NCAA Ethics and Compliance Program

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

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**Introduction**

The values and principles that people, business corporations and institutions abide by in order to behave, make decisions and conduct activities in a socially acceptable manner are called ethics. In most cases, institutions put in place a code of conduct that regulates their policies and decisions. As organizations operate within the society, reputation and productivity is affected by the ethical stance and philosophy of the organization (Ferrell & Fraedrich, 2015). Lately, ethics has become a prime concern for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). NCAA is a body which creates such rules and enforcement methods that aim at providing oversight and guidance to the athletic departments of several universities schools. However, the organization has failed many a time to prevent ethical violations. In this context the scandals that emerged in the Penn State University, University of Alaska and Ohio State University.

**Discussion**

**Q1.**

In 2011, a sex scandal surfaced in the Penn State University. The former assistant coach of the Penn State football team had assaulted young boy for many years (McFadden & Stenda, 2015, pp. 5-18). As per the investigation, the misbehavior was initially reported in 1998 to the university as well as Gary Schultz, who was the Senior Vice President of Finance. Consequently, the investigation was conducted but due to lack of evidence, no charges were made against him. In another report in 2011, a graduate assistant reported that he saw the former vice coach assaulting a boy sexually. The matter was reported to the Head Coach who further reported it to the University officials, but no notification was sent to the police.

In the Ohio State scandal, the athletes had violated the rules and the team's coach had covered them up. Consequently, five players were suspended. The violation involved the use of a gear that was supplied to barter tattoos by the team (Ferrell & Fraedrich, 2015). As per the NCAA rules, football players cannot accept any benefits which have not been given to the general public. Despite the fact that the head coach knew about it, he did not report the violation to the school.

The scandal of a football coach at the University of Alaska surfaced in 2012 when it was discovered by an investigation that Bobby Petrino, the football coach, got Jessica employed as Student Coordinator at the university's Athlete Department. She was a former student at Alaska University. She had been employed as an employee of the state. Since Bobby has a personal relationship with Jessica, there was clearly a conflict of interest (Ferrell & Fraedrich, 2015). The investigation further unearthed that, in fact, Bobby had offered her gifts that were of at least $20, 000 worth.

The above-mentioned scandals could not be prevented by the NCAA. One reason for this failure was the honor-based system of rules and regulations. Furthermore, the NCAA program assumes that all individuals are not only competent but can also make ethical decisions in trying situations (McFadden & Stenda, 2015). Finally, the scandals show a lack of effective deterrence: the NCAA prescribed punishments seem to be less costly in comparison with the benefits associated with violations of the rules.

**Q2.**

No ethical program can succeed if the people in higher authority decide not to report the unethical incident. The Penn State scandal is a case in point. Although the incident was reported first in 1998, no action was taken on the ground of lack of evidence. Again, when the Head Coach reported the misbehavior to the officials, the matter was not reported to the police. Nor was any disciplinary action taken. This case exposed negligence and inaction on the part of the University and NCAA leaders.

Article 11 makes the head coach responsible for creating a conducive environment for enforcement and compliance (Ridpath, 2015). He should himself keep an eye on his subordinates including the assistant coaches. In the case of Penn State, the Assistant Coach remained involved in unethical behavior for more than a decade and the Head Coach was not aware of it.

Likewise in Ohio State case as well, the Head Coach was aware of the matter, yet he did not even bother to report it. In the case of the University of Alaska, the Coach was himself involved in illicit activity. Although he had a personal relationship with the former student, yet she was employed as a student coordinator. The Coach should have remained aware of the conflict of interest (Ferrell & Fraedrich, 2015).

**Q3**

Had there been a proper enforcement and investigation mechanism in Penn State, the child would not have been abused for such a long duration i.e. more than a decade. In most of the cases of sexual abuses, there is the issue of lack of evidence. Therefore, other considerations are taken into account. With proper investigation and punishment, the abuse of the child could have been stopped in 1998. Moreover, if the Head Coach had remained vigilant of the activities of the Assistant Coach (under Article 11), the child could have been saved earlier from abuse.

Although employees (including coaches) are required to maintain exemplary ethical standards, in Ohio State Scandal the Head Coach himself was guilty of unethical behavior as he did not report the incident. The suspension of 5 students could have been avoided if the Head Coach had warned them earlier of the repercussions.

If the oversight, supervision and enforcement mechanism had been robust, the Coach at Alaska University would have never employed a person as Student Coordinator who he had a personal relationship with. Moreover, this particular case has highlighted the limitations of the NCAA regime. Such conflict of interest had not been previously defined categorically in the constitution of NCAA.

**Q4.**

The investigation for cases related to sexual abuse should be dealt with in a manner different from other crimes. While conducting an investigation, they should not strictly ask for evidence. The history of the alleged criminal, the consistency in the statements of the sufferer, and the inconsistencies in the statements of the accused should be focused upon to reach a conclusion. Moreover, the role of Head Coach should be reinvigorated as the prime supervisor to keep an oversight on unethical behavior. He should remain vigilant and keep an eye on not only players but also his subordinates. In this regard, the NCAA should expand its regime and address the issues of conflict of interest. Moreover, the school administration should be strictly asked to report any violation in a timely manner to the NCAA. The students should be made aware of the Principles for Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics (Article 2 of the Constitution). When they are aware, they can avoid misconduct and misbehavior. Moreover, they will be in a better position to report any exploitation.

**Q5.**

The HR Department should remain vigilant and keep an eye on cases related to conflict of interest. The Alaska Scandal could have been prevented, had the HR Department known about the Coach’s personal relationship with the Student Coordinator. Moreover, since it is important for the Coach, as per Article 11 of the Constitution of NCAA, to maintain a supervisory oversight over his subordinates, the HR should ensure that the Coach fulfills this responsibility in an efficient manner. In this regard, the Coach must avoid giving personal favors to his subordinates including the assistant coaches. Otherwise, the subordinates will become lax in their duties. Therefore, the HR department should ensure that the relationship between the Coach and other staff remains professional.

**References**

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