

Former Chapel Hill Tutor Indicted in Sports Agent Investigation

by Anthony Caruso on October 7, 2013

A former UNC-Chapel Hill tutor who worked closely with Tar Heels football players has been indicted on charges of violating North Carolina's sports agent laws.

Jennifer Wiley Thompson was indicted on four counts of providing financial benefits to former UNC football player Greg Little in an effort to help sports agent Terry Watson sign the player. According to sources, Thompson provided Little with two \$579 round-trip plane tickets to Florida in an effort to persuade him to enter a contract with Watson Sports Agency in Georgia. She is also accused of delivering cash payments of \$2,000 and \$150 to the player.

The sports law violation carries a maximum of 15 months in prison, and the possibility of civil penalties up to \$25,000. The indictment is expected to be the first of many, as the state has been investigating the school for potential sports agent violations since 2010. District Attorney Jim Woodall reinforced the state's zero-tolerance policy and affirmed that its investigation will continue.

"I think the message is it's a violation of the law," said Woodall. "Although some people feel like it goes on everywhere - since everybody does it, it's OK - that's not the way it is. It's not OK because it may go on everywhere. And when we have evidence it's gone on here, we're going to take action."

Sports agent laws vary on a state-by-state basis, and have gained more attention recently as new investigations into the conduct of agents and college players come to light. Many states impose these laws to ensure fair play and keep players from losing their eligibility and schools from being sanctioned. Some analysts contend that punishments and fines against agents who violate sports agent laws have only recently been enforced. However, the spiking number of NCAA athletes allegedly corresponding with agents may lead to more litigation in the future.