

District of Kansas

July 12, 2006

FORMER BARTON COUNTY COACH

CONVICTED ON 5 COUNTS

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WICHITA, Kan. – A federal jury Tuesday convicted former Barton County track coach **Lance Brauman** on charges of theft and wire fraud.

Brauman, 35, an assistant track and field coach at the University of Arkansas, was found guilty on one count of embezzlement from student assistance program funds, one count of theft from a program receiving federal funds, and 3 counts of mail fraud.

During a seven-day trial before U.S. District Judge Monti L. Belot in Wichita, the prosecution focused on events that occurred from Dec. 14, 2000, to Aug. 28, 2003, while Brauman was coaching at Barton County Community College in Great Bend, Kan.

"Mr. Brauman was charged with falsifying the financial records of the Federal Work Study Program, as well as both the financial records and the academic records of Barton County Community College," said U.S. Attorney Eric Melgren. "His defense was that other coaches and employees of Barton County Community College routinely engaged in similar conduct. The implication was that if criminal behavior is widespread it is not really criminal. This jury verdict sets the record straight on that point. The message is clear that the public expects honesty, accountability and respect for the law from coaches as well as other employees of colleges and universities that receive public funds."

The jury found Brauman guilty on the following counts:

- Count 2 (embezzlement from a student assistance program): Brauman was responsible for false time sheets that resulted in paying approximately \$16,809 in Federal Work Study Program funds to student athletes who were not entitled to receive them.
- Count 3 (theft from a program receiving federal funds): Brauman caused approximately \$109,477 in campus employment funds to be paid to student athletes who were not entitled to receive them.
- Count 4 (mail fraud): Brauman in 2003 mailed to Great Bend, Kan., payment for student athlete Tyson Gay's enrollment in a class called "Technical Mathematics," even though Brauman knew that Tyson would not complete the course as required.

– Count 5 (mail fraud) Brauman in 2003 caused Brigham Young University in Utah to send course documents for College Algebra to Barton County Community College in Great Bend, Kan., so that Tyson Gay would receive credit in the course, even though Brauman knew the test in the course would not be completed as required.

– Count 6 (mail fraud): Brauman in 2003 caused a transcript for Tyson Gay to be sent from Barton County Community College to the University of Arkansas representing that Tyson Gay had earned credit for a class called "Technical Mathematics," and had earned an associate degree from Barton County Community College. In fact, Gay had not completed the course as required and did not qualify to receive an associate degree.

The jury found Brauman not guilty on the following counts:

– Count 7 (mail fraud), which alleged that in 2003 Brauman caused a transcript to be mailed from Barton County Community College to Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, falsely stating that student athlete Donald Hooks had completed a course for credit.

– Count 8 (mail fraud), which alleged that in 2003 Brauman caused a transcript to be mailed from Barton County Community College to Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, falsely stating that student athlete Devin Mims had completed a course for credit.

– Count 9 (mail fraud), which alleged that in 2003 Brauman caused a transcript to be mailed from Barton County Community College to Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, falsely stating that student athlete Da'Ray Sims had completed a course for credit.

Count 1, a perjury count charging that Brauman made false statements when he testified before a grand jury, was dismissed by prosecutors when the trial began.

Brauman will remain free on bond until his sentencing, which is set for Oct. 9. He faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$250,000 on each mail fraud count. The maximum penalty for embezzlement from assistance funds is 10 years and a fine up to \$20,000. The maximum penalty for theft from a program receiving federal funds is 20 years and a fine up to \$250,000.

Brauman was one of eight coaches and administrators at Barton County Community College who were indicted on federal charges. Among the other defendants are:

– **Neil Elliott** (athletic director), who is charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the federal government, one count of theft of federal funds, one count of embezzlement from student assistance programs and 8 counts of mail fraud. He is set for trial beginning July 25.

– **Ryan Wolf** (basketball coach) who pleaded guilty to four counts including one count of embezzlement from student assistance funds, two counts of theft of federal funds, and one count of mail fraud. He is scheduled for sentencing Aug. 14.

– **Lyles Lashley** (track coach) who pleaded guilty to one count of theft from a program receiving federal funds. He is awaiting sentencing.

- **Ryan Cross** (basketball coach) who pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud. He is scheduled for sentencing Aug. 7.
- **Shane Hawkins** (basketball coach), who pleaded guilty to one count of perjury before a grand jury. He is scheduled for sentencing Aug. 14.
- **David Campbell** (basketball coach), who pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement from a student assistance program. He was sentenced to 3 years probation and ordered to pay \$7,714 in restitution.
- **Matt Skillman** (basketball coach) who pleaded guilty to embezzlement from student assistance programs and mail fraud. He was sentenced to serve 2 years probation and ordered to pay \$26,239.25 in restitution.

Melgren commended the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which investigated the case, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra Barnett, Assistant U.S. Attorney Annette Gurney and Assistant U.S. Attorney Lanny Welch, who prosecuted the case.