

NCAA Lifts Certain Penn State Sanctions

by Anthony Caruso on September 30, 2013

The National Collegiate Athletic Association recently announced its decision to reduce several of the sanctions it levied against Penn State's football program following the Jerry Sandusky scandal.

The NCAA said it will restore some of the scholarships to the popular university beginning next year, and is considering making future changes to the sanctions, such as reducing the four-year postseason ban. Penn State had initially faced a cap of 65 scholarships starting in 2014, but instead will have 75 scholarships in 2014, 80 in 2015, and the full allotment of 85 in 2016. The Penn State sanctions were the most severe the NCAA has levied against any university under sports law, and the softening of this punishment is the result of the school's full compliance with the rules.

"While there is more work to be done, Penn State has clearly demonstrated its commitment to restoring integrity in its athletics program," said former Sen. George Mitchell. "The university has substantially completed the initial implementation of all the Freeh Report recommendations and its obligations to the Athletics Integrity Agreement, so relief from the scholarship reductions is warranted and deserved."

Although the university and its students are welcoming the announcement, some sports commentators claim that the move sends a bad message to other universities and colleges who may put athletic programs ahead of the integrity of the school and protection of their students. Pat Haden, the athletic director of USC, gave a measured response to the news. USC's athletic program is currently operating within the confines of sanctions imposed by the NCAA in 2010, which resulted in the loss of 30 scholarships.

In a statement, Haden said he hopes that the NCAA's new position on sanctions and relief will "result in a consistent and fair enforcement and penalty process for all its institutions," the Los Angeles Times reports.