



# Sports

## Mavericks football coach in scholarship quandary

With recent admission to Northern Sun, MSU must drop 12 football scholarships by the 2008 season

By Chad Courrier  
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**MANKATO** — A couple of weeks ago, when Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference officials visited Minnesota State, Mavericks football coach Jeff Jamrog was as surprised as anyone when Northern Sun commissioner Butch Raymond announced that if expansion was approved, incoming universities would have all of its programs in compliance with the league's scholarship limits by 2008.

Now that the Northern Sun has approved adding Minnesota State, St. Cloud State, Augustana and Minne-

sota Duluth to its conference, that deadline is a reality, and Jamrog is scrambling.

"It was my understanding that there would be a transition period," he said. "The game's changed. There's going to be some very tough decisions made."

When Minnesota State made application to the Northern Sun in January, it was known that if accepted, both the men's and women's programs would have to eliminate 14.5 scholarships to comply with the new league. On the men's side, 12 of those scholarships had to come from football.

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There was talk about a gradual reduction in scholarships, perhaps going from 36 to 28 by 2008 and reaching the Northern Sun limit of 24 by 2009. There were rumors that when Wayne State and University of Mary joined the Northern Sun, those programs were allowed to play conference games before they had eliminated enough scholarships.

Raymond, disappointed by

the number of rumors floating around this winter, said he's not sure where that idea came from. He was not with the Northern Sun in 1998 when Wayne State joined, but he said that Mary was in full compliance last season.

"Our league has no interest in playing somebody who is not in compliance," he said. "We're not excited about any of the schools having to reduce scholarships, but in a conference, you have to be on the same level."

Thinking he had more time, and still unsure about the program's future, Jamrog signed 29 players in February, trying to build depth in the program.

Now faced with having to eliminate 12 scholarships over the next year, and trying to abide by President Richard Davenport's pledge in December that current scholarships would be honored, Jamrog's not sure what to do.

"You recruit a year ahead, and plans were already set

(this season)," Jamrog said. "You can't pull scholarships that you've promised to (high school kids). That's professional suicide with the coaches."

That leaves attrition as the primary route to reaching the 24-scholarship limit.

The Mavericks currently have 36 scholarships for football, spread out over approximately 90 players. There are 11 seniors on the team, and Jamrog said they comprise 6.3 scholarships.

That leaves another 5.7 scholarships that need to be eliminated before the Mavericks can take the field in 2008, and that's assuming no recruiting class next spring.

"It will be a challenge," Minnesota State athletic director Kevin Buisman said. "We'll have to see what kind of plan we can come up with."

St. Cloud State, Augustana and Minnesota Duluth are funded at 28 to 30 scholarships, and with larger senior

classes, the attrition for those programs is greater, making the transition easier.

Buisman said the entire program's budget transition plan probably won't be finalized until next week. He said three plans were presented to Northern Sun officials, each of which showed budget compliance by 2008-09.

"With the (spring) signing date coming up (Wednesday), the coaches have to know what they're working with," he said.

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JEFF JAMROG,  
Minnesota State head football coach