

University of Wisconsin amends policy changes in light of racist costume incident



By Saira Anwer | Posted: Wed 10:08 PM, Nov 09, 2016 | Updated: Wed 11:56 PM, Nov 09, 2016

Madison, Wis. (WMTV) --Two weeks ago, Camp Randall gained national attention, not just for a Badgers win, but for a racially charged costume worn at the game.



An attendee wore a President Obama mask with a noose around the neck.

After the incident, several UW athletes took to social media to speak out about how the University handled, or mishandled, the situation.

Wednesday night, the UW campus announced the amendment of their venue policies in an effort to take action after the racist costume incident at Camp Randall.

NBC15 spoke to a few UW athletes before the policy was made public.

Until that point, all the athletes had seen were statements from campus leadership.

"I mean a statement is great, but what after that?" said Badgers guard Jordan Hill.

"It's a nice response. I mean it's kind of like trying to put a band aid over something," Badgers forward Nigel Hayes said.

"Hopefully the university gets a little more strict on their policies and statements and everything like that," Badgers guard Bronson Koenig said.

Just a few hours later, the University announced exactly that, with an announcement on the UW Badgers website.

Community leaders had met with Athletic Director Barry Alvarez to discuss and roll out the new policy, to make sure racially offensive attire has no place at UW athletic events.

"It's like a costume policy. So the fact that we were able to get this done in two weeks, I've never seen a university move this quickly, move this swiftly, and also get input from the community," Michael Johnson, the president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Madison said.

Johnson, who often speaks on racial issues in the Madison area, explained that the policy takes effect immediately.

"The policy is now going to be embedded at the door of very entrance, on every ticket that's being sold," Johnson said.

"Season ticket holders are going to get an email."

Johnson says he's proud of the decision made by Athletic Director Barry Alvarez, and in the community's ability to distinguish hate speech from free speech.

"No form of racism should be tolerated in this community, whether it's visual racism, or racism through speech," Johnson said.

"It should not be tolerated and I applaud Barry Alvarez and his team for taking this very seriously and I think the chancellor will do the same."

Effective immediately, items now banned from UW athletic facilities include nooses, ropes, and any replicas of weapons.

Michael Johnson said the policy will also ban clothing with racist statements, but so far the online statement hasn't explicitly stated that.

Spectators who don't abide by the new rules can be refused entry to ejected from the venue.

According to the UW Badgers website, the new amendments include the following-

1. Items prohibited from our facilities include nooses and ropes because they are weapons and they constitute a threat to safety, as do replicas of weapons.
2. Any person who engages in violent, threatening, abusive or otherwise disorderly conduct which tends to provoke a disturbance or incite violence will be ejected from our events. Threats include statements, actions and behaviors that could reasonably be foreseen as having a purpose to inflict physical harm, even if the person making the threat doesn't have the ability to carry out the threat. Disorderly conduct does not require that a disruption actually occur.
3. The University of Wisconsin and the Big Ten Conference promotes good sportsmanship, appropriate fan behavior and a welcoming atmosphere for all fans at all athletic events sponsored by the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. Racist and other offensive behavior is not appropriate for our venues.
4. Any spectator carrying a prohibited item may be refused admittance or may be ejected from the venue.

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