



Jerry White, Commissioner

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February 16, 2016

Dr. Kathryn Jeffery
Superintendent/President
Santa Monica College

Dear Dr. Kathryn Jeffery,

On January 8, 2016, I received an email alleging that Santa Monica College (SMC) soccer coaches Aaron Benditson and DJ Huish were witnessed illegally recruiting at Canyon High School. This allegation was later verified with pictures of this activity. Canyon High School is **not** within your recruiting area. Bylaw 2.1.1 regarding out of district recruiting states, “**person to person** contact between college representatives and prospects, family members or legal guardians of the prospective student-athlete may **only** take place on the host college’s campus.”

The Western State College (WSC) has experienced numerous concerns involving the Athletic Program at SMC. This resulted in a one (1) year probation of the entire SMC Athletic Program on February 25, 2015 (please reference attached letter). I met with Dr. Chui Tsang who accepted the sanctions with the assurance that a process would be implemented to address the most recent violation in the Swim/Dive Program, as well as, others within the Athletic Program.

As a result of this most recent violation, the WSC will issue the following sanctions. Please reference CCCAA Constitution Bylaw 7.4.12.10.2.

1. The entire Athletic Program will be placed on probation for a period of two (2) years.
2. The Women’s Soccer Program will be banned from Post Conference (PC) for a period of one (1) year – 2016-17.
3. Coach Aaron Benditson will be suspended for a period of 8 games.
4. Assistant Coach David Huish will be suspended for a period of 4 games.
5. Forfeiture of in state recruiting (Bylaw 2.1 G. H. I.).
6. SMC will submit an overall written plan to address eligibility, recruiting, and game day issues.
7. SMC will submit in writing a monthly report summarizing the progress being made and identifying any other problems and how they were handled.

These sanctions may be appealed by using Bylaw 7.4.

Athletic Director Reggie Ellis is to be commended for his prompt and thorough handling of this matter. His recommended sanctions were appreciated and considered. However, Coach Benditson previously served a six (6) game suspension for his inability to adhere to the CCCAA requirement to report stats for the soccer program in a timely manner. He has been a head coach at SMC for ten (10) years. Therefore, to commit this recruiting violation that puts the entire SMC Athletic Program on a two (2) year probation sanction demonstrates his disregard for CCCAA rules and the welfare of others at SMC. I would further recommend frequent meetings with the entire coaching staff to discuss recruiting rules, as well as, best practices. Everyone involved must understand the serious nature of any additional missteps within the SMC Athletic Program. Peer pressure can be a powerful tool.

It is the goal of the WSC to assist in making each of our eighteen (18) colleges the best they can possibly be for our student athletes. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry White".

Jerry White

Commissioner, Western State Conference

Cc: Dr. Mike Tuitasi, Vice President Student Affairs

Reggie Ellis, Athletic Director