

## Investigative Journalism Winner

# Doing nothing worth \$94,000

**By: BRIAN HUGHES – Published in “The Red & Black”, Newspaper of the University of Georgia.**

**WANTED:** Administrative Specialist-Managerial

**SALARY:** \$94,464

**JOB DUTIES:** None

**CONTACT:** University of Georgia Athletic Department

Who's interested in a nearly six-figure salary to do nothing? Sounds too good to be true, huh? Well, ask former women's golf coach Todd McCorkle if he's dreaming. Because he's cashing in to the tune of \$258 per day.

And you're probably doing as much coaching at the University as McCorkle these days - zilch. Here is the kicker: McCorkle admitted to sexually harassing his own players. Chancing indeed.

### **The Case**

For McCorkle, the gig isn't the fantasy it appears to be. The two-time national champion coach is away from a marquee sports program for the first time in nearly a decade and a half. But his paycheck doesn't reflect his absence.

On May 7, 2007, McCorkle resigned from his post as women's golf head coach, amid a sexual harassment case initiated by his players. Allegations were made that he repeatedly directed sexual comments and jokes at players, such as making jabs about their underwear. The golfers also said he showed them the Paris Hilton sex tape, according to documents obtained from the Office of Legal Affairs. One unnamed player claimed, "He is randomly rubbing your back or flipping hair, or a pat on the butt -- and otherwise not thinking anything about it."

The records indicate McCorkle admitted explaining the definition of "blue balls" to his players and calling one player "sexy" on the way to an SEC Tournament banquet. Due to these admissions, he was found in violation of the Non-Discrimination Anti-Harassment Policy. However, Steven Shewmaker, executive director of Legal Affairs, did not recommend that McCorkle be fired. Instead, Shewmaker proposed McCorkle undergo extensive sexual harassment training and go without pay for the month of July.

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McCorkle resigned three days later - three days before the NCAA tournament was set to begin. At the time, Athletic Director Damon Evans said McCorkle would be reassigned within the athletic department.

"We are appreciative of Todd's contributions to our golf program," Evans said in a 2007 news release after the resignation. "We look forward to continuing to work with him within our organization." McCorkle now has a new title, administrative specialist-managerial. He even has an office phone number listed on the University Web site. The problem is the number routes to current women's golf coach Kelley Hester.

Nobody in the athletic department could provide The Red & Black with even a semblance of McCorkle's job duties. They didn't know.

The Red & Black found few higher education institutions with an administrative specialist-managerial on payroll. At Valdosta State University, the entry salary for the identical title is \$29,084 with a maximum payout of \$43,625 - about \$50,000 less than McCorkle's bankroll.

Associate Athletic Director Claude Felton took his best stab at explaining the former coach's new title. "I don't know where he is," Felton said. "He's not physically here anymore. Since he's under contract, he could still be asked to perform some function within the department." When asked of the likelihood of McCorkle returning, Felton said, "I would not foresee him being involved in the future."

Felton said McCorkle's case was not out of the ordinary. He referenced former basketball coach Jim Harrick and former football coach Ray Goff, whose contracts were honored after they left. While Harrick endured a scandal of his own, neither had a sexual harassment case swirling around their terminations. Evans did not return phone calls, inquiring into the nature of McCorkle's reassignment.

And Felton said he did not know how the evolution of McCorkle's new role was determined. "I think that probably the Athletic Association would decline to comment on matters such as this," he said.

### **Where in the world is Todd McCorkle?**

McCorkle still is being paid as the head women's golf coach even though he is 360 miles from campus. He teaches golf to the general public, as an instructor at The Golf Club at North Hampton in Fernandina Beach, Fla.

McCorkle spoke to The Red & Black Wednesday afternoon, right before conducting a clinic at the country club. "There really is a good story there, but I'm at a point in my life where I'm content with each of us going our separate ways," he said of his dealings with the athletic department.

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McCorkle's contract with the University expires at the end of June, when he will no longer be paid by the University. For now, he receives paychecks from the University and North Hampton. In addition, McCorkle may head south with nearly \$90,000 in profit after the sale of his Athens home finalizes.

It didn't take long for the heralded coach to land on another campus. Last winter, McCorkle worked for several months as director of instruction at the University of North Florida Golfplex.

General manager Mark Spencer said he was aware of McCorkle's history when he made the hiring decision, adding any uncertainty was alleviated by two references on McCorkle's resume - University president Michael Adams and Athletic Director Damon Evans.

"That certainly made my decision easier," Spencer said. He did not know McCorkle before hiring him but has since become a staunch defender of the beleaguered coach. "It's a shame someone with a personal vendetta can ruin so many lives," Spencer said about the harassment allegations.

Spencer said his hiree was "railroaded" by "overzealous parents" and added if McCorkle was a woman, he would "still be coaching today." "If he was such a scumbag, why is his wife still with him?" Spencer asked.

McCorkle's wife, Jenna Daniels, played for him while he coached at the University of Arizona from 1997 to 2000. McCorkle cited his wife as one of the reasons he was resigning, saying in the original news release, "Coaching at Georgia has been a great experience but this will allow me more flexibility in assisting my wife with her LPGA career."

However, Daniels made the cut in just one of 11 professional tournaments she entered last year, according to the Ladies Professional Golf Association Web site. She netted \$2,361. She is not listed as an active LPGA player this year.

### **Get paid and disappear**

McCorkle's was the first in a string of sexual harassment cases during the past year at the University in which punishment has been strikingly uniform. In at least four cases, the violator of the sexual harassment policy was not fired but instead allowed to receive the remaining money owed to them on their contract before leaving the University. McCorkle is set to make \$100,944 in total following the day of his resignation through the end of his contract in June.

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William Bender, a tenured professor in the college of education, faced sexual harassment complaints reaching as far back as two decades. He issued his resignation in September, but it does not become effective until May. Bender is teaching online courses. He will earn \$40,448.40 between his resignation and the end of his contract.

Then there is Mark Jensen, assistant professor of genetics and epidemiology, who issued his resignation in March. He was found in violation of the policy for sending frequent flirtatious e-mails and being "touchy" with students, documents show. Jensen will make \$8,246 in the period following his resignation.

And there is Stephen M. Shellman, an assistant professor in the School of Public and International Affairs, who admitted having a problem with alcohol and resigned March 7. He was under investigation for two incidents involving alcohol and inappropriate contact with students. Shellman will have made \$8,615.54 post resignation when his contract expires April 28.

But none of these faculty members received new job titles. They were either relieved of their duties or continued previous work, albeit in a different capacity.

No word yet on who will take over the administrative specialist-managerial job McCorkle will vacate at the end of June.

Regardless, you already have the qualifications.