

**For Immediate Release:  
March 8, 2011**

**Contact: Shelly Poe  
(614) 678-2034**

## **Ohio State self-reports to NCAA case involving head football coach**

Ohio State officials today submitted a self-report to the NCAA that Head Football Coach Jim Tressel violated provisions of NCAA Bylaw 10.1 when he failed to notify the university about information received involving two football student-athletes.

The university became aware of this situation on Jan. 13, while reviewing information on an unrelated legal issue. The university's Office of Legal Affairs notified the appropriate institutional officials and an investigation began immediately. After conducting additional fact finding, including questioning Tressel, the university notified the NCAA on Feb. 3.

"I am disappointed that we find ourselves in this situation. I want to thank the NCAA for being responsive and working collaboratively with us on this case. We ask Buckeye Nation to be patient as we resolve this matter and we thank them for all the support that they provide to our programs," said Athletics Director Gene Smith. "I think everyone knows how I feel about Jim Tressel. There is no better coach at developing young people than Jim."

"I am sorry and disappointed this happened. At the time the situation occurred, I thought I was doing the right thing," Tressel said. "I understand my responsibility to represent Ohio State and the game of football. I apologize to any and all of the people I have let down. I will grow from this experience."

"The university has responded as rapidly as possible and worked with the NCAA to ensure full cooperation," said President E. Gordon Gee. "Coach Tressel has acknowledged he has erred and takes full responsibility for his actions. During the past decade, he has devoted his life to the university, the students on his team, and so many others in the larger community. As an NCAA member school, we are committed to doing everything possible to comply with NCAA rules and bylaws."

As part of its self-report, the university has self-imposed the following sanctions: a public reprimand and apology; a two-game suspension; attendance at a compliance seminar; and a \$250,000 fine.



March 8, 2011

Ms. Julie Roe Lach  
Director of Enforcement Services  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
P.O. Box 622  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-6222

Dear Ms. Roe Lach:

This is in reference to the recent conversation between representatives of The Ohio State University ("University" or "institution") and the NCAA Enforcement Staff and constitutes a self-report of a violation of NCAA legislation involving the institution's head football coach. More specifically, the University reports that:

*Between the period of April 2, 2010, and January 15, 2011, Head Football Coach Jim Tressel violated the provisions of NCAA Bylaw 10.1 when he failed to notify institutional officials of information he received beginning in April 2010 that concerned potential violations of NCAA preferential treatment legislation with student-athletes on the football team. Coach Tressel received e-mails from an attorney that provided specific information about two student-athletes selling memorabilia to a local tattoo parlor owner. These e-mails also indicated that one student-athlete may have received free and/or discounted services at a tattoo parlor. Although Coach Tressel had the information, he did not inform institutional officials.*

Upon receiving information about this matter in January 2011, University officials acted immediately. The Faculty Athletics Representative, key administrators from the Office of Legal Affairs, and the President's Office became engaged in the inquiry. After conducting several interviews, the University has determined the above NCAA violation occurred and is imposing significant corrective and punitive measures upon Coach Tressel and the football program. This letter will review the institution's inquiry and also detail these corrective and punitive actions, which include suspending him from coaching several games during the 2011 football season, reducing his salary, and precluding Coach Tressel from having any involvement with spring practices or summer camps in 2011.

#### Overview of Inquiry

On December 19, 2010, the institution submitted a self-report of a violation of Bylaw 12.1.2.1.6 and an eligibility reinstatement request to NCAA Vice President of Academic and Membership Affairs Kevin Lennon and NCAA Director of Secondary Enforcement Chris Strobel. This report involved six current football student-athletes who sold institutionally-issued memorabilia or received discounted services. At the time this report was submitted to the NCAA, the University believed that the first notice received by institutional officials was contained in a December 7, 2010, letter from the U.S. Department of Justice to the University's Office of Legal Affairs. In essence, the letter indicated that certain Ohio State University sports memorabilia had been seized in a criminal investigation and questioned whether the University or

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certain student-athletes had ownership interest in these items. Utilizing the letter to begin its investigation, the University conducted an inquiry and submitted the December 19, 2010, self-report.

However, on January 13, 2011, while reviewing information on an unrelated legal issue, the institution's Office of Legal Affairs discovered an e-mail from Coach Tressel that was the subject matter of some of the activities pertaining to the University's December 2010 NCAA self-report. The Office of Legal Affairs notified appropriate institutional officials and an additional inquiry began. One of the first actions was to conduct a search of Coach Tressel's e-mail account. This search uncovered three e-mail strings between Coach Tressel and an attorney relating to this matter and to certain student-athletes. Two strings occurred in April 2010, and one in June 2010.

E-mails searches were then conducted by the University of all football coaching staff members and other football administrative staff members. After these searches, it was concluded that no other e-mail correspondence to Coach Tressel or any other football coaching or other football administrative staff member existed that related to the football student-athletes' activities set out in the University's December 19 NCAA self-report. As a result, the institution believes that no other football coaching or other administrative staff member was knowledgeable prior to December 2010 of these activities and needed to be interviewed.

On January 16, 2011, three days after the initial e-mail was discovered, Coach Tressel was questioned by institutional officials about his correspondence with the attorney and he acknowledged receiving these e-mails. On January 21, 2011, the institution retained The Compliance Group (TCG) to serve as an outside consultant on this matter. As you know, shortly thereafter, you were informed of this information and invited to participate in the institution's ongoing investigation. On February 8, the NCAA and institutional representatives conducted an interview of Coach Tressel. Additional joint interviews with the University and the NCAA were conducted with various individuals over the following two weeks resulting in this self-report.

The institution will continue its inquiry in conjunction with the NCAA Enforcement Staff but believes that at this point, it is appropriate to report this information.

#### Overview of E-mail

The e-mails discovered by the University indicated that the attorney initially e-mailed Coach Tressel on April 2, 2010, with information pertaining to football student-athletes' alleged visits to a local tattoo parlor. The e-mail also indicated that the owner of the parlor possessed Ohio State football memorabilia, that one specific student-athlete may have been given free or reduced tattoo services, and that the owner of the parlor had a criminal background and was the subject of a criminal investigation. Coach Tressel replied "I will get on it ASAP" in an e-mail response on the same day.

The attorney e-mailed Coach Tressel again on April 16, 2010 with additional information, including that two student-athletes were selling their Championship rings. Coach Tressel e-mailed a reply of "keep me posted as to what I need to do, if anything."

Finally, on June 1, Coach Tressel initiated an e-mail to the attorney asking if the attorney had additional names of football student-athletes involved in these activities. The attorney replied the same day that he did not have additional names. On June 6, Coach Tressel thanked the attorney for his response. No other e-mail correspondence between the attorney and Coach Tressel (or the attorney and any other football coaching staff member and other football administrative staff members) was discovered by the institution.



### Information Relating to the Violations

The University contends that Coach Tressel violated NCAA Bylaw 10.1 and also failed to follow the institution's protocol for reporting of violations by not informing compliance or other institutional administrators of the information he received beginning in April 2010. This policy is communicated to all coaches and staff on a regular basis. The policy, in part, is detailed below:

*"Any employee, student-athlete, or other individual associated with The Ohio State University Athletics Department must notify the Compliance Office immediately of any possible or potential violations of University, Big Ten, or NCAA rules."*

Coach Tressel's employment agreement also obligates him to inform compliance and the Director of Athletics of any violations or likely violations of NCAA rules.

Besides not coming forth unsolicited to the Director of Athletics or a member of the University's compliance staff, below are the occasions when the institution believes Coach Tressel had a specific opportunity to provide information relative to the NCAA violation reported in December but failed to do so. Coach Tressel:

- i. Signed the NCAA Certificate of Compliance Form on September 13, 2010, indicating he has reported any knowledge of possible violations to the institution;
- ii. Did not report the information in the e-mails or his knowledge of potential violations to the institution in early December 2010 when he initially learned from University officials on or around December 9 that information had been received from the Department of Justice regarding the student-athletes potentially violating NCAA legislation for selling memorabilia and receiving discounted services; and
- iii. Did not report the information in the e-mails or his knowledge of potential violations on December 16, 2010, when asked by institutional officials about his knowledge of the student-athletes' involvement in these activities. More specifically, while conducting its inquiry, institutional officials interviewed the six involved student-athletes. Following the interviews, University officials informally questioned Coach Tressel about his knowledge of this information. When Coach Tressel was asked if he had been contacted about the matter or knew anything about it, he replied that while he had received a tip about general rumors pertaining to certain of his players, that information had not been specific, and it pertained to their off-field choices. He implied that the tip related to the social decisions/choices being made by certain student-athletes. He added he did not recall from whom he received the tip. He also stated that he did not know that any items had been seized.

During the January 16, 2011 meeting with institutional officials and during his February 8, 2011, interview with the NCAA and the University, Coach Tressel explained that based on a few of his past experiences with student-athletes, his primary concern after receiving the attorney's e-mails was whether any of his players were associating with individuals involved in criminal activities. He added that he did not report the information to the institution because he believed that there were unusual extenuating circumstances that outweighed him informing the University of the information he had learned. In particular, he was protecting the confidentiality of the attorney (which the attorney requested) and of the federal criminal investigation. He prioritized potential criminal activity and the possibility of interfering with an ongoing criminal investigation over potential NCAA violations. Coach Tressel stated that after receiving the information, his concerns about his players associating with individuals involved with potential criminal activity caused him



to talk to team members more often about with whom they should associate. During these discussions, he indicated that he now understood that he mishandled this situation.

While explaining the extenuating circumstances surrounding his failure to report the information, Coach Tressel admitted during his February 8, 2011 interview that he understood that: (i) not reporting the information constituted a NCAA violation; (ii) he knew "there would be consequences," including NCAA violations involving the student-athletes for selling memorabilia at some point; (iii) he did not "look at" eligibility issues prior to December 2010, although he thought the involved student-athletes would eventually be ineligible; and (iv) the "inevitable" would occur at some point if the student-athletes were involved in criminal and/or NCAA violations.

### Corrective and Punitive Actions

Based upon this information, the institution has undertaken significant and swift corrective and punitive actions. Several are detailed below:

#### A. Corrective Actions

1. Review both the institution's formal "Protocol for Reporting of Violations" and NCAA Bylaw 10.1 with all coaching staff members on a quarterly basis through the conclusion of the 2011-12 academic year, and semi-annually in subsequent years. The expectation of strict compliance with these provisions will be communicated by, among others, the Director of Athletics and the Faculty Athletics Representative.
2. Require Coach Tressel to attend a 2011 NCAA Regional Rules Seminar by September 2011. This attendance will be certified and reported to appropriate institutional officials.

#### B. Punitive Measures

1. Issue a public reprimand to Coach Tressel for his involvement with the activities in this report. Additionally, Coach Tressel will issue a public apology.
2. Suspend Coach Tressel from the first two games of the 2011 season. This suspension shall preclude Coach Tressel from: (i) participation in any game-day activities; (ii) being in the facilities where the games are played during game day; or (iii) having any contact with members of his coaching staff while the games are ongoing.
3. Fine Coach Tressel \$250,000. This money will be used to pay for the direct costs of the investigation (i.e., travel, outside consultant, etc.) from the annual compensation provided to Coach Tressel.

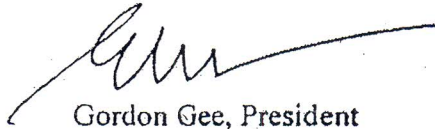
### Conclusion

This issue was self-detected by the institution, and the University's "Investigating Possible Violations" policy was adhered to in the conduct of a thorough and expeditious investigation. The FAR, Office of Legal Affairs and President's Office directed and were involved in every step of both the investigation and the formulation of significant corrective and punitive measures. These same individuals also will ensure strict compliance with the penalties.

The institution is very surprised and disappointed in Coach Tressel's lack of action in this matter. His behavior in this situation is out of character for him and is contrary to his proven history of promoting an atmosphere of NCAA compliance within the football program. Since his hiring as the head football coach in 2001, he and his staff have attended NCAA rules education sessions on a consistent basis, regularly sought interpretations, and self-reported secondary violations. His lack of action in this matter appears to have been the result of indecisiveness regarding the appropriate actions to take in this specific situation in which he was placed, as opposed to a blatant disregard of NCAA legislation. Nevertheless, we recognize that he should have forwarded this information in some manner to appropriate institutional officials. With the exception of this mistake, he is a man of integrity and high moral standards.

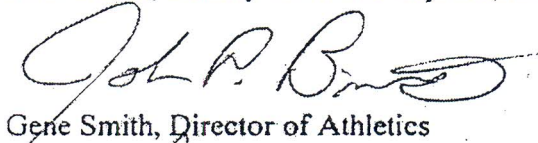
The institution appreciates the cooperation of your staff in this inquiry.

Sincerely,



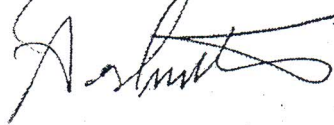
Gordon Gee, President

John Bruno, Faculty Athletics Representative



Gene Smith, Director of Athletics

cc: Mr. James E. Delany





Archie, Doug

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From: Tressel, Jim  
Sent: Friday, April 02, 2010 6:32 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Thanks [REDACTED] ...I will get on it ASAP ...Happy Easter to you as well !! Go Bucks !! jt

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, April 02, 2010 2:32 PM  
To: tressel.3@osu.edu  
Subject: [REDACTED]

Dear Coach Tressell:

- A lot of my friends are in law enforcement. The Federal Government raided the house of [REDACTED] yesterday. His name is Edward "Eddie" Rife.
  - He lives [REDACTED]
  - His [REDACTED]
  - He owns and operates a tattoo parlor call Fine Line Ink off Hague and Sullivant
  - When the Federal Government raided his house yesterday they seized 70,000 in cash and a lot of Ohio State Memorabilia; including championship rings.
  - I am being told [REDACTED] and other players have taken Eddie Rife signed Ohio State memorabilia (shirts/jerseys/footballs) to Eddie who has been selling it for profit. I dont know if he gives any money in return to any players.
  - I have been told OSU players including [REDACTED] have been given free tatoo's in exchange for signed memorabilia.
  - Just passing this on to you.
  - Hope all is well with you. Have a Blessed Easter
- [REDACTED]

p.s. Eddie was convicted about 9 years ago for felony forgery and possession of criminal tools in Franklin County. Case number 01 CR-3245

p.s.s. He also was with his friends (most in drug trafficking) at [REDACTED] where he witnessed the homicide of one of his friends that night in the parking lot; and where he was the State's chief witness in that case 03 CR-922

p.s.s.s The Federal Government was at his house for alleged drug trafficking, but they knew about the memorabilia before they even got there.

Archie, Doug

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From: Tressel, Jim  
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2010 11:20 AM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] and Eddie Rife Update

[REDACTED] -- I hear you !! It is unbelievable !! Thanks for your help....keep me posted as to what I need to do if anything. I will keep pounding these kids hoping they grow up ....jt

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2010 9:43 AM  
To: [tressel.3@osu.edu](mailto:tressel.3@osu.edu)  
Subject: [REDACTED] and Eddie Rife Update

Good morning.

- I hope I am not bothering you. I know you are busy with Spring practice.
- And, I hope you are doing well and being blessed.
- I had Eddie Rife in my office for an hour and a half last night.
- What I tell you is confidential.
- He told me [REDACTED] gave him some type of [REDACTED] ---but I dont know the year
- He told me he has about 15 pairs of cleats (with signatures), 4-5 jerseys---all signed by players, the [REDACTED] (whoever that was awarded to)
- He told me he has about 9 rings Big Ten Championship, among them were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] (no surprise here), etc...( I didnt press him for all the names because I didnt want to emphasize this part of our meeting more than others)
- [REDACTED] National Championship ring (no surprise here either)
- He will not talk publicly about this.
- If [REDACTED] and he may, I will try to get these items back that the government now wants to keep for themselves; which is screwed up in an of itself. I know who specifically in the District Attorney's office that is working on this matter and know both of them well so I will try if the opportunity presents itself.
- These kids are selling these items for not that much and I cant understand how they could give something so precious away like their trophy's and rings that they worked so hard for. In their life they will have children or maybe a parent who can really appreciate their hard work for what they earned. My father had two jobs; he [REDACTED], and when he got off work he spent 26 as a [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] He died in 2001 at age 67. [REDACTED] I dont get it and I am still old fashion.
- Just passing this info on...especially now that I actually talked to Mr. Rife.
- Take care Coach.
- [REDACTED]



Archie, Doug

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2010 2:24 PM  
To: Tressel, Jim  
Subject: Re: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Rife Update

Coach:

- Only thing we can do is keep him, his house, his tattoo parlor off limits to players. I would also make sure you tell [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (and whoever else) NOT to call him on his cell phone too because if he gets arrested, and that seems to be the plan, we dont want their phone numbers in his cell phone that the government will trace. He really is a drug dealer. And I know [REDACTED] has his phone number and has called him. All I tell you is factual.
- He is in really big trouble. The federal government has told him that his best offer is to take 10 years in prison. He wanted my opinion yesterday on his situation.
- I will get you a slate photograph of him from the sheriff so you can show these guys you know what is going on and know who they are dealing with.
- I have to sit tight [REDACTED] but at least he [REDACTED]
- One correction from my first email to you...he did confirm [REDACTED] that he put out on the street [REDACTED] his house, but he [REDACTED] so they [REDACTED]. But, he had that much [REDACTED]
- Okay. That is all for now.
- I like the world you live in a lot better than the one I do with regard to dealing with people, despite loving what I do for a living.
- Take care. I will keep you posted as relevant information becomes available to me. Just keep our emails confidential. Thank you.
- [REDACTED]

On Fri, Apr 16, 2010 at 11:19 AM, Tressel, Jim <[TresselJ@buckeyes.ath.ohio-state.edu](mailto:TresselJ@buckeyes.ath.ohio-state.edu)> wrote:

[REDACTED]--- I hear you !! It is unbelievable !! Thanks for your help....keep me posted as to what I need to do if anything. I will keep pounding these kids hoping they grow up ....jt

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2010 9:43 AM  
To: [tressel.3@osu.edu](mailto:tressel.3@osu.edu)  
Subject: [REDACTED] and Eddie Rife Update

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- He told me he has about 9 rings Big Ten Championship, among them were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] (no surprise here), etc...( I didnt press him for all the names because I didnt want to emphasize this part of our meeting more than others)
- [REDACTED] National Championship ring (no surprise here either)
- He will not talk publicly about this.
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- Just passing this info on...especially now that I actually talked to Mr. Rife.
- Take care Coach.
- [REDACTED]



Archie, Doug

From: Tressel, Jim  
Sent: Sunday, June 06, 2010 9:15 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: RE: Names ??

Thanks [REDACTED] Hope you are feeling better !! Go Bucks !! jt

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, June 01, 2010 4:09 PM  
To: Tressel, Jim  
Subject: Re: Names ??

Coach, I am sorry for not getting back to you earlier. Since we last talked I had an [REDACTED] and while they were at it, [REDACTED] I am fine now. No more names as the federal government appears to have reached a resolution for [REDACTED] Eddy Riffe [REDACTED]. As a result, all communciation [REDACTED] and the district attorney had to cease. The names I gave you for the two current players are still good. Those are some beautiful rings. I hope they cherish them forever. [REDACTED]

On Tue, Jun 1, 2010 at 7:33 AM, Tressel, Jim <TresselJ@buckeyes.ath.ohio-state.edu> wrote:



[REDACTED] --- our rings arrive this week for 2009 Big Ten ....any names from our last discussion ?? I would like to hold some collateral if you know what I mean .....jt

**JIM TRESSEL**  
HEAD COACH

Tressel.3@osu.edu  
(614) 292-7620

The Les Wexner Football Complex at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center  
535 Irving Schottenstein Dr. | Columbus, OH 43210

**34** BIG TEN  
CHAMPIONSHIPS



**7** NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

