

# Discredited

## The UNC Scandal and College Athletics' Amateur Ideal

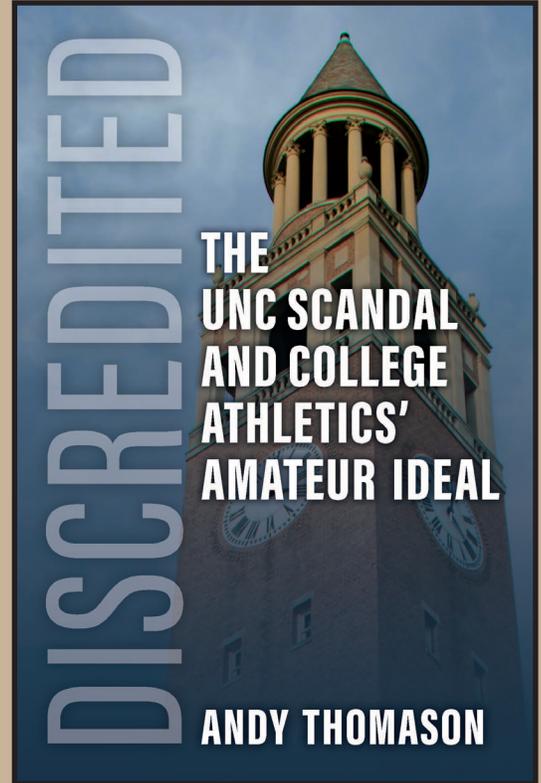
In 2009, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was on top of the world.

Consistently named one of the top universities in the country, it had welcomed a new phenom of a chancellor who promised to lead the public Ivy into the future. In the all-important athletic realm, the Tar Heels were the Coca-Cola of athletic brands. Resting upon the legacy of legendary basketball coach Dean Smith, UNC had carved out a reputation of excellence paired with squeaky-clean adherence to the rules. Supporters had a name for that irresistible ethos: the Carolina Way. The Tar Heels were climbing even higher. That year, they won their fifth national championship in men's basketball and looked poised to climb the ranks in football under a new, high-powered coach.

But within just a few years, it all came crashing down.

The Tar Heels' success, it turned out, was based on a foundation of deceit. Athletes were flocking to a slate of fake classes that advisers deftly used to keep them eligible to play. That revelation and others metastasized into one of the most damaging scandals ever to visit an American college. In *Discredited*, journalist Andy Thomason provides a gripping and authoritative retelling of the scandal through the eyes of four of its key participants: the secretary who presided over the fake classes, the professor who directed players toward them, the literacy specialist turned whistleblower who sought to expose the system, and the chancellor who found his career suddenly on the line. The heart-stopping narrative reveals the toll of a college's investment in major sports, and the amateurism myth upon which it is based. Based on dozens of original interviews and thousands of pages of documents, *Discredited* demonstrates just how far a university will go to preserve the athletic status quo: tolerating tarnished careers, ruined reputations, and years of scathing media criticism—all for a shot at competitive glory.

**Andy Thomason** is Assistant Managing Editor at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.



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