

## Ineligible Player Could Cost Seminoles

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*RUGBYMag.com* has learned #4 Florida State forfeited their 72-7 win over Kennesaw State on Jan. 29 for the use of an ineligible player. Florida State coach Tim Russell says the player lied about being a full-time student, and when his ineligibility came to the attention of the FSU coaching staff, the day following the game, they self-reported the incident to South Collegiate Commissioner Marty Bradley.

The consequence of the forfeit is not only a loss of the four-point win and bonus point for notching well above four tries, but also the deduction of a point, per league rules. Until South Carolina tied #5 Florida Saturday, it appeared as though the forfeit would cost FSU a shot at the postseason. Still, Russell says he does not regret the decision to self-report the incident.

“It was a tough decision, to be honest with you. We found out on a Monday that the player in question had lied to us and put us in that situation. We made a tough decision as a coaching staff and leadership as a club,” he said.

“We’re trying to build a program that can be founded on some strong principles. We could have lied about it, we could have doctored the papers quite easily and got away with it. We knew it would cost us at least one game and possibly the season, but in the big picture we thought about the most responsible thing as leaders of these young guys playing rugby, and we knew what we had to do.”

Florida’s tie with South Carolina Saturday, instead of an expected bonus-point win, leaves the door open for FSU. They have to bonus-point and win against South Carolina and Georgia (which they did in their first meetings with each club) and beat Florida by more than seven, depriving them of a bonus point. If they do, the Seminoles will win the head-to-head tiebreaker with Florida and advance to the Sweet 16.

Florida State has known about the punishment the bulk of the season, but the South standings weren’t adjusted to show the forfeit until this week. Florida State travels to Gainesville April 9.