

3-30-2006

## Scandal at Indiana, K-State, and Duke

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

 Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Sports Management Commons](#), and the [Sports Studies Commons](#)  
Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety>  
University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Commentary is brought to you for free and open access by the Public History at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in On Sport and Society by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### Recommended Citation

Crepeau, Richard C., "Scandal at Indiana, K-State, and Duke" (2006). *On Sport and Society*. 731.  
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety/731>

SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE  
Scandal at Indiana, K-State, and Duke  
MARCH 30, 2006

In this month of madness, March is going out like a crazed lion. The Final Four has offered excitement at the level of delirium. While off the court the dark underside of intercollegiate athletics had found numerous modes of expression pointing to levels of madness of another kind.

Although the three cases to be examined here are considerably different in both seriousness and consequences, all three are part of a piece and intricately interrelated. All three point to the incompatibility of intercollegiate athletics and the educational mission of the university as well as the ways in which the university has been corrupted by the big business of intercollegiate athletics. The culture of privilege and exception surrounding athletic programs, departments, and personnel, has become deeply ingrained in university life.

The first, and least egregious case, involves Indiana University, the institution once dominated by its basketball coach, Robert Knight. In search of a new Mr. Knight, IU has turned to Oklahoma where Kelvin Sampson has produced a winning program and amassed an envious record of a reported 550 recruiting violations currently being investigated by the NCAA. No doubt the upside here is that Sampson has demonstrated an ability to attract good players, and through this investigation he should learn how to better hide the violations. This is the good news for Indiana.

Hiring someone under this kind of cloud sends the message that coaching integrity is something that is not all that important, or at least not as important as winning.

If the IU case is tainted, then what can be said about the hiring of Bobby Huggins as the new coach at Kansas State University? The baggage carried by Huggins makes Sampson's look like an overnight case. Huggins has been in coaching for 24 years with the most recent sixteen at the University of Cincinnati where he took his teams to March Madness for fourteen straight years.

The fact the graduation rates for Cincinnati's basketball team under Huggins were among the worst in the nation doesn't seem to matter. The fact that Huggins was arrested for drunken driving

two years ago and that his firing at Cincinnati resulted from an accumulation of off-court offenses and questionable on-court machinations seems not to matter either. Kansas State, like so many other athletic programs, is looking for a winner, and Huggins has established himself as a consistent winner on the court.

Kansas State President Jon Wefald said that America is a country that always gives people an opportunity to fit in and start over again. "What we have here today is a coach who can do a great job as a coach and recruiter, and do a good job of bringing in student-athletes that are going to go to class and graduate." The latter comment qualifies as delusional and the President was lucky he didn't choke to death on it.

One report indicates that the announcement of Huggin's hiring came after the University President first listed any number of significant academic achievements within and by the university. Whether this provided enough cover is doubtful and probably fooled no one except perhaps President Wefald.

The third case involves the university that is reputed to have one of the best academic environments in the nation, and one that demands much of its athletes. Some even claim that at Duke the term "student athlete" is not an oxymoron. Today Duke is dealing with an ugly incident involving a case of rape at a party held by the Lacrosse team. The specifics of the case are not yet known, although one university official said that there is no doubt the rape did take place and that the party was fueled by alcohol. The Lacrosse season has been suspended and the team members are under police investigation.

A number of things are worth noting about the Duke case beyond the specifics of the rape case itself. First, team members have not been forthcoming with information about the night in question and police have described them as uncooperative. Second, there has been almost no public comment from the coach of the team, Mike Pressler, who has been head coach at Duke for over twenty years. Third, fifteen members of the 47 man Lacrosse team have been previously charged in cases primarily of underage drinking and drunken behavior. Fourth, the case has a racial component as the woman is black and all but one of the 47 players is white.

Student protests have taken place on campus accusing the Duke administration of not acting forcefully enough, and directing anger at what some see as a conspiracy of silence by the

players. The racism inherent in the case has also been an object of the student protests.

While many on the Duke campus thought this would be a week in which their primary athletic concern would be the appearance of their basketball teams in the final four, instead they are caught in a maelstrom created by another athletic team. One group of students drafted this message to the University President: "It is our impression that the University is cultivating and sustaining a culture of privilege and silence that allows inappropriate behavior to plague the campus."

This is a message appropriate to many campuses across the nation where intercollegiate athletics has become the wild elephant that no one seems to know how to tame or control. That is the unspoken meaning of March Madness.

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.

Copyright © 2006 by Richard C. Crepeau