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Disciplinary Action

June 27th, 2023

The following is a description of an incident that took place on May 29th during the Florida State Club Baseball & Colorado game taking place at the Division I World Series in Alton, Illinois.

INCIDENT:

On May 29th, during the top of the 3rd inning of Game 10 of the Division I World Series featuring Florida State Club Baseball & Colorado, Tournament Director & Vice President of NCBA Baseball Operations Eric Curitore was alerted by a member of the event staff that they believed player(s) within the Florida State Club Baseball dugout were consuming alcohol during the game. This claim stemmed from seeing multiple Florida State Club Baseball players in full uniform making purchases at the concession stand, including INDIVIDUAL 1, who appeared to purchase an alcoholic beverage and pour it into a cup. Directly after hearing this claim, Eric Curitore moved down to the field level to observe the Florida State Club Baseball dugout.

Upon arriving to their dugout, Eric could see INDIVIDUAL 1 holding a souvenir cup in his right hand. While the NCBA does provide each team water & cups during games, this souvenir cup was vastly different from what is provided. This souvenir cup can only be accessed at the concession stand as it's only provided when purchasing a soft drink. Alcohol is sold at the concession stand, but it is sold in its original bottle. Wanting to confirm what was in the souvenir cup Eric moved towards INDIVIDUAL 1. Upon seeing Eric, INDIVIDUAL 1 slightly turned his back & put his left hand over the top of the cup. At that point Eric directly asked to see what was in the cup & it was confirmed the souvenir cup was filled with beer & the cup was used in attempt to conceal the fact.

Eric immediately threw away the cup & instructed INDIVIDUAL 1 to pack his things and leave the dugout & facility on the spot immediately. INDIVIDUAL 1 obliged & was escorted out by the NCBA.

Due to the initial claim referencing multiple players in full uniform at the concession stand alongside INDIVIDUAL 1, Eric immediately returned to the Florida State Club Baseball dugout to investigate further. No other evidence of alcohol was present as all remaining players were assertively informed & reminded of the severity of the current situation.

The NCBA's stance on alcohol is listed in NCBA rule 22.03.1: "By signing the liability waiver each player agrees that the use of drugs, alcohol, or any other substances that could cause danger or detrimental effects upon the participant's performance as a member of this organization is strictly prohibited during NCBA Sanctioned Competition."

The following was determined:

- INDIVIDUAL 1 was consuming alcohol in his team's dugout, in full uniform, during his team's game. He also holds the title of Vice President within the club.
- INDIVIDUAL 2, who holds the title as President within the club, was on site and participating in the game.

With this incident taking place during a World Series game & Florida State Club Baseball still active in the bracket, immediate disciplinary action needed to take place. After a quick review of the disciplinary precedents set forth by the most recent SUNY Buffalo (2019) & Pittsburg State (2020) alcohol related incidents, the NCBA determined that the following MINIMUM and IMMEDIATE penalties needed to be issued:



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- INDIVIDUAL 1 was issued a minimum three game suspension due to his direct involvement in the incident for consuming alcohol in the dugout during a game.
- Both top ranking student officers present receive a 3 game suspension for being responsible for their team's conduct during an NCBA Sanctioned event.
 - President - (INDIVIDUAL 2) was issued a three game suspension. He was the highest-ranking individual for the team & was present during this event.
 - Vice President – (INDIVIDUAL 1) was issued an additional three game suspension as the second highest ranking officer present.
- Florida State Club Baseball would not receive their travel stipend tied to the event; each of the 8 World Series teams qualify for travel assistance from the NCBA should they meet all NCBA requirements & expectations throughout the week.
- Florida State Club Baseball was immediately placed on probation for the remainder of the 2022/23 season, the entire 2023/24 Season, and will be INELIGIBLE for a postseason at-large selection in 2023/24, meaning they must win their conference to proceed to the postseason.

That night Eric Curitore emailed Florida State's Sport Clubs Administration the details to the incident that took place. Florida State Club Sports faculty acknowledged the severity of the incident and started their own internal investigation. Throughout the next 7-10 days both Florida State's Sport Clubs Administration & the NCBA remained in touch to ensure both parties had all the necessary information tied to the incident.

Florida State's Sport Clubs Administration concluded its investigation & issued its own internal disciplinary actions for the club.

Upon returning to headquarters following the completion of the World Series, the NCBA launched an in-depth review of past disciplinary rules attributed to previous alcohol as well as conduct violations occurring during NCBA postseason activities. After studying the additional disciplinary precedents set forth by the SIU-Carbondale (2006), Iowa State (2010), and UC-Santa Cruz (2015) alcohol related incidents; as well as the UMASS (2006), Delaware (2011), and Sam Houston State (2013) postseason conduct incidents, the NCBA is issuing the additional penalties:

- INDIVIDUAL 1 will receive an additional three game suspension on top of the initial six, bringing his total to nine total games. Precedence through previous related incidents call for a 6 game suspension for drinking in the dugout during a game and an additional 3 game suspension for being a present officer of the team while alcohol consumption occurred in the dugout.
- INDIVIDUAL 1 will receive a lifetime ban from holding any coaching or officer duties with any NCBA member team for consuming alcohol in the dugout as a team officer.
- Florida State Club Baseball will also be placed on probation for the 2024/25 season. They will remain fully postseason eligible during that season.
- Florida State Club Baseball's officers are required to write a full email apology to the other seven World Series participating teams, apologizing for their actions during the event. This needs to be completed by no later than Friday, July 7th. Failure to provide such an apology will result in Florida State Club Baseball being postseason INELIGIBLE for the upcoming 2023/24 season.



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INDIVIDUAL 1 & INDIVIDUAL 2 have both served two games towards their overall suspensions, after sitting out their teams final two games at the World Series. Any remaining game(s) can only be served from their total suspension during future NCBA Sanctioned Games while holding an official roster spot on any NCBA member team.

Lastly, the Commissioner of the NCBA, Sandy Sanderson, wishes for all those reading this to understand that actions like these are not acceptable and will be punished severely.

“The NCBA has worked exceptionally hard to raise both the level of play as well as the public persona regarding the validity of collegiate club baseball. When the NCBA first started in 2000, the term “club” was often confused with the term “intramural” which brought about public images of “pickup” or “sandlot” baseball. Thus, the NCBA expects its member teams and participants to conduct themselves with a minimal level of common sense, which protects the integrity and image of the NCBA and the game of baseball itself. When NCBA Sanctioned Baseball Games are treated like “Beer League Softball”, the credibility of the NCBA as a legitimate collegiate baseball league is tarnished. The NCBA is proud of the fact that we are able to facilitate the opportunity for college students to play competitive baseball. More so, we are proud of the growth in reputation that collegiate club baseball has achieved since the NCBA’s inception, and we will not allow one team or one individual to jeopardize that reputation. We owe it to all our member teams and participants to protect it for both club baseball players now and in the future.

Individuals and teams, whose conduct damages the fragile reputation of the NCBA and club baseball as a sport, must understand the big picture impact they have on not just themselves, but on all club baseball participants around the country. Bringing controlled substances onto the playing field or in the dugout, risks creating a situation where the NCBA would no longer be able to secure liability insurance and thus would be left unable to rent quality venues to host events. Additionally, an MLB scout who was present at this year’s World Series caught wind of this situation after over hearing fans in the stands talking and made a comment to me after the fact that “apparently not that much has changed”. With the rise in talent within the NCBA and more players hoping for opportunities to continue playing at the professional level, incidents such as this will close doors of opportunity for those ball players striving for a chance to be seen by pro ball decision makers.

Poor decisions and actions by one team or one individual can have a negative ripple effect that impacts the opportunities of thousands of baseball players across the entire NCBA.”

NCBA President and Commissioner, Sandy Sanderson.

Eric Curitore
Vice President of Baseball Operations
National Club Baseball Association