

May 14, 2000 (5:35PM)

Knight Sanctions

MB: open press conference:

In early March I asked John Walda and Fred Eichhorn to undertake a very difficult and important task. They agreed to investigate allegations former player Neil Reed made in televised reports. I chose these two men because of their impeccable integrity, their strong devotion to Indiana University and because of their professional backgrounds as trial attorneys. As you all know, Mr. Reed alleged that he was choked by Coach Knight. These are very, very serious allegations.

Trustees Walda and Eichhorn have conducted a seven-week, exhaustive investigation. This investigation, which took place in the glare of media spotlights nationwide, came to an end earlier today. The Trustees have gathered ample information to make a thorough and fair assessment of the matter. Indiana University, its family and friends, owe Mr. Walda and Mr. Eichhorn an immense debt of gratitude for their work.

I would like to ask Mr. Walda to now describe the investigation, the process by which it was conducted, and the findings it yielded:

JW:

- Originally, we were asked to investigate, specifically, the allegations Neil Reed made in televised reports. These included allegations that Mr. Reed was "choked" by Coach Knight, that President Myles Brand was verbally abused and thrown out of basketball practice by the coach and that Coach Knight displayed soiled toilet paper in a heated discussion with players in the locker room.
- We were clear, however, that any information we learned would dictate the course of the review. As I said at the March 23 press conference, there are no sacred cows at Indiana University, including the men's basketball program.
- The review included personal discussions with about XXX individuals, including former IU basketball managers, current and former IU players, current and former IU coaches, the IU athletic director and several others.
- We had the full video-tape of the alleged incident between Coach Knight and Neil Reed. We had the video tape analyzed by a distinguished former FBI agent. We also employed a private investigator to conduct many of the interviews.
- Our seven week investigation found the following: We could NOT accurately determine if the locker room incident concerning soiled toilet paper actually occurred. Our investigation found that President Brand was NOT dismissed from practice as has been alleged. On the final incident, the most serious, our video tape analysis confirmed that

Neil Reed was grabbed at the neck, but was not injured. However, that single action by Coach Knight was clearly inappropriate.

- The review, the first of its kind during Coach Knight's 29-year tenure, also uncovered new information that illustrated a protracted, troubling pattern in which Coach Knight has a problem controlling his anger. In order to ensure the integrity of the review, we promised all those interviewed confidentiality. Thus, we cannot go into detail. Unfortunately, many of the details have received widespread media attention. But what we found was a lengthy pattern of troubling behavior by Coach Knight.
- (elaborate that the trustees felt that the pattern of conduct was seriously deficient....our goal is to protect and enhance the image of IU. . .we cannot do so with that conduct...therefore, we are resolved that if the Coach persists in this conduct, it won't be tolerated....as I said earlier this spring, "there are no sacred cows at Indiana Univeristy...)

MB to resume

- During my tenure which began in 1994, each of the controversial allegations concerning Coach Knight have been dealt with appropriately. Viewed by themselves, none of the recent revelations about Coach Knight's behavior—including the Neil Reed incident—would constitute a reason for dismissal. But the review caused us to look at the sum total of incidents. From that perspective, a troubling pattern of highly inappropriate behavior clearly emerged. This sort of behavior cannot and will not continue.
- I believe Coach Knight is an honorable man of high integrity. We must also remember that Coach Knight has a long, illustrious career at IU. He has won three national championships. His players have extraordinarily high graduation rates. And many former players have pointed out the coach's rare ability to positively influence the lives of the hundreds young men who have played for him. I spent nearly three hours with Coach Knight on Saturday. He and I have had several other discussions since that time. In these discussions, he has given me his word that he will take extraordinary steps to change his behavior and to represent Indiana University with honor and dignity.
- I have conferred at great length with the IU Trustees, and they have delegated the responsibility of personnel decisions to me. Two Trustees—Steve Ferguson and Peter Obremsky have recused themselves from deliberations on the basis of attorney/client privilege. Both of these Trustees are lawyers who have had legal dealings with Coach Knight. I am acting with the full concurrence of the remaining seven Trustees. After lengthy, very difficult deliberations, I recommended to the Trustees of Indiana University that Bob Knight continue his duties as men's head basketball coach. I recommended that he do so only under very specific, very firm guidelines. These guidelines send a clear message that abusive, boorish and embarrassing behavior will not be tolerated. Let me repeat: we have established very specific, firm guidelines which send a clear message that

abusive, boorish and embarrassing behavior will not be tolerated.

- Please see the handout that details these sanctions: (MB TO READ)
- These sanctions and directives are effective immediately. The Trustees and I are in absolute agreement: Should the basketball coach violate any of these requirements, he will be terminated immediately. This is a zero-tolerance policy. If Coach Knight had not agreed to all of these conditions, I would have recommended to the Trustees that he be terminated immediately. It is my belief that the Trustees would have agreed with the termination.
- This process has forced us to question how well Indiana University has handled these individual controversies in previous years. Could these problems have been dealt with earlier and more effectively? The answer to that question is yes, I believe they could have been dealt with more effectively. We have had a systemic problem that allowed this pattern of unacceptable behavior to develop. In developing a strict code of conduct for all coaches, student athletes, and Athletic Department employees, we are taking steps to avoid such problems. We cannot change the past, but we can shape the future. Any coach or student athlete who violates that code—including Coach Knight—will face sanctions up to and including immediate termination.
- Let me close on a personal note. This has been an extraordinarily difficult and troubling process. On the one hand we are dealing with sensitive and very personal issues. Even more difficult, the Trustees and I have had to weigh these issues in the glare of the media spotlight. This has prompted an avalanche of response from faculty, students, parents, alumni, supporters and others. On the other hand, a great deal of media attention has been focused very negative aspects of Bob Knight's public career and personality. What has been lost is the profound good side of this man that many of us in Indiana know and respect. We have struggled mightily to be balanced and fair.

Back to John

- Before we open this to questions, Coach Knight asked that this statement from him be read (distribute) ... pause read:

INDIANA UNIVERSITY



DEPARTMENT OF
INTERCOLLEGIATE
ATHLETICS

President Myles Brand, in a meeting with me, gave me a set of guidelines he expects me to follow if I want to continue as Indiana University's basketball coach.

I have absolutely no problem with guidelines. The establishment of effective and proper guidelines can in the long run help me become a better coach.

As I have said before, I recognize that I have a problem with my temper. For those times it has ever caused me to do anything that gave anyone understandable and justifiable reason to be upset, I am sincerely sorry.

Bob Knight, May 15, 2000

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OFFICE OF THE
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RELATIONS

Sanctions and Directives
Resulting from the Review

1. As a result of the review, which found a pattern of inappropriate behavior, the sanctions for Coach Knight are a three game suspension during the regular 2000-01 season and a \$30,000 fine, which will be withheld from his salary.
2. Any verifiable inappropriate physical contact discovered in the future with players, members of the University community or others in connection with his employment at IU will be cause for immediate termination.
3. Public presentations and other occasions during which Coach Knight is a representative of Indiana University will be conducted with appropriate decorum and civility. Included among these occasions are interactions with the news media. Failure to do so will be cause for further sanction, up to and including termination from the position of basketball coach.
4. A task force will be established to develop policies for appropriate behavior for all coaches, Athletic Department employees, and student-athletes and for sanctions for not following these policies. The task force will make its recommendations on these policies to the Athletics Committee, the President and, for approval, to the Trustees of Indiana University.

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