

NEWS & INSIGHTS

HENRY GIMENEZ AND LIGHTFOOT TEAM CLOSE OUT YEAR WITH NCAA SUCCESSES

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Lightfoot, Franklin and White, LLC partner **Henry Gimenez** recently helped three leading collegiate sports programs secure favorable decisions in high-profile matters before the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) investigatory panels, the Committee on Infractions (COI) and the Independent Accountability Resolution Process (IARP). The IARP is the adjudicative body in the NCAA's Independent Accountability Resolution Process, and the COI is an administrative body that decides infractions cases involving NCAA member institutions and their employees.

Gimenez was assisted by Lightfoot's in-house NCAA specialist, Hallett Ruzic.

On September 27, the IARP announced that an American Athletic Conference school and its head coach was cleared of all serious allegations arising from a four-year investigation. The probe looked into allegations that the coach improperly gave financial assistance to several prospective student-athletes and charged the university with lack of institutional control. Gimenez represented the school during its hearing before the IARP in late May 2022, successfully arguing that the case be processed as a Level II Standard, not a Level I or aggravated case as alleged.

Gimenez also represented Louisiana State University (LSU) in late July 2022 before the COI. The committee weighed sanctions against the university over the conduct of two assistant football coaches. Thanks to Gimenez's work, the committee accepted the university's self-imposed penalties and did not impose further sanctions.

Most recently, Gimenez and team appeared before the IARP on behalf of the University of Arizona. The IARP ruled that the case against the University be classified as Level I, Standard, largely accepting all of the institution's self-imposed penalties and rejecting the lack of institutional control charge.

These three favorable decisions follow the Lightfoot NCAA team's **success last year with Auburn University** after the COI largely adopted Auburn's self-imposed penalties and found that one violation alleged by the NCAA enforcement staff and contested by the University was not demonstrated. Gimenez has now represented universities and coaches in six COI or IARP matters.

"We are grateful that the NCAA's investigatory panels were able to get to the heart of each matter and hear the perspectives of our clients," Gimenez said. "In the end, all bodies saw the facts for what they were, and issued fair rulings in the process."

Gimenez leads Lightfoot's **NCAA Compliance & Investigations practice** and has been practicing collegiate sports law for 20 years. He has represented athletic programs and directors, coaches and student-athletes, including national championship contenders and Heisman Trophy winners from all corners of the NCAA membership. Gimenez handles traditional NCAA compliance issues and investigations while also helping colleges and universities with investigations relating to Title IX and student welfare issues, athletics-related employment disputes, negotiating and drafting coaching contracts, and more.