

Michigan Responds To NCAA's Notice Of Allegations, Says They Are "Grossly Overreaching" And Will Not Accept Sign-Stealing Penalties



Nearly five months after the NCAA revealed its Notice of Allegations against Michigan, which said it has committed 11 infractions and six Level I violations pertaining to their elaborate sign-stealing scandal, the school has provided a response.

According to a report by Ross Dellenger of Yahoo Sports released on Tuesday, Michigan is fighting those allegations, claiming that the NCAA is "grossly overreaching" and "wildly overcharging" without credible evidence to prove that Wolverines staff members knew of Connor Stalions' impermissible sign-stealing operation.

The 137-page response obtained by Yahoo Sports revealed that the NCAA became aware of Stalions' sign-stealing system by an unnamed source who previously used to work for Michigan, and that the Wolverines are claiming that the NCAA can only present evidence and information that can be attributed to people who are willing to be identified.

Because of this, Michigan is not planning to cooperate with the NCAA and come to a negotiated resolution, meaning that the case will now be headed for a hearing before the Division I Committee of Infractions that will likely take place in the coming weeks. The report said that the final penalties given out to the Wolverines may not be revealed until some time after the hearing, and Michigan is requesting a "pre-hearing conference" that will discuss who the unnamed source was and how he or she brought these charges to the school.

The response also includes Michigan defending head coach Sherrone Moore's act of deleting 52 text messages between he and Stalions, which occurred in October 2023 on the same day that media outlets revealed Stalions as the leader of the Wolverines' sign-stealing system. The university argued that none of the texts — one of which was a message from Stalions to Moore saying that the Wolverines should change its signals ahead of the 2022 game against Ohio State — were specifically about the sign-stealing scheme.

Moore said that the texts — which also Stalions telling Moore that “Nebraska is screwed” and them discussing blitzing tendencies at Michigan State, among others — were deleted because he was angry that Stalions would want to take all of the credit for the Wolverines’ success on the field.

The report also said that a handwritten note was found on Stalions’ desk referencing a plan for Michigan’s 2023 matchup with Ohio State that included “focusing on them all year plus watching every TV copy and sky cam.” Michigan is arguing that this serves as evidence that Stalions’ sign-stealing system was legal and did not include any in-person scouting.

But the Wolverines also refuted that it failed to intervene or monitor Stalions’ scheme, revealing that two members of the program raised concerns about the signal-stealing process Stalions was using. One of those staff members was former running backs coach Mike Hart, who — according to the report — received a call from a Rutgers staff member that said Stalions was “going further” than most do with sign stealing, prompting him to report that call to former Wolverines defensive coordinator Jesse Minter.

Low-level Wolverines staffer Michael Neyman also raised concerns regarding Stalions and refused to take part in the scheme when Stalions asked him to rent a car and travel to Georgia to scout a Bulldogs game. Although Georgia was not on the schedule that year, Michigan claimed that this was permissible because it could have matched up with the Bulldogs in the College Football Playoff.

Michigan is also refuting three of the four NCAA allegations that argue Stalions impeded the investigation, those being that Stalions declined to produce his phone for personal imaging, withheld or removed hard drives from his office, put relevant information into a backpack and instructed a staff member to bring it to an unpaid intern’s house where Stalions could pick it up.

The only allegation that the Wolverines are not refuting is that he instructed a student intern to delete potentially relevant information.

Michigan is facing a slew of violations from the NCAA. Moore faces a potential Level 2 violation and is a repeated offender since he also committed recruiting violations in 2023, while former Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh, linebackers/special teams coach Chris Partridge, assistant player of personnel Denard Robinson and Stalions are accused of committing Level 1 violations, the most serious category in the NCAA’s enforcement process.

The school itself also faces a Level 1 violation charge due to its “pattern of noncompliance within the football program” and its efforts to hinder or thwart the NCAA’s investigation.

BSB will have more on this breaking news story as news unfolds.