

Hazy viewpoints: Athletes and administrators perceptions of hazing

Colleen McGlone, Coastal Carolina University

**Legal aspects
Session 8**

**Thursday, May 29, 2008
3:30 PM - 3:55 PM**

**Presentation (25-minute)
Abstract 378**

In June 2007, a New Jersey prosecutor sent a message to college administrators nationwide by bringing criminal charges against two administrators over the alcohol-related death of a freshman (Nuwer, 2007). It is common for administrators to be charged civilly in hazing cases, but this is believed to be the first time college administrators have been charged criminally in a hazing incident. In 2005, the world of collegiate sport was introduced to "The Dirty 30". This list referred to 30 NCAA member institutions whose athletes had posted hazing pictures on various internet sites including facebook.com, myspace.com and utube.com. While the story is old, the issue of hazing continues to surface weekly in media stories across the nation and often causes multitude problems for athletic administrators.

In the recent past, courts have held schools accountable for injuries resulting from acts of hazing when the institutions administration or officials have had knowledge of hazing occurring within their scope of jurisdiction (Chapel v. Franklin Pierce School District; Rupp v. Bryant). Case in point, in Chappel v. Franklin Pierce School District No.402, the court held that since there was a known tradition of hazing occurring at the school, the school could be held responsible for a hazing injury.

Sport administrators have known for years that hazing has been prevalent at all levels of sport. Research has shown that hazing is prevalent in athletics (Alfred, 1999; McGlone, 2005). While the topic is dichotomous in nature, the question of how hazing is perceived has not been fully examined. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of hazing from the view of both student athletes and administrators in order to identify how to reduce hazing within NCAA athletics and to formulate effective hazing policies in athletics.

The study was conducted utilizing an anonymous electronic survey using a mixed method format. A random sample of student athletes, athletics directors and senior women's administrators from every Division institution were invited to participate in the survey. The study resulted in 1,157 participants resulting in a 31% response rate. The survey was administered in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of current perceptions regarding hazing within Division 1 NCAA athletics. The content examined was categorized by sections each section addressed a specific area of concern regarding hazing activities. The survey was broken down into the following sections: 1) demographics, 2) prevalence and severity of hazing, 3) policy, 4) reporting, and 5) prevention.

This presentation will discuss the findings of the study regarding the extent of knowledge that current administrators have regarding the prevalence of hazing at their institutions as compared to the prevalence and perceptions of hazing among current student athletes. By understanding the perceptions of hazing among athletes and administrators, athletic departments can develop effective hazing policy which in turn provides a layer of protection for all involved.