Football vacates 22 games in conclusion of alleged Saunders scandal

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The book on the NCAA's investigation of University of Louisiana at Lafayette regarding a former assistant football coach, David Saunders, is now fully closed as the university has vacated 22 wins during Saunders's tenure at UL Lafayette.

Part of those 22 wins include the 2011 and 2013 New Orleans Bowl Championship and a shared conference championship in 2013. The vacated games also include eight wins from the 2011 season, four wins from the 2012 season, eight wins from the 2013 season and two wins from the 2014 season.

Mark Hudspeth's win total as head coach of the Cajuns has dropped from 40 to 18 after the university officially vacated the 22 wins.

"While it is disappointing to vacate these victories and championships, we finally put this chapter behind us and will continue to grow our championship football program," Athletic Director Scott Farmer said in a statement to the university. "We stand behind the integrity and accomplishments of coach Mark Hudspeth, members of his coaching staff and each of our student-athletes who played football during the Hudspeth era."

Saunders was accused of assisting what the NCAA identified as six prospective student-athletes in college entrance exams by sending them to a Wayne County Testing Center in Mississippi where the exam administrator allegedly altered the scores of said student-athletes.

The NCAA's official report on the findings, released in January, revealed the NCAA said they believed Sanders acted alone. Although the report revealed Saunders worked separate from the university, the report also stated the university is ultimately responsible for its employees.

Because the NCAA said they believed

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Saunders acted as a lone wolf and what Carol Cartwright, chief hearing officer for the case, described as “exemplary cooperation” between the university and the NCAA during the investigation, the football program was handed the lowest possible penalties for multiple level I violations.

“Our university strives to comply with NCAA standards and maintains a comprehensive rules compliance program,” Farmer said in a statement. “Our compliance staff has performed with great professionalism and vigilance.

Although the 22 wins have officially been removed from the record books for the Cajuns, it doesn’t mean that Cajuns team and its fans will lose the memories experienced throughout Hudspeth’s first four seasons at the reins of the Ragin’ Cajuns football team.”

Farmer said in a statement that he appreciates all of the hard work by the athletes and players and the support from the team’s fans.

“Since Coach Hudspeth’s arrival in 2011, the football staff and student-athletes have shown their dedication to winning through their hard work and indomitable spirit,” Farmer said. “Although games were vacated due to the actions of one person, our fans, student-athletes and coaches will remember the excitement and pride they felt. We appreciate all of our fans’ support and together we will fight on.”