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Q: What should constitute an adequate background check for a high profile athletics position?

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A: Hiring a multi-million dollar head basketball or football coach who gets paid substantially more than the university president is not a normal hire. Neither is hiring a $500,000 athletic director. As we have seen from the 2013 Rutgers university debacle, the media microscope and public interest are powerful forces. As long as athletic programs insist on excessive salaries to top employees, abuse of the power given to them by an adoring spectator public, and higher education demonstrates minimal oversight over athletics program operations, the potential of media sensationalization of mistakes in the selection of new employees is significant.

There is little question that a third party investigative agency or experienced search firm should be hired to do the comprehensive background check; the depth of which is normally not required in higher education. Consideration should be given to mandating the following elements:

- accuracy of professional credentials (degrees earned, previous positions, awards and achievements, etc.)
- finger print based criminal background check
- interviews with previous employers to determine previous instances of professional discipline, past misconduct or performance concerns
- history of NCAA rules violations
- current or previous involvement with civil lawsuits and the circumstances surrounding such involvement
- specifically query the job candidate about and review details regarding:
    - controversies at prior employment
    - complaints or disciplinary action during past employment
    - affiliation with any non-profit organizations or businesses that have been the subject of controversy, bankruptcy or litigation
    - previous filing for bankruptcy protection
    - party to a tax lien or grievance

- maintenance of personal blogs, web sites or social networks
- any past non-criminal violations of the law
- any past sanctions by state or federal regulatory agencies

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