

NCAA hits 65 schools with academic penalties

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

Teams at 65 schools — including Texas, Tennessee and West Virginia — failed to meet the NCAA's new academic standards and now face the loss of scholarships for their poor grades.

But don't look for any of the biggest names in football or basketball on the list released Wednesday by the NCAA of those lagging behind in the classroom.

The only school in the six biggest conferences to be sanctioned in football or men's basketball, the primary moneymakers for most athletic departments, was DePaul of the Big East. It

could lose one scholarship in men's basketball next year.

Nationwide, 99 teams could lose scholarships as early as next fall. The new academic points system requires each team to meet minimum requirements or face the potential loss of scholarship money when academically ineligible athletes leave school.

No school can lose more than 10 percent of its scholarships. And if the ineligible scholarship athlete stays in school, the NCAA will not take the scholarship

away from the athlete's team.

Sacramento State had the most teams affected (six) and could face the loss of as many as 2.3 scholarships in football. Prairie View A&M in Texas was among the hardest hit schools. As many as 10 athletes in five sports could lose scholarship money, including 5.3 scholarships in football alone.

The NCAA also released a list of schools that consistently outperformed its baseline standards. Among those were Brown, Harvard, Yale, Notre Dame, the three U.S. military academies and William and Mary.

North Carolina and Illinois, the two teams that reached last year's NCAA men's basketball championship game, were both

among the top 10 percent academically in that sport.

Overall, NCAA officials were pleased with the improvement made since last year when about 6 percent of sports teams made the list. Fewer than 2 percent of teams were penalized this year.

"We want people to know that if you're going to play our games, you're going to be a student," NCAA president Myles Brand said.

Brand said a statistical adjustment, similar to the margin of error in public opinion polls, helped some schools avoid the list. Kevin Lennon, the NCAA's vice president of membership services, said 63 schools also received waivers based primarily

on their institutional mission statement; 16 were rejected.

The NCAA may not be so forgiving in the future when the statistical adjustment is phased out and repeat offenders become subject to harsher penalties such as postseason bans and the loss of tournament money. Some university officials hope that sends an even stronger message.

"Obviously, if you received a penalty in this round, you need to find out what's wrong," said Walter Harrison, president of the University of Hartford. "Those institutions need to get better and get better quick because those adjustments will get smaller and eventually go away."

Football teams fared the worst,

followed by baseball and men's basketball. Nine women's programs were sanctioned, compared with 90 men's teams.

Florida A&M, Jacksonville State, Murray State in Kentucky, Nicholls State in Louisiana, Tennessee-Chattanooga and Tennessee-Martin all received the maximum penalty in Division I-AA football, 6.3 scholarships.

"Scholarship reductions in any sport are not easy to accept," said Hawaii athletic director Herman Frazier, whose school could lose five scholarships in football and one in baseball. "I have spoken to the coaches of both sports involved and impressed on them a need for improvement."



BRAND



SUBMITTED PHOTO

CHEER CHAMPS

The Franklin Community High School competition cheerleaders competed Sunday at the Indianapolis Convention Center. The squad finished first in the medium varsity division and was named overall grand champion of the school division. The first-place finish qualifies the team for a trip to Tampa, Fla., at the end of April. Members of the team are, front row from left, Kylie Burgess, Jordan Smith, Jayme Rhoades, Lauren Pursiful, Courtney Watson, Ashlyn DeWitt, Amber McShanog and Brooke Hartkorn; middle row, Whitney Phillips, Jennifer Pate, Leanna Thompson, Talena Moss, Morgan Miller and Kristen Carpenter; and back row, Kendra King, Whitney DeWees, Kaelea Wilkerson, Sam Nally, Kristen Young, Kylee Woodrum and Mackenzie Church.

ESPN2 will produce show about Bonds

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO

Barry Bonds' reality TV show chronicling the slugger during his pursuit of Hank Aaron's career home run record will debut April 4 on ESPN2, the network announced Wednesday.

The show, "Bonds on Bonds," produced by Mike Tollin and Brian Robbins, will offer a behind-the-scenes look at Bonds and the San Francisco Giants this season.

Bonds, who turns 42 in July, enters 2006 with 708 homers, seven shy of passing Babe Ruth and 48 from breaking Aaron's mark.

The first episode will be an hour long and air at 8 p.m. April 4 on ESPN2. The rest of the episodes air at 7 p.m. Tuesdays throughout the season.

ESPN said it has an agreement to air 10 hours of programming, with most episodes being a half-hour and others an hour.

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PREP BASKETBALL

Freshman leader of South Bend team in girls state finals

By STEVE HERMAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Skylar Diggins is only a freshman, yet the 5-foot-8 guard is the dominant player for the most dominant team in Indiana girls basketball this year.

On Saturday, Diggins and her top-ranked South Bend Washington teammates will play Castle for the Class 4A championship at Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

"She's had some phenomenal, phenomenal games, the type of games where you don't know how many points she scored until the game is over," Coddens said.

Diggins shoots 51 percent from the field, including 42 percent on 3-pointers, and leads Washington at 20.7 points and 5.6 assists a game.

Washington's only loss in 26 games this year was by three points against a Chicago team in November. Since then, the Panthers have won 19 straight games and lead the state in scoring at 75.8 points a game and in average winning margin at 30 points.

Unranked Castle (24-3) is a senior-dominated team. The Knights lost three straight in late December and early January but have won 14 in a row since.

Maria Olsthoorn, a 6-1 senior, leads Castle at 12.3 points a game.

Class 3A

Of the eight teams in the finals, Fort Wayne Luers is the only one with a previous championship — four, to be exact.

"It's every bit as sweet as the first time," said Luers coach Teri Rosinski, whose team won the 3A championship in 2002 and was runner-up in 2004. "I'm just rejoicing. I feel very blessed to be here."

The Knights' only senior, Vini Dawson, didn't play when Luers made its most recent appearance in the finals. This year, Luers' top scorer is sophomore MarKee Martin, who averages 11.3 points a game, while Dawson and sophomore Amanda Pedro average 8.0 each.

They'll take on Evansville Memorial, which lost just four games this season, two of them to 4A Castle. Since the second loss to Castle, which coach Bruce Dockery called the turning point of the season, the Tigers have won seven straight by an average of 16 points a game.

Their top player is Purdue-bound FahKara Malone, a 5-5 point guard who averages 20.3 points and 4.7 assists a game.

IF YOU GO

What: The 31st Indiana High School Athletic Association girls state basketball championships

When: Saturday

Where: Consecro Fieldhouse, Indianapolis

Pairings: Class A, Lafayette Catholic (17-10) vs. South Central (Harrison) (23-5), 10:30 a.m.; Class 2A, Westview (24-3) vs. Heritage Christian (24-3), about 12:30 p.m.; Class 3A, Fort Wayne Luers (23-4) vs. Evansville Memorial (23-4), 6 p.m.; Class 4A, South Bend Washington (25-1) vs. Castle (24-3), about 8 p.m.

Class 2A

Heritage Christian and Westview match 24-3 records and similar stats in scoring and in defense in Class 2A.

Unranked Westview is unbeaten against other 2A schools this year and features leading scorer Tiffany Fisher, a 6-1 sophomore who averages 17.6 points and 9.1 rebounds and leads the state in field goal accuracy at 68 percent.

"She's been in double figures in every game but one. For a sophomore, it's just amazing, her consistency," coach Randy Yoder said.

No. 1-ranked Heritage Christian, which starts three freshmen, a sophomore and a junior, was the 2A runner-up to Rochester two years ago.

"Rankings don't win games," Eagles' coach Rick Risinger said.

The Eagles' top scorers are freshmen Kelly Farris at 11.1 points a game and Claire Freeman at 10.5.

Class A

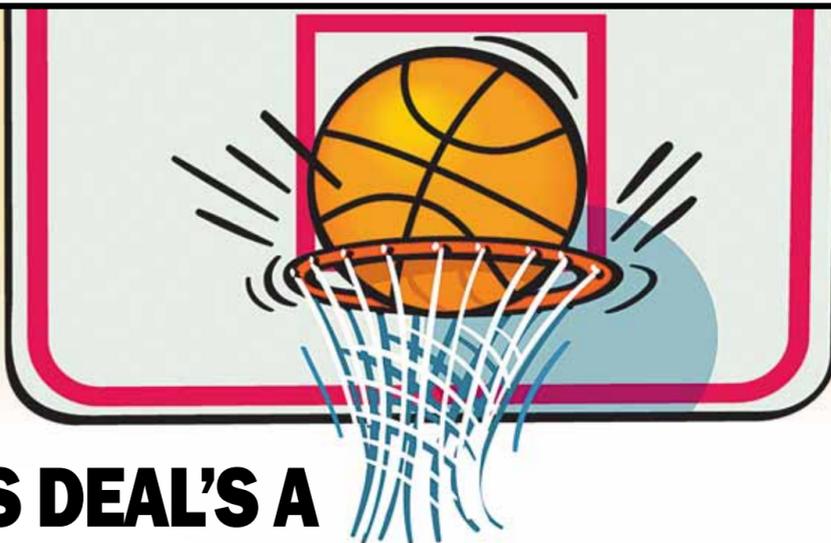
Lafayette Catholic (17-10) started the season with five straight losses to 3A and 4A opponents. In the tournament, the Knights' victims have included top-ranked and three-time defending champ Tri-Central.

"Those kids have had three coaches in four years," said second-year coach Geoff Salmon. "To stick with it and grind it out and make it here your senior year is just incredible."

Lafayette Catholic's only double-figure scorer is senior Kathleen Mills at 12.6 points a game.

The Knights face unranked South Central (23-5), which is making its first appearance in the finals in any team sport after defeating Lanesville last week in the semistate.

Sophomore guard Brittany Schoen, the daughter of coach Randall Schoen, is the top scorer at 20.5 points a game.



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