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## Paid vacations

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE  
Paid vacations  
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What is the difference between getting a paid vacation and being suspended from your job with pay?

One comes as part of your normal work time, the other is announced at a press conference.

On Tuesday, Bob Huggins, head basketball coach at the University of Cincinnati was arrested for DWI. Friday he held a press conference expressing apologies and remorse and taking "full responsibility" for his actions. Saturday Bob Goin, Athletic Director at the university suspended Huggins from his job indefinitely and with pay so Huggins could "update his life priorities" and "address any personal matters he has ignored."

There is no indication that Huggins' job is in jeopardy. In fact, Goin said he expects Huggins to be coaching in the fall. There is no indication that Huggins will be expected to clean up his act on the sidelines or improve the dismal graduation rates in his program. In the past Huggins' program had the distinction of being placed on probation for two years for numerous violations including lack of institutional control, lying to NCAA investigators, and giving illegal favors to his players. There are no consequences to these actions because Huggins wins. This is a basic rule of intercollegiate athletics.

Just a little over two weeks ago Gary Barnett, head football coach at the University of Colorado, had his three month paid vacation, a.k.a. suspension with pay, ended when he was re-instated as head coach by the University President in a move that stunned many in and out of Colorado.

Promising "a sweeping overhaul" of the athletics program at the University of Colorado, President Betsy Hoffman announced that this did not mean that anyone would be swept out of a job. A commission set up by the University Board of Regents criticized President Hoffman, Athletic Director Richard Tharp, Coach Barnett, and University Chancellor Richard Byyny for "lax oversight and slow reactions to recruiting problems." Five of the eight members of the commission have said that heads should have rolled.

Instead the Colorado Buffalo football program will roll on. Gary Barnett last week gave the now obligatory Sunday "confessional" Conversation to ESPN Sportscenter where he "admitted mistakes." He also took a stand against rape saying it is a "very, very serious crime." He is opposed to the use of hookers for recruiting and taking recruits to strip clubs. He expressed "shock" over the actions of one his staff, a person who has been with him since his days at Northwestern.

Apparently Gary Barnett, unlike most coaches, is not a "control freak." His players and staff go about their business without Barnett knowing what is going on, without his constant supervision and scrutiny. That is more than a little difficult to fathom but apparently he is one of those rarities, an easy-going lackadaisical type, in the high-pressure world of big-time sports.

Barnett, of course, says that he is responsible for his program including both "coaching responsibilities" and "educational responsibilities." He says that this current set of problems will not lead him to be more severe in punishing his players, but it will result in an effort to change the public "perception" that he is "arrogant." The Sunday Conversation was not a good start towards that end.

After being reinstated with continuing pay as head coach by President Hoffman, Barnett said he was dedicated to leading "a socially responsible program that will be a source of pride" to the school, both athletically and academically. This should make everyone feel better.

So ends several months of accusations and charges flying around the campus and the city of Boulder. What has not ended are the ongoing criminal investigations associated with the scandals. Whether any of this will ultimately change the culture at the university remains to be seen. The one thing we do know is that it is unlikely to change the culture of intercollegiate athletics generally. The pressures to win and keep those revenue streams flowing are simply irresistible.

Continuing the quest for new revenue streams the BCS this past week took one more step forward in their endless quest to prove that you can "milk a goose." In this case the goose of the mixed metaphor is the one that produces new BCS Bowl championship games, which in turn produce more revenue, and more opportunities to exploit the talents of top-flight college football players before they turn professional.

Seeking to avoid any suggestion that a playoff is in the offing, the BCS officials were quick to point out that the new game will match the two top-ranked teams, and is not a playoff from the previous four bowl games. The game will be played one week after those four games, but this in no way should be construed as an endorsement of extending the season as university presidents have opposed a national championship playoff on precisely those grounds.

If this makes no sense to you don't be alarmed. It shouldn't.

If it does make sense to you then you may have a future as a CEO in higher education at a big-time football school.

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

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