

Memphis judge rules in favor of TSSAA regarding James Wiseman, Ryan Boyce coaching link

TOM KREAGER | MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL

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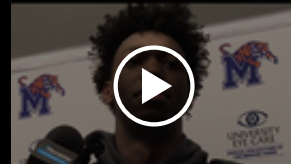
Memphis attorney Leslie Ballin announced Friday the Tigers' star freshman James Wiseman has been ruled ineligible by the NCAA, according to multiple reports.



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James Wiseman ruled ineligible by the NCAA



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A Memphis judge issued a summary judgment in favor of the TSSAA regarding a coaching link policy that led the state's high school association to declare current [University of Memphis basketball](#) players [James Wiseman](#) and Ryan Boyce ineligible at East High during the 2017-18 school year.

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Chancellor Jim Kyle ruled that the TSSAA did not violate the athletes' property rights and that a coaching link rule was not too vague.

The ruling on Oct. 3 gave the high school association a victory in a nearly two-year court battle regarding the eligibility of both athletes. The TSSAA ruled both ineligible for the 2017-18 basketball season. However, a court injunction granted by Kyle led to the court battle and allowed both to play that season. East went on to win the Class AAA state championship.

James Wiseman Memphis Tigers basketball Penny Hardaway



The TSSAA ruled both players ineligible because they played for Team Penny, an AAU basketball program that Penny Hardaway began sponsoring in 2012. Hardaway was also East's basketball coach at the time.

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The TSSAA's coaching link rule makes athletes with an athletic record who transfer to a new school ineligible if an athletic coaching link existed during the previous 12 months. Those links may include: attendance at an individual camp and then transferring, playing on a non-school team and then transferring to that coach's school, transferring to a school where a former coach was hired or transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed.

The athlete is ruled ineligible for 12 months at the new school if a coaching link exists.

The TSSAA has yet to issue any punishment toward East High since the ruling. The Memphis school system has appealed the decision, issuing a motion to alter or amend Kyle's decision.

The motion to amend stated that nowhere in the coaching link rule does the word "sponsor" appear. However, Kyle's ruling states the "TSSAA correctly applied its rule when it found Coach Hardaway coached Penny and

applied its rule when it found Coach Hardaway coached Boyce and Wiseman, which would make them ineligible for the 2017-18 season."

East finished 31-3 that season with Boyce and Wiseman on the team.

The NCAA announced Friday that Wiseman was declared ineligible to play at Memphis after it was announced that his family received \$11,500 to help move from Nashville to Memphis from Hardaway. Wiseman played at Ensworth, a Nashville private school, before moving to Memphis prior to his junior year at East.

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A temporary restraining order has been filed to keep Wiseman eligible while the situation plays out in the courts.

The acceptance of money from a coach is a violation of the TSSAA's recruiting rule according to its bylaws.

The bylaws state as examples of influence for athletic purposes include:

1. Offers of or acceptance of any special privileges not afforded to other students, whether athletes or not.
2. Offers of financial aid based on need to any prospective student-athlete by

any member of the coaching staff. All financial aid questions should be referred to the principal or person in charge of financial aid.

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TSSAA executive director Bernard Childress, who is on an extended medical leave, referred all questions to Nashville attorney Rick Colbert, who represents the high school athletic association.

"It certainly raises questions about that," Colbert said regarding Wiseman's family receiving money from Hardaway to move to Memphis. "That's not my decision to make."

Reach Tom Kreager at tkreager@gannett.com and on Twitter @Kreager.

JAMES WISEMAN

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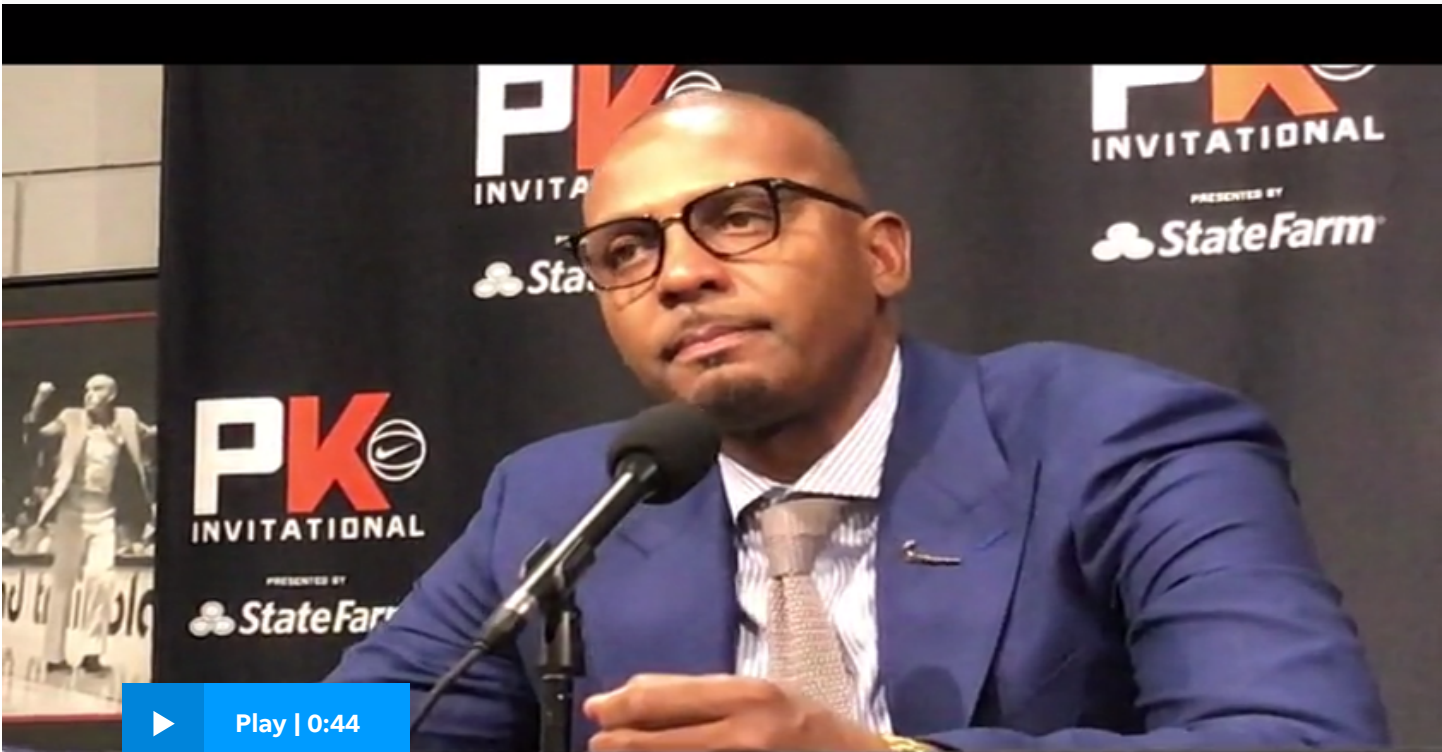
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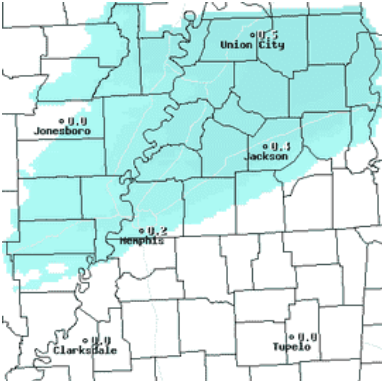
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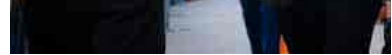
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