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## College Football Scandals: Auburn, Washington, Miami, Notre Dame, Minnesota

Richard C. Crepeau  
University of Central Florida, [richard.crepeau@ucf.edu](mailto:richard.crepeau@ucf.edu)

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Last Saturday you could hear the chant that goes with the tomahawk chop on two networks, and if you were quick with the remote control you could even get them into sequence. The Atlanta Braves were on CBS, while over on ABC the Florida State Seminoles were putting on a clinic for Kansas to open the college football season. As always, Keith Jackson was there with his now familiar, nearly anesthetizing, call of the game. College football and Keith Jackson are nearly one.

In a recent interview Jackson admitted that he approaches college football more as a cheerleader than a critical broadcaster, and says that he would not criticize a product for which his employer has paid millions. Don't ever accuse Keith Jackson of being a journalist, or being objective.

And so the college football season began on August 28 weeks before many colleges were in session, right in the middle of some great pennant races, and a day before the start of the U.S. Open Tennis Championship.

But in fact many of the colleges are in mid-season form already. At Auburn University news came a few weeks ago that the Eric Ramsey tapes have finally resulted in NCAA sanctions for the Tigers. The NCAA says that Auburn lacked "institutional control" of its athletic program, and that the violations were encouraged by Pat Dye's policy of not wanting to know what was going on in the program. For his efforts Eric Ramsey earned the wrath of Alabama fans, and learned that he could not count on his teammates for support. Football has taught him some valuable lessons for life.

A few weeks later the axe fell at Washington, a program that Bill Walsh had publicly described as "outlaw" a few months ago. It was the PAC-10 Conference who laid down the sanctions on the Huskies, which began its investigation after it became known that quarterback Billy Joe Hobert was given a \$50,000 loan by an Idaho businessman. Other players received illegal payments, and several boosters have been ordered to disassociate themselves from the Washington program. The sanctions imposed by the PAC-10 were harsh, and the result was that Coach Don James, who had been there for 18 seasons, resigned in protest. When the going gets tough, the really great leaders jump ship.

Meanwhile in Miami the thunder continues over charges last week by former star Benny Blades that he and five teammates received illegal payments from an agent in violation of NCAA regulations. Blades said he received \$30,000 from Mel Levine, and he also described an incident in which one of his teammates put a gun to Levine's head to collect some money he was owed by Levine.

And even at Notre Dame the atmosphere is growing more tense. In last week's Sports Illustrated the recruitment of kicker Scott Bentley is recounted. When Bentley signed with FSU, Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz called Bentley to berate him for not choosing Notre Dame. Holtz told Bentley he had made a 40-year mistake and let his father down. Bentley's father, a Notre Dame alumnus, let Holtz have it with both barrels describing Holtz's call as "a despicable tactic" which he can not forgive.

Also on the Lou Holtz watch a highly critical book on him is due out next week. It will chronicle a trail of NCAA violations at both Minnesota and Notre Dame, including illegal payments to players and the encouragement of the use of steroids. The book is based on interviews with over 100 players, co-workers, and officials at the schools. As is always the case with this sort of book, many of those interviewed are already coming forward to announce they are being mis-quoted or mis-represented.

Those of us from Minnesota who are familiar with Lou Holtz's dismal legacy there will not be surprised at whatever is in this book, nor will those who have followed his career over the longer haul. This king of the one-liners and male-patterned sincerity has covered his tracks over the years by winning, and by dazzling the locals, wherever he has been. Fawning alumni love the winning and the well-turned cliché, while local and national reporters love the fact that Lou Holtz is good copy.

For years I had admired the Notre Dame athletic program which under the watchful eye of former Notre Dame President Father Theodore Hesberg maintained quality of performance, standards of ethics, and academic integrity. I was dismayed when Lou Holtz was hired to head the football program, and perhaps now the chickens are coming home to roost.

It really is great to have college football back, it's such an essential part of the American system of higher education. Just ask Keith Jackson he'll tell you how great it is, and that Don James and Lou Holtz are great molders of character.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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