



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

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## **Investigation Reveals Questionable Purchases by MTSU Athletic Department**

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office, working in close cooperation with Middle Tennessee State University Audit and Consulting Services, has completed an investigation of questionable activity within the MTSU Athletic Department.

The investigation began after Athletic Department officials first detected potential problems.

Investigators determined that a former associate athletic director charged \$3,500 to his university purchasing card to buy 100 copies of "A Guide to Etiquette for Student Athletes." At the time of the purchase, the associate athletic director was listed as one of two incorporators of the company that produced the guide, and he was identified on the corporate website as the chief operating officer.



The former associate athletic director told investigators he purchased the etiquette guides for the football team and denied any association with the company. Although more than half of the football team recalled receiving an etiquette guide, the athletic director, football coach, and director of football operations told investigators they did not know about this purchase.

Athletic department officials could not determine whether the purchase of the etiquette guide was in the Athletic Department's best interest.

Additionally, investigators found that MTSU Athletic Department staff used the university's purchase credit with a sports and fitness company to obtain at least \$34,084 in athletic shoes and sports apparel for friends and family.

MTSU had a contract with a sports and fitness company that provided a specified amount of retail purchase credit that enabled coaches and athletic staff to obtain free apparel and other items. The contract stated the free products and apparel were "for use by (or in connection with) the Covered [athletic] Programs, clinics, camps, Coaches, Staff and such other purposes as UNIVERSITY and/or Director of Athletics may deem appropriate."

The Athletic Department neither monitored nor tracked purchase credit orders to determine if they were made in accordance with the contract terms, or the university's acceptable use practices.

The results of this investigation have been communicated with the Office of the District Attorney General of the

16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.

MTSU officials have indicated they are establishing new practices and procedures to correct these issues. To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

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