

COMMENTARY FOR SESSION 3:
U.S. INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORT AND CONTROVERSY

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Papers: Susan Rayl, *Gymnastics Divorces the AAU: The Role of the Penn State Versus Cologne Gymnastics Affair*
Al Figone, Nick Englis and Henry Hill: *College Basketball's Master Fixers*
Ying Wu, Margot Polivy, *Legal Costs, and the Demise of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women*

These three papers focus on the seamier side of college sports—the manipulation and power plays exerted by individuals and organizations for their own purposes rather than the welfare of the athletes or the reputation of the sport. We see in these papers stories of control and greed—a sad commentary on the condition of college athletics that have fallen to the baser level rampant in professional sports and big business. We also find despair for the athletes themselves who have lost integrity and hope.

In Susan Rayl's paper we see the power struggle between the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The monopoly of the AAU, challenged by the NCAA, placed a stranglehold on the Pan-American and Olympic gymnastics teams. Caught between two organizations vying for control, the gymnasts suffered.

Several questions occurred to me as I read the paper. I'm curious how 1963 and 1966 graduates represented Penn State in 1967; a brief explanation

of eligibility would help the rules-impaired among us. Follow-up with the AAU on why they didn't suspend Corrigan, Swetman, and Kindon might shed some light on the uneven application of the rules. Perhaps AAU records might explain its antipathy or hostility toward gymnastics.

Consulting Avery Brundage's papers at the University of Illinois at Urbana which contain files relating to the AAU could provide some insight into the organization's behavior. [SUSAN: The repository sources for the correspondence consulted should be cited in the footnotes.]

Al Figone brings to our attention the corruptness of college basketball by examining the secondary literature about two game fixers, Nick English and Henry Hill. Here we see the NCAA and colleges keeping secrets about widespread gambling and point spread fixing among players at several colleges. The attitudes, If we ignore it, it'll go away, if we look the other way we don't have to admit it's happening, or it's no big deal everybody does it and besides, who does it hurt? give tacit approval to illegal gambling. The "who loses" attitude exhibited by the players speaks of the breakdown in ethics. It's frightening to think that these same players will carry over this attitude in their personal and business lives.

As with Susan's paper where the athletes received uneven punishment, I'd like to know why Rick Kuhn was the only one of the three

Boston College players convicted. Did he have no prospects, why was he singled out as the scapegoat? I would have liked to hear what Coach Fordy Anderson thought the players were receiving cash payoffs for. Serious gamblers will bet on just about anything. Is basketball the only corrupt collegiate sport, or just the easiest to fix?

I have ^a question~~s~~ about ^{one} ~~two~~ statement~~s~~ in the paper. [When AI says “we are then left to rely on reports which overwhelmingly lack the reliability which by necessity can only be attained by following appropriate research methodology as prescribed in sport history,” I have to ask what research methodology is prescribed in sport history and how is that different from any other historical research?] Secondly, saying the University of Kentucky would have been the first basketball team to win the Grand Slam if only they’d won the NIT tournament is like saying Silver Charm would have won the Triple Crown last year if only he’d won the Belmont Stakes. This close is not good enough.

Finally, Ying Wu’s paper based on his 1997 Penn State dissertation examines the organizational politics of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), and the dissention caused by attorney Margot Polivy’s financial greediness and need for control. His skillful research in primary sources uncovered the internal reason for the AIAW’s demise. For

all her good intentions to support the AIAW's mission, Polivy, like a leech, sucked the AIAW dry. Shakespeare said it well, "kill the lawyers."

Capitalizing on the legal inexperience of the AIAW's female leadership, Polivy convinced them that only her magic elixir potion would cure their legal ills; once hooked, the AIAW didn't realize they were addicted to such expensive dope until it wiped them out. So much for sisterly solidarity; find an edge, drive a wedge, and don't hedge your bets that the lawyer always wins in the end.

In this age of cynicism, it is all too easy to shrug off the corruption, greed, and jockeying for control as necessary evils or, worse yet, business as usual. What we tend to forget though are the injured parties—the fan who expects to see a fair contest between competing teams, and the athlete who is like a towel in a tug of war between two bulldogs each determined to be the victor; when the dogs lose interest they toss aside the towel, dirty and full of holes.

Our three speakers have presented chilling examples of greed, corruption, and naivete in college athletics. They raise as many questions as answers and I encourage them and us to turn over a few more rocks and expose the creepy crawlies hiding in the dark. I'm not advocating a McCarthyist witch-hunt, but a closer examination of what has happened in

amateur and professional athletics to avoid any further damage to college sports. Maybe this scrutiny could return some integrity to college basketball, place the welfare of the athletes above petty wrangling, and alert inexperienced administrators to the dangers of relying on one advisor.