12-19-2011

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Delivering a Big Assist

12.19.2011 | Athletics, Students, Business

The Dayton Flyers men's basketball team has turned to an unlikely source to help recruiting and compliance with NCAA regulations.

Management information systems students Brock Griffey and Kyle White will never make a basket for the Flyers, but they've scored major points for a database they've helped put together to help keep Flyers' coaches straight on the recruiting trail.

"Record keeping needs to be pristine when it comes to recruiting and NCAA regulations," said Eric Farrell, assistant director of basketball operations.

When Archie Miller took over as men's basketball coach in April, his recruiting database from the University of Arizona didn't jive with the one at Dayton. With the major summer recruiting period approaching and Miller's need to have a familiar system, the Flyers needed an assist fast.

The students discovered Miller's 300-megabyte recruiting database with vital information on recruits was too old for the system at Dayton. Files necessary for a seamless conversion were missing, so they had to search the Internet for out-of-production PC files to download. Once completed, they turned to fixing faulty and nonexistent query fields.

In about 20 hours during two days, Griffey and White had a working database that included the ability to print index cards with recruits' information.

"It was good to have them. Those two were great," Farrell said about Griffey, a senior from Dover, Ohio, and White, a senior from Chicago. "They sank their teeth right into it. If they had not jumped on it, our recruiting efforts would've fallen behind."

Farrell said in addition to helping coaches keep track of recruits and their travels, the system also enables the staff to easily access records needed for NCAA compliance reports.

White and Griffey had helped "family, friends and friends of friends" with computer issues before, but nothing as high profile as the University of Dayton men's basketball team.

"I thought it was pretty cool the men's basketball team used students to help," White said. "Also, it helped us understand why we learn what we're learning in the classroom and how we can apply it. This project was good practice before our senior project."

While it may be uncommon for the top athletic program at a school to seek an academic unit on campus for professional help, this type of project is common at the University of Dayton, where real-world experiences joining theory and practice are part of the educational philosophy.

"We are preparing our students to do meaningful applied things. All of them will do a major consulting project for a live organization as part of their educational experience," said David Salisbury, associate MIS professor. "It also fits into our Marianist ideal of a community working together."

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