

Coker withdraws from UI, released from scholarship

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Sophomore running back Marcus Coker has withdrawn from classes for the spring semester and will be granted a release from his scholarship, the UI announced in a release Tuesday afternoon. This comes after Coker was suspended from the 2011 Insight Bowl against Oklahoma for violating the UI's Student-Athlete Code of Conduct last December.

Coker becomes the second running back this calendar year to leave the program after freshman Mika'il McCall, who had been serving a two-game suspension handed down by coach Kirk Ferentz for a violation of team rules, officially left Jan. 3.

Iowa athletics director Gary Barta commented publicly on Coker leaving from the Breslin Center prior to the Iowa men's basketball team against No. 6 Michigan State on Tuesday. Barta said he spoke over the phone with Ferentz upon learning that Coker withdrew from classes Tuesday morning and that Coker would be granted the release.

He also said Coker's status for possibly returning to the team this spring hadn't changed and wasn't a factor in Coker's decision to leave.

"I didn't know what to expect other than I knew his status at some point would be adjusted one way or the other," Barta said.

Barta didn't disclose whether any restrictions would be placed on Coker's release and said a decision wouldn't be made until

he got back to Iowa City. He also wouldn't comment on speculation from the outside.

"When we went into the bowl, he was suspended because he violated the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct," Barta said. "Beyond that, I'm not going to say anymore, and I know there's a lot of speculation."

UPDATE: As first reported Tuesday evening by the [Iowa City Press-Citizen](#), Coker was identified as a suspect during an investigation into an alleged assault that took place at his Iowa City residence on Oct. 28, 2011. The report clearly states that charges were never filed against Coker nor has he been found guilty of any sort of wrongdoing.