

# The Interpreter

November 2003

## N ational L etter of I ntent

The fall National Letter of Intent signing period is from November 12, 2003 until November 19, 2003. This signing period affects all of our sports except football and women's soccer.

The National Letter of Intent (NLI) was started in 1964. The purpose of the NLI is to provide certainty in the recruiting process. By utilizing the NLI, institutions agree to provide a prospective student-athlete an athletic scholarship for one academic year in exchange for the prospect's agreement to attend the institution for one academic year. Furthermore, participating institutions agree not to recruit a prospective student-athlete once he or she signs an NLI with another institution. A prospective student-athlete who signs an NLI is no longer subjected to recruiting contacts (except during a dead period) and call limitations; and is ensured an athletic scholarship for one academic year.

With this in mind, let's take the opportunity to further familiarize ourselves with the "do's" and "don'ts" associated with the NLI signing period.

**Bylaw 13.1.6.2.1** states that the NLI (and accompanying grant-in-aid) may be delivered by express mail, courier service, regular mail or facsimile machine (ie., no personal delivery). After the calendar day on which the prospect signs the NLI, **Bylaw 13.1.3.3.3** states that there will be no limit to the number of telephone calls by the institution with which the prospect has signed.

After signing the NLI, **Bylaw 13.1.6.3** states that there will be no limit to the number of contacts by the institution. However, the following conditions continue to apply:

- a. No contact may be made during a "dead period";
- b. Any contact at the prospect's educational institution in Division I football and basketball shall be confined to the permissible contact period and shall not exceed one visit per week; and
- c. Contact at the site of a prospect's competition shall continue to be governed by the provisions of **Bylaw 13.1.7.2**, except that contact with the prospect's relatives or legal guardians at the site of the prospect's competition shall be permitted

**Bylaw 13.11.8** states that communication of any signing is limited to those media forms normally used by the institution. An institution is permitted to make an announcement of signed prospects to the media as long as it is a one-time announcement and no prospects are in attendance during the announcement.

And in conclusion, it is important to remember that all signees remain prospects until the first day of practice or the first day of classes, whichever comes first.



## BASKETBALL ETHICS DISCUSSED

Division I college basketball coaches agreed to adopt a "code of ethics" and hope to work closely with the NCAA to change or possibly eliminate some of the rules governing the sport.

Nearly 300 coaches met for three hours to discuss the various ethical problems that have plagued college basketball over the last six months.

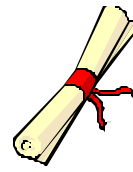
NCAA president Myles Brand also attended the meeting—a promising sign for coaches who say they have often felt like adversaries of the NCAA instead of its partner.

They agreed to "customize a code of ethics" for their basketball programs, and said they would provide the NCAA recommendations on stiffer penalties for secondary recruiting violations. They also authorized the basketball coaches ethics committee to devise a plan to deal with poor behavior.

The most significant outcome of the conference, according to some coaches, was the presence of Brand and his vow to listen to coaches on how to solve college basketball's woes.



## New Gauge for Graduation Rates



## Concerns over Ephedrine Spurs Action

The NCAA unveiled a new way to measure graduation rates that, unlike the current federal standard, would not punish teams when players in good academic standing choose to transfer to other institutions.

The NCAA also moved a step closer to enacting reforms that would use a second new measure, a "real time" annual assessment of academic progress, to penalize teams and even institutions that are doing a poor job of educating their student-athletes.

Under the federal standard, a student-athlete who transfers to another college is considered to have failed to graduate at the first college, even if the athlete was in good academic standing there. Likewise, a student who transfers into an institution cannot count as a graduate in the federal calculation for the new institution.

The NCAA's new yardstick would not punish colleges that lose transfers who are in good academic standing, and it would allow colleges that enroll transfers to count those athletes in their graduation rates.

Even though the new graduation standard fixes what the NCAA perceives as flaws in the federal measure, both standards measure graduation rates over six years and are thus only a historical look at the institution.

The NCAA is proposing a new standard, known as the "annual academic-progress rate", that would gauge how well each institution is going in three areas: retaining student-athletes; keeping them eligible for competition; and graduating them.

The NCAA's Division I Board of Directors will vote on the proposed changes in April.

The NCAA is reviewing a proposal to expand year-round random drug testing to all sports in part because of increasing concern over use of the banned stimulant ephedrine.

Year-round random drug tests are now limited to football and track, but the NCAA recommended expanding the tests. If approved, the proposal would take effect for the 2004-05 school year.

The proposal arose after a 2001 NCAA drug-use survey showed broader use of performance enhancers, including ephedrine, steroids and other substances.

Ephedrine, a powerful stimulant that is sold to promote weight loss, acts as an amphetamine on the heart and nervous system. It can raise an athlete's body temperature, blood pressure and heart rate.

The 2001 NCAA survey indicated 3.9 percent of athletes questioned admitted using ephedrine.



## From the Interpretation File



### Employment of High School Booster Group

An institution's athletics department may not employ any group consisting of prospects (e.g., an athletics team, high school booster group, non-athletics high school group). Because of the athletics nexus between an institution's athletics department and a high school athletics booster group, it is impermissible for those groups to be employed by an institution at institutional athletics events or facilities even if that athletics booster group does not contain prospects as members.

However, it is permissible for a department of the institution (other than the athletics department) or an independent, third-party entity (e.g., an entity to which the athletics department has contracted out the responsibility of hiring groups to work for the institution) to employ a group of prospects (including a high school booster group) to work at the institution's athletics contests or non-athletic events taking place in athletic facilities, provided: (1) the opportunity for employment is available to other groups in general; (2) the

group is not selected for a recruiting purpose, and (3) the athletics department has no involvement in the selection process.

### Four-Year College Transfer Prospect Participating in Nonmandatory Workouts During the Summer Conditioning Period

It is permissible for a four-year college prospect to participate in nonmandatory workouts during the summer conditioning period in the sport of football, provided the prospect has signed a written offer of financial aid and/or admission.



# In the News....

## Gophers Repay NIT

The University of Minnesota has reached an agreement to return money to the National Invitation Tournament because the Gophers used ineligible players during men's basketball games in 1996 and 1998.

The Gophers generated between \$100,000 and \$200,000 during those two tournament appearances. The Gophers and NIT agreed not to divulge the amount of the payback.



## BYU Rules Transfer's Courses Are OK

A Brigham Young University investigation found no irregularities in former Missouri guard Ricky Clemons' three BYU correspondence courses taken in the summer of 2002.

BYU officials independently opened a probe into Clemons' course work because of allegations he cheated at Barton County Community College and the University of Missouri.

The allegations of cheating were made by his ex-girlfriend. She alleged that he was given exam answers at Barton County and that she witnessed a Missouri tutor write a paper for him.

Clemons served a jail sentence after he admitted to choking his ex-girlfriend in January. He was dismissed from the basketball team at Missouri in July after he violated the terms of his jail work release program.

## Goal Post Maker Responds to Lawsuit

A Connecticut-based goal post manufacturer, sued by an Indiana man who was paralyzed when a goal post was toppled by fellow students following a 2001 football game at Ball State, says fan behavior is to blame—not faulty design.

Aaron Bourne filed the suit in federal court in Indiana. It alleges the goal posts were “designed and constructed in a manner which allowed them to suddenly snap and collapse,” striking Bourne and causing injuries that paralyzed his legs.

“This is not a product issue but is a case about personal responsibility and whether our society will tolerate acts of fan violence or will take the necessary steps to prevent this vandalism,” said Neil Gilman, president of Marty Gilman, Inc.



## Probe at McNeese

The NCAA and the Southland Conference are investigating the McNeese State men's basketball and track and field programs for possible rules violations.

Athletic Director Sonny Watkins would not go into specifics about the alleged violations, but promised to release more information when a report is complete.

# November Recruiting Calendar

## Football

Nov 1-29 Quiet/Eval  
Nov 30-Jan 31 Contact

## Men's Basketball

Nov 1-9 Quiet  
Nov 10-13 Dead  
Nov 14-19 Quiet  
Nov 20-30 Quiet/Eval

## Women's Basketball

Nov 1-9 Quiet/Eval  
Nov 10-13 Dead  
Nov 14-30 Quiet/Eval

## Baseball

Nov 1-9 Cont/Eval  
Nov 10-13 Dead  
Nov 14-30 Quiet

## Softball

Nov 1-9 Cont/Eval  
Nov 10-13 Dead  
Nov 14-26 Cont/Eval  
Nov 27-30 Quiet

## Volleyball

Nov 1-9 Cont/Eval  
Nov 10-13 Dead  
Nov 14-30 Cont/Eval

## Other Sports Except Soccer

Nov 10-13 Dead

## **NLI Dead Period Reminder**

A dead period exists for **all sports except football and soccer** beginning at **7:00 am, Monday, November 10, 2003** until **7:00 am, Friday, November 14, 2003** during the signing of the National Letter of Intent.

All in-person contact on- or off-campus is prohibited during this time. Telephone calls are permitted during a dead period.

Unlimited calls for all sports except football and soccer are permitted from Wednesday, November 12, 2003 until Friday, November 14, 2003.

## **Interpreter On-Line**

The Interpreter can be found on-line at [www.seminoles.com](http://www.seminoles.com) by clicking onto "NCAA Compliance", in the left column. The Interpreter icon is under the "What's New??" section. Past issues are archived here and contain more detailed information than space prohibits in the newsletter form.

*The Interpreter* is published by Heather McAtee. All comments should be directed to **The Interpreter**, P.O. Drawer 2195, Tallahassee, FL 32316, phone (850) 644-4272, or by e-mail: [hmcatee@mailier.fsu.edu](mailto:hmcatee@mailier.fsu.edu).

## **COMPLIANCE STAFF 644-4272**

### **Mr. Bob Minnix**

Associate Athletic Director  
for Compliance

### **Mr. Brian Battle**

Director of Compliance

### **Ms. Heather McAtee**

Compliance Coordinator

### **Ms. Katie Hughes**

Compliance Assistant

Florida State University  
Athletic Compliance Office  
P.O. Drawer 2195  
Tallahassee, FL 32316

**November 2003  
National Letter of Intent  
Graduation Rates  
Basketball Ethics**

