

NCAA accuses Tennessee of rules violations

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 23 February 2011 12:26

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The NCAA has charged Tennessee with at least a dozen rules violations committed by the university's basketball and football programs.

Included in the allegations after the NCAA's 22-month investigation are charges that coach Bruce Pearl acted unethically and failed to monitor compliance activities by his basketball staff. Former Volunteers football coach Lane Kiffin is also charged with failing to monitor his staff. Kiffin is now at Southern California.

The notice, which was received by Tennessee on Tuesday and released Wednesday, did not include potential punishments.

"Receipt of the NCAA's notice of allegations by the University of Tennessee is another step in bringing this matter to conclusion," Tennessee athletics director Mike Hamilton said in a statement. "Our institution has operated in complete cooperation with the NCAA since April 2009 as they have pursued their investigations. We take these allegations seriously and most items noted in this document have already been reported broadly."

Tennessee has until May 21 to respond to the NCAA's allegations and is expected to appear at a June 10-11 meeting of the Committee on Infractions.

Most of the charges against Pearl and his program stem from impermissible calls made to recruits and Pearl's improper hosting of recruits at his home during a 2008 cookout.

Pearl acknowledged in September misleading NCAA investigators about the cookout, and Tennessee punished him by reducing his salary by \$1.5 million over four seasons and banning him from off-campus recruiting for a year. The Southeastern Conference punished him with an eight-game suspension, which he has already served.

"Throughout this process we have recognized that we made significant mistakes, and we look forward to concluding this matter with the NCAA," Pearl said in a statement. "The penalties imposed on our program to date have been severe, but I want to commend our student-athletes and staff for staying focused and working through these potential distractions."

The charges against Kiffin and his staff relate to impermissible contact with recruits by coaches and the program's student hostesses.

The NCAA also reviewed Tennessee's baseball program during its probe, but did not levy any charges against it.

"Any allegation from the NCAA is a serious matter for us, and we will address these issues in a timely manner," said Jimmy Cheek, chancellor of Tennessee's Knoxville campus. "As an institution we have been proactive in dealing with these allegations, and we will continue to cooperate fully with the NCAA."