence ethical behavior or contribute to the problem with their own actions (Kjeldsen, 1992).

While the previous examples are obvious breaches of ethical conduct, there are other ethical questions that arise within the context of sport which are not as obvious. For example, general problems exist such as the debate as to whether or not coaches should be allowed to change schools, often in the middle of their contracts, while the athletes they recruit are bound to their schools by letter of intent (McCallum & O'Brien, 1998). In addition, there are specific situations that create debate among the sporting community. For ex-

ample, an injured Nykesha Sales was allowed to score an uncontested lay-up to set Connecticut's scoring record, which created a debate as to whether the action was considered good sportsmanship ("Breaking records, bending rules," 1998). Because of the large amount of clearly unethical behavior in college athletics and the wide range of ethical dilemmas faced in this setting, it is important to study unethical behavior in college athletics and the means available for dictating or influencing ethical behavior.

Codes of Ethics

Although the term "ethics" is widely used, many people do not have a clear understanding of its meaning. The American Heritage Dictionary defines ethics as "the study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by the individual in his relationship with others" (Morris, 1979). This definition suggests that the study of ethics involves examining the choices individuals make when faced with a situation that has more than one possible solution. While choosing a solution, an individual will seek to determine which solutions are right and which are wrong. Therefore, the ultimate question in the study of ethics is: "What makes decisions or actions right or wrong?"

Moreover, after a solution is chosen by the individual, the individual's behavior will be scrutinized by others who will also seek to evaluate whether the behavior was right or wrong (Shea,

1996). Overall, there is greater scrutiny in society today of the ethical conduct of those in leadership positions in a variety of professions (Shea, 1996). In reaction to this increased scrutiny, there appears to be a move toward the establishment of a variety of codes and rules to govern the conduct of those working in these various professions. Many of these codes seem to be based on a general philosophy of moral conservatism and the moral certainty of duties, obligations, principles, and rules (McNamee, 1998).

Organizations within intercollegiate athletics have recognized the need to address ethical problems in their field and many have created codes of ethics in order to encourage ethical choices. For example, intercollegiate athletic conferences frequently establish codes of ethics for their member institutions and persons associated with those institutions. These codes are designed to outline the type of behavior expected of athletes, coaches, administrators, spectators, officials, and/or others, and these codes describe the conditions under which sport should be administered (Shea, 1996). Codes of ethics are generally published and distributed to members when they join the organization, to give members a clear understanding of the ethical standards from the beginning. The codes then need to be incorporated into the culture of the organization in order to increase the likelihood that they will impact behavior (Chonko & Hunt, 1985). This can be done by posting codes in highly visible places (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996) and by frequently referring to the codes.

Literature on codes of ethics (e.g. Campbell, 1998; Fraleigh, 1993; Freedman, 1998) reveals that they are most effective if they accomplish a few goals. Codes of ethics should (a) be based on a few overriding principles, (b) be clear as to whom the code is addressed, (c) specify who is responsible for enforcement, and (d) provide procedures for enforcement.

Principles should be accompanied by a rationale that gives a clear understanding of the purpose of the code, and should provide clear standards that can be the basis for making judgments regarding appropriate behavior in a variety of situations (Callahan, as cited in Fraleigh, 1993). One of the major criticisms of codes of ethics is they are extremely vague and therefore they do not provide adequate guidance to individuals and organizations regarding the expectations of the profession (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996). However, codes should not be too specific either (Kretchmar, 1993). In this case, the principles would not be able to be applied across a variety of settings and would provide guidance in only a limited number of situations. While there is available research on how to frame ideals, there is little research available on what ideals athletic governing bodies feel are important.

In sport settings, there are a variety of groups to which the code may apply (e.g., coaches, athletes, administrators). Effective codes need to specify toward which group or groups the code applies because standards may differ among groups. For example, many believe that

it is unethical for student-athletes to receive financial inducements from agents because this would violate their amateur status, but few would argue that their coaches are subject to the same standard. When the codes specifically address coaches and administrators, effective codes should mix service to the students and larger society, while still serving the best interest of the professionals (Fraleigh, 1993). An effective code should protect those who the organization seeks to serve from any possible negative impact from the actions of professionals, but should not compromise the standards of the profession regarding honesty and integrity. In addition to specifying to whom the codes apply, codes also need to be clear regarding who is responsible for ensuring ethical conduct. Codes frequently make individuals or groups responsible for the actions of others. For example, an institution may be held responsible for unethical conduct by their booster group or its members.

Finally, the code of ethics should be backed up by means for punishing those who violate the standards of the code (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996). Without some sort of possible penalties for violations, the code becomes merely a suggestion and the members can choose to ignore it. Again, there is little research to illustrate how conferences enforce ethical conduct and penalize ethical violations.

Purpose of the Study

There is a growing body of research on ethical behavior in sport (e.g. Hums, Barr & Gullion, 1999; Volkwein, 1995), yet there is a dearth of research on codes of ethics used by sport organizations. Ethical behavior in college athletics is of particular interest because recent research has found that rules violations are increasing in college athletics (Mahony, Fink & Pastore, 1999). Moreover, many people believe the actual number of violations far exceeds the number of institutions that are actually penalized. Therefore, exploring codes of ethics is an appropriate first step toward understanding ethical conduct among groups involved in intercollegiate athletics.

Specifically, the authors of this study are interested in exploring codes of ethics being used by NCAA intercollegiate athletic conferences. The authors of the current study chose to examine codes of ethics being used by intercollegiate conferences for three reasons. First, conferences act as governing bodies for intercollegiate competition and take on the responsibility for governing conduct. Second, conference rules often supersede institutional rules. Third, conferences are in a better position to enforce ethical behavior, because the strong incentives (e.g., money, winning) for institutions to violate the rules and the tradition of sub-unit autonomy in the university structure (Frey, 1994) makes strong institutional control unlikely. Specifically, the questions addressed by the study are:

1. What ideals and standards do conferences deem to be important?
2. To whom do conference codes apply?
3. Who is responsible for ensuring conduct?
4. What penalties and procedures do conferences use to enforce their codes?

A secondary purpose of the study is to examine differences in codes of ethics between conferences that participate in each of the NCAA's three divisions. Division I members are likely to be larger schools with a higher emphasis on competition and attendance. Division II members compete at a lower competitive level, have no attendance requirements and cannot exceed maximum financial aid awards for each sport. Institutions in Division III are generally smaller schools, and Division III members are prohibited from awarding financial aid on the basis of athletic ability. The authors are particularly interested in investigating whether the differences associated with division membership create differences in conference codes of ethics, specifically as they relate to the four questions above.

Method

A letter was sent to 45 randomly selected intercollegiate athletic conferences which requested copies of their codes of ethics. The sampling frame consisted of conferences located in the United States that were members of the

Table 1
Areas Addressed by Codes of Ethics

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Address specific ideals valued by the conference	25	11	6	8
Address specific constituents	23	10	6	7
Address responsibility for ensuring behavior	20	10	5	5
Address specific rules for enforcement	17	8	5	4
Address specific acts of unsportsmanlike conduct	22	11	6	5
Address procedures for contest/game management	10	5	2	3

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Codes were requested and received from conferences competing in all three NCAA divisions (15 conferences were selected from each division). A follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents. Twenty-five responses were received for a response rate of **56%**. Eleven of the codes received were from NCAA Division I conferences, six were from Division II and eight were received from Division III conferences.

Content analysis was the method used to gather data for the study. Content analysis is defined as an objective, systematic and quantitative approach to research that is appropriate when the mode of expression is crucial to the investigation, and the researcher's data are limited to documentary evidence (Kassarjian, 1977). Although there is an element of subjectivity in content analysis, with proper procedures it can deliver valid and reliable results (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991).

The output of the inquiry is a result of a content analysis of codes of ethics from NCAA Division I, II, and III conferences. The output addresses each of the research questions and is divided into precisely defined categories. To ensure category reliability, categories were chosen and agreed upon by a team of four researchers (Kassarjian, 1977). The unit of measurement for the qualification of elements was either theme or word depending on the category. Theme as a unit of measurement was chosen to analyze standards and ideals, because it is especially useful when analyzing values or beliefs (Kassarjian, 1977).

The first role of the content analysis required identifying ideals promoted in each code of ethics. Each ideal was assigned to one of seven categories. Next, codes were analyzed as to the constituents to whom the codes are addressed, persons responsible for ensuring ethical conduct and enforcement policies. Finally, many of the codes examined were

found to contain items pertaining to definitions of unsportsmanlike conduct and prescriptions for game management. These two aforementioned topics were most often addressed independently from ideals, therefore they are classified as separate sections within this study (see table 1).

Results

Ideals

Each of the conference codes studied addressed specific ideals valued by the conference and those ideals are outlined below. Within this context seven main ideals were identified: sportsmanship, values, promotion of a hospitable environment, compliance with conference rules and personnel, welfare of student-athletes, equitable treatment, and professional conduct (see table 2). Conferences used different statements to express general ideals, and many conferences used multiple statements to express ideals.

The most common ideal promoted by codes of ethics was sportsmanship. Sixteen of the 25 (64%) codes addressed sportsmanship as being critical to ethical conduct. Nine (81%) of the Division I codes used addressed sportsmanship, while half of the Division II and Division III codes addressed the subject. Codes most often addressed sportsmanship by instructing constituents either to act in a sportsmanlike manner or to emphasize and promote good sportsmanship. Additional statements specified that unsportsmanlike conduct would

not be tolerated, even in defeat, and sporting events should be conducted at the highest level of sportsmanship. Many of the codes also described in detail what classified as unsportsmanlike behavior, which will be addressed later in this article.

The second most common ideal was the promotion of values. Twelve of the 25 codes (48%) made specific mention of the importance of values or the need to promote values. The most common values mentioned were honesty, integrity, and fair play. Several codes specified that conduct should reflect the high standards of honor and dignity.

Eleven of the codes (44%) had language that called for members to provide healthy or hospitable environments. Statements in this category encouraged member schools to provide a healthy competitive environment by showing respect for opponents, officials and fans. Statements also encouraged fans to support their teams in a positive manner. Five of the Division I codes called for universities to provide crowd control that shows respect for the visiting team. This statement was not found in any of the Division II or Division III codes.

Specific statements designed to promote compliance with conference rules or support of conference personnel were mentioned in ten codes (40%). Several codes specifically stated that member institutions and personnel at member institutions should act in accordance with and abide by rules. In addition, codes included statements that called for support of the conference's officiating program, accurate eligibility reports,

Table 2
Ideals Promoted by Codes of Ethics

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Sportsmanship/Lack of Sportsmanship	16	9	3	4
Act in sportsmanlike manner	11	7	1	3
Emphasize & promote good sportsmanship	7	3	1	3
Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated	3	2	1	0
Conduct sporting events at highest level of sportsmanship	2	0	1	1
Promote Values	12	5	3	4
Promote desirable traits of honesty, integrity & fair play	10	4	3	3
Reflect high standards of honor and dignity	5	2	1	2
Providing a healthy/hospitable environment	11	7	1	3
Crowd control/respect for visiting team	5	5	0	0
Encourage a positive attitude/support in a positive manner	5	2	0	3
Respect opponents, officials, fans	4	2	1	1
Provide a healthy environment	3	2	1	0
Compliance with Conference Rules/Conference personnel	10	4	3	3
Act in accordance to rules/Abide by rules	7	2	2	3
Actively support officiating program	2	1	1	0
Avoid the need for rules	1	1	0	0
Support administrative decisions	1	0	1	0
Accurate eligibility reports	1	1	0	0
Welfare of Student Athletes	9	4	3	2
Education is foremost/high scholarship	7	3	2	2
Welfare of student/athlete comes first	4	1	1	2
Value quality competitive opportunities	3	1	1	1
Improve student life	2	1	1	1
Athletic excellence is related to caliber of experience	1	0	0	1
Athletics are extra-curricular, not income or entertainment	1	0	0	1
Provide student athletes academic support	1	1	0	0
The game belongs to the players	1	0	1	0
Equitable Treatment	8	2	2	4
Gender equity	3	1	0	2
Conduct competition in non-discriminatory manner	2	0	0	2
Equitable treatment	2	1	1	0
Institutional policies are the same for athletes & students	2	0	1	1
Professional Conduct	8	4	3	1
Conduct exemplifies highest traditions/high standards	4	2	1	1
Promote a cooperative environment with the media	2	2	0	0
Respect confidentiality	2	0	2	0
Provide an example for fans	2	1	1	0
Avoid conflicts of interest & exploitation	1	0	1	0
Honor professional relationships	1	0	1	0
Prevent drug abuse	1	0	1	0

Note: Many conferences provide multiple statements pertaining to individual ideals, so the totals will not be equal.

Table 3
Individuals Addressed by Codes of Ethics

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Coaches	18	8	4	6
Student-Athletes	17	9	4	4
Administrators/staff	16	8	4	4
Game officials	8	5	1	2
Fans/spectators	7	3	1	3
Cheerleaders/spirit groups	6	5	1	0
Team representatives/associated individuals	6	3	1	2
Students	4	3	0	1
General/all	4	2	1	1
Sports-information directors	1	1	0	0
Assistant football coaches	1	0	0	1

support for administrative decisions, and the desire to avoid the need for rules.

Statements pertaining to the welfare of student-athletes were mentioned in nine codes (36%). The most common statement pertaining to the welfare of student-athletes asserted that education is foremost, and high scholarship should be valued. Multiple codes included statements that the welfare of the student-athlete comes first and that institutions should value quality competitive opportunities for student-athletes. Also mentioned in this category were remarks such as: athletics should improve student life; the game belongs to the players; athletic excellence is related to the caliber of experience; and athletes should be provided with academic support. In addition, one code mentioned that athletics are extra-curricular activi-

ties, therefore the main goal is not entertainment or revenue generation. There were no real differences between the three divisions in this category.

Statements designed to promote equitable treatment were mentioned in eight codes (32%). Statements in this category fell into two general themes. The first theme concerned gender equity and non-discriminatory competition. The second theme concerned the way student athletes are treated in relation to the rest of the university community. This was addressed by stating that student-athletes should receive equitable treatment and student-athletes should be treated in the same manner as other students in the university community.

Professional conduct was specified in eight codes (32%). Most of the statements in this category concern coaches.

Half of the eight codes in this category exhorted coaches to exemplify the highest standards of conduct. Other statements were more specific, instructing coaches to promote a cooperative environment with the media, provide a positive example for fans, and respect confidentiality. Also mentioned in this category were statements that individuals should act to prevent drug abuse, honor professional relationships, and avoid conflicts of interest and exploitation.

Individuals addressed

While none of the conferences had specific codes for one more particular groups, twenty-three of the 25 codes (92%) specifically named one or more groups or individuals addressed by the code of ethics (see table 3). Coaches, student-athletes, and administrators were the groups most often addressed. Coaches were addressed in 72% of the codes, student-athletes in 68% and administrators were targeted in 64%.

Game officials, fans/spectators, cheerleaders/spirit groups, team representatives, and students were also mentioned in multiple codes. Sports-information directors and assistant football coaches were also addressed in one code each. Four of the conferences (16%) specifically stated their code of ethics applies to everyone involved in the intercollegiate athletic program. No real differences exist between divisions.

Responsibility for conduct

Codes of ethics vary as to who is responsible for ensuring ethical conduct. Twenty of the 25 codes (80%) specified one or more entity as being responsible for ethical conduct (see table 4). The member institution was mentioned most often as being responsible followed by coaches and the university's athletic director. Institutional staff, student-athletes, game officials, and the university's chief executive officer were also mentioned. Three of the Division I codes ad-

Table 4
Responsibility for Ensuring Behavior

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Member institution	8	5	2	1
Athletic director	7	5	0	2
Coaches	7	3	2	2
Institutional staff	3	3	0	0
Student-athletes/Players	2	1	1	0
Game officials	1	0	1	0
CEO	1	0	1	0

Table 5
Enforcement

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Individuals responsible for enforcement				
Commissioner	12	8	2	2
Institution administrators	5	1	2	2
Committee	4	1	2	1
Penalties				
Suspension	10	5	3	2
Reprimand	4	3	1	0
Institutional fine	2	2	0	0
Letter	2	0	1	1
Probation	2	1	1	0
Termination from team	1	0	0	1
Team suspension	1	0	1	0
Incidents during NCAA play are reported to NCAA	1	0	1	0
Institutional expulsion	1	0	1	0
Appeals				
Hearing by committee	7	4	3	0
Hearing by board of directors	1	1	0	0

dressed institutional staff, while none of the Division II or Division III codes mentioned institutional staff as being responsible for conduct.

Enforcement

Enforcement policies are outlined in 17 codes (68%) (see table 5). Twelve of the 17 codes (70%) overall placed the conference commissioner in charge of penalties, while 80% did so at the Division I level. Other codes made institutional administrators and infractions committees responsible. Penalties included individual suspension, reprimand,

probation, institutional fine, team suspension, termination from the team, and institutional expulsion. Eight of the codes of ethics also illustrated the process for an appeal. Overall, conferences at the Division I level were more specific with regards to penalties and had more options for penalties, particularly when compared to Division III.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Of the 25 codes of ethics examined, 22 of them (88%) specifically defined actions that constitute unsportsmanlike conduct (see table 6). All of the Division

Table 6
Unsportsmanlike Conduct

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Public criticism of officials, conference, opponents	16	9	5	2
Obscene gestures & profanity	10	4	3	3
Physical abuse	9	5	3	1
Inciting abusive action	9	5	3	1
Negative recruiting	9	5	3	1
Taunting/verbal abuse	8	4	2	2
Tobacco usage/alcohol usage	5	1	2	2
Entering locker rooms	3	2	0	1
Use of artificial noise makers	2	0	0	2
Stipulations regarding scouting opponents	1	0	1	0
Coaches are prevented from contacting officials	1	1	0	0
Use of cannons	1	1	0	0
Gambling	1	1	0	0
Release of sensitive information	1	1	0	0
Intimidating action	1	0	0	1

I and II codes and 63% of the Division III codes had rules regarding unsportsmanlike conduct. The most popular rule prohibited public criticism of the conference, officials, or opponents and was found in 64% of the codes. Prohibitions against obscene gestures and profanity were the next most popular followed by prohibitions of physical abuse, inciting abusive action, negative recruiting, taunting or verbal abuse, and the use of tobacco and alcohol. A small number of codes placed stipulations on coaches entering locker rooms, scouting of opponents, and contact with officials. Also mentioned were statements prohibiting intimidating actions, use of artificial

noisemakers, release of sensitive information, gambling, and firing of cannons.

Game Management

Ten codes of ethics (40%) provided prescriptions for game management (see table 7). The most often cited stipulation required a statement of sportsmanship be read by the public address announcer at all home events. Others gave administrators the responsibility for maintaining a sportsmanlike atmosphere and the responsibility for ensuring the safety of visiting players and fans. The codes also addressed crowd control, bench decorum, and the prohibition

Table 7
Contest/Game Management

	Affiliation			
	All	I	II	III
Public address announcements promoting sportsmanship	7	2	1	4
Administrators must maintain a sportsmanlike atmosphere	3	2	0	1
Insure security of visiting players and fans	3	2	1	0
Arrange seating to insure sportsmanship	2	2	0	0
Prohibit alcohol at competition sites	2	0	0	2
Post sportsmanship statement at sites	1	0	0	1
Coaches should assist in crowd control	1	1	0	0
Discourage disruptions	1	1	0	0
Administrators must meet with ejected personnel	1	0	0	1
Head coach is responsible for bench conduct	1	0	0	1
No alcohol at conference championships	1	1	0	0
Welcome the other team & provide information	1	1	0	0

of alcohol at competition sites. There were no real differences among the NCAA divisions.

Discussion

This study sought to explore intercollegiate codes of ethics in order to discover what intercollegiate conferences include in their codes of ethics. Although the codes of ethics differed with regards to length and specificity, a number of basic themes did emerge. First, many of the codes highlighted the basic principles of honesty, integrity, and sportsmanship for athletes, coaches, and administrators. Second, the codes dealt with behavior both on and off the field. For example, while many of the codes focused on athlete recruitment and the

enforcement of related rules, sportsmanship on the playing field was also an important theme in a number of the codes.

Many of the codes emphasized the values of athletics in an educational institution and stressed the functional contribution of coaches to their schools and their players. Moreover, some of the codes also alluded to the expected norms within today's society and stressed the necessity for athletes, coaches, administrators, and even fans to behave in a manner consistent with these norms. However, it should be noted that only one third had statements that pertain to the welfare of student athletes.

One of the more confusing aspects of codes of ethics for intercollegiate ath-

letic conferences is determining which group the code is directed toward (e.g., athletes, coaches, fans, and/or administrators). In the current study, eleven different groups of people are identified in the codes of ethics. Although the conferences vary greatly in terms of whom is addressed by the code of ethics, coaches are mentioned most often. This is consistent with the idea that teams reflect the character and personality of the coach, and coaches are important in teaching student-athletes how to compete fairly (Campbell, 1998). However, it appears that many of the codes lack clarity in regard to whom the items are focused, and many conferences appear to address too many groups within one code. The strategy in the 1970s by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) of developing different codes of ethics for different groups (e.g., student athletes, coaches, and officials) may be more effective (Kroll, 1976, 1977a, 1977b). Several of the codes did attempt, as is also suggested by Fraleigh (1993), to mix service to students and clients and larger society, while still serving the best interest of the professionals.

While almost one-third of the codes did not address the enforcement policies related to the code, most did discuss who was responsible for enforcing the code, the possible penalties for violating the code, and the appeal process. A process for enforcing the conference codes of ethics is important for three reasons. First, past experience indicates that self-regulation is not sufficient to ensure ethical behavior (Fraleigh, 1993).

Second, the NCAA's system of punishment is often ineffective (Mahony et al., 1999). Third, ethical behavior is often inconsistent with individual and organizational success (Frey, 1994; DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996), therefore individuals will have a general tendency to violate the code if there is no enforcement.

In most cases in which enforcement is addressed, an official of the conference office, most often the commissioner, has the responsibility for enforcement. In these cases, the commissioner is responsible for appropriating and enforcing penalties to punish violators. However, the effectiveness of code enforcement in many of these cases is questionable. The conference commissioner, who is often asked to be both judge and jury, is often far too busy to monitor compliance with the code. Moreover, because the conference often benefits financially from the success of its member institutions, the commissioner would have little incentive to punish a successful institution, coach, or player. For example, it would not have been in the best interest of the Atlantic Cost Conference (ACC) to further penalize Florida State star Peter Warrick or the Florida State football program for his off-the-field behavior. The success of the 1999 team was enhanced by Warrick's performance and ultimately resulted in a spot for Florida State in the national championship game and a large payout to the ACC.

Because of the realization that the commissioner and conference office cannot adequately monitor compliance with the code of ethics, most codes

specified an entity (member institution, athletic director, coach) as being responsible for the ethical behavior of employees, student-athletes, and fans. This entity was responsible for making sure the institution's members are aware of and behave according to the ideals and standards described within the conference's code of ethics. However, the heavy reliance on self-regulation, particularly when the codes are generally inconsistent with individual and organizational success (Frey, 1994; DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996), is a questionable strategy at best.

Differences between codes used by conferences competing in different divisions were minimal. Sportsmanship as an ideal was found more often in NCAA Division I codes than in codes from the other two divisions. This implies that there may be a greater need to emphasize sportsmanship in conferences that compete at a higher level. The second difference between codes pertains to crowd control. Five Division I codes call for universities to provide crowd control that shows respect for the visiting team, but that statement is not found at the lower levels. This difference recognizes that larger crowds attend NCAA Division I events creating a greater need to protect visiting teams. The third difference was found between Division I and Division III schools with regards to the formality of the code enforcement. Division I conferences were more likely to be clear about who was responsible for enforcement, to have an appeals process related to penalties for violating the code, and used a greater number of

penalties. The other statements were found across divisions implying that conferences competing in the three divisions have similar ethical philosophies, but recognize differences in sportsmanship, crowd size, and enforcement.

Although the purpose of this study was not to evaluate the codes' effectiveness, it should be noted that there are some inconsistencies between the findings of the current study and the prescriptions for effective codes found in the literature. Many of the documents sent by the conferences were more similar to policies and procedures than actual codes of ethics. Statements regarding adherence to conference rules, definitions of unsportsmanlike conduct, and prescriptions for the conduct of athletic events are all specific instructions with little room for interpretation. As discussed in the literature, codes of ethics are supposed to be more general and are designed to provide a basis for good decisions in a variety of situations. This is important because it is impossible to build a code of ethics that will cover every dilemma (Freedman, 1998). In addition, codes of ethics that convey shared values are often more effective than lists of policies and procedures (Kleiner & Maury, 1997). The codes of ethics did appear to be based on some overriding principles, as suggested by Fraleigh (1993), but they often were too specific and failed to provide guidance in a variety of situations.

Overall, the codes of ethics being used by intercollegiate athletic conferences were clearly diverse. They varied with regards to the specificity of the

standards, procedures to handle unethical behavior, related penalties, and the groups that were the focus of the standards. Clearly, more work is needed on developing codes of ethics for sports governing bodies in order to encourage and ensure improved ethical behavior by sport organizations.

Implications for Sport Managers

The results of this study present some implications for sport managers. First, no one ideal was represented in more than 16 of the 25 codes studied. This suggests that either conferences have varying ideas of what is important to include in a code of ethics or conference codes are incomplete. In the case of the latter, codes may have been hastily developed in order for a conference to join the list of organizations publishing a code of ethics. Whatever the reason, sport managers can use the information in this study to identify areas where the codes are lacking and add elements to complete the codes. Similarly, the results illustrate that conferences are often unclear as to whom the codes of ethics serve. It is important that much thought is put into the code and that the code reflects the mission and values that the conference wants to stress. With this in mind, conferences should specify to whom a code is directed, whom the code serves, and who is responsible for ensuring ethical conduct. In regard to enforcement, perhaps an impartial body should review cases of unethical conduct rather than the conference com-

missioner in order to preserve the interests of all parties involved.

Future Research

The limitations of this study are that the results are exploratory and the results are not intended to be an interpretation of the usefulness of the codes. Future studies of codes of ethics designed to evaluate effectiveness or interpret meaning, should be careful to employ standards to ensure reliability and validity.

Content analysis is useful for providing an empirical starting point for new research about the effects of communications (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). The results of the current study give an understanding of what intercollegiate athletic conferences consider appropriate to include in their codes of ethics. This knowledge creates a foundation to expand into an institutional level of analysis. Therefore, the next step in this line of research is to explore consistency between conference codes and the representative schools. In addition, an institutional analysis will allow researchers to study the differences between institutions with differing missions.

The current study also creates a foundation for studying athletic personnel and student-athletes to determine their understanding and perceptions of ethical conduct. Similar to the institutional approach, a study measuring the perceptions of athletic personnel toward the code of ethics would address inconsistencies between institutional standards

and personal standards. In particular, the researchers hope to address the issue of whether coaches believe that their respective code of ethics has an impact on their profession. A future study would include a survey to assess the impact of codes of ethics on the perceptions of intercollegiate athletic coaches.

The current study evaluates codes of ethics at American institutions; therefore, the prescriptions are based on predominantly American values. Future research should look at how these American codes differ from codes used in other countries and cultures. Results of this study should shed light on how cultural differences impact ethical behavior in sport and offer implications for governing bodies of international sport organizations and competitions. This topic is particularly interesting in light of the recent International Olympic Committee scandal, which appeared to suggest that cultural differences in what is considered ethical may in fact exist. In addition, future research will include a study that examines the nature of a code of ethics.

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