Should Roy Williams take a time out?Article10 Comments Email Print Order Reprint

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Ol’ Roy, some call him, and the Tar Heel Nation was surely relieved when the man whose UNC-Chapel Hill basketball teams have won two national titles turned up healthy recently after a cancer scare. It’s not just the victories that have endeared him to fans, but his friendly manner and his reputation for playing by the rules, on the court and when it comes to the classroom.

So it would be hoped that having seen his university (his alma mater, by the way) go through a humiliating scandal connected to its football program and academic fraud and sham courses and all the rest of it, Williams would support wholeheartedly his chancellor’s announced inclination to toughen the rules of admission and eligibility for athletes.

Chancellor Holden Thorp, whose pending resignation is certainly connected to the scandals, said recently that his university might put in some new rules raising the required high school grade point average of incoming athletes even before the change is mandated by the NCAA, college sports’ governing body. Come 2016, all NCAA members will have to follow a rule requiring freshmen athletes to have a 2.3 high school grade average (up from 2.0) to be eligible to play in their freshman season.

 But Williams told reporters he didn’t think anyone in the Atlantic Coast Conference would put the new rules in “before everybody else does them.” And he didn’t seem to see the need.

That sort of leaves Thorp out to dry, which isn’t good considering his inclination to install the rules early was the right one. If Ol’ Roy were to get on his side, he might be able to bring the rest of the ACC along with him, which would be a positive signal. In light of what’s happened in Chapel Hill, that kind of signal is sorely needed.

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