

The Irish Interpreter

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Notre Dame Athletics Compliance Office

Booster Briefing

Can I Take A High School Student To A Game?

“Can I take this student to the game?” is a common question asked by alumni and boosters (see page 3 for definition of booster). Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to this question, but there are some guidelines.

A typical scenario follows: An alumnus calls the Compliance Office and explains that his grandson's friend and high school teammate, a prospective student-athlete (grades 9 through 12) and potential Notre Dame recruit, wants to come to a Notre Dame home game. The booster indicates that he has provided his grandson's friends with tickets and travel to Irish home games for over 10 years and has known this particular friend of his grandson since they were both in elementary school. The booster also mentions that, once in South Bend, he may also bring his grandson and his grandson's friend to the family tailgate party.

Would this be permissible according to NCAA rules?

Yes in this case, but only because:

This booster has a pre-existing relationship with his grandson's friend.

This booster's relationship with the prospective student-athlete does not originate in athletics, but in his grandson's friendship beginning in elementary school.

This booster will be providing benefits that he has consistently provided to his grandson's friends, regardless of athletic ability, for several years.

These points should be viewed only as general guidelines. Additionally, because NCAA rules preclude boosters from soliciting a prospect's enrollment at Notre Dame, this booster must ensure that neither he nor his friends or family solicit the prospective student-athlete's participation in athletics at Notre Dame.

Due to the complexity of these situations, if you would like to take a high school student to a Notre Dame athletic event and you have any questions about whether this could violate NCAA rules, please feel free to contact a member of the Athletics Compliance Office at any time.

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Athletics Compliance Office Staff:

Jill Bodensteiner, Associate Athletics Director	(574) 631-6721
jbodenst@nd.edu	
Jen Vining-Smith, Assistant Athletics Director	(574) 631-3248
jvinings@nd.edu	
Brent Moberg, Director of Compliance	(574) 631-3041
bmoberg1@nd.edu	
Tom Timmermans, Compliance Coordinator	(574) 631-2237
ttimmerm@nd.edu	
Cyndi Sykes, Administrative Assistant	(574) 631-9647
crissman@nd.edu	

Around the Country

Oklahoma State Baseball

A former Oklahoma State University baseball player may have received an impermissible extra benefit when he accepted a used car while competing in a summer league, leading to a possible major violation for the program.

The player received a used car from the family with which he lived while playing in the summer league. The family had no prior connection to Oklahoma State Athletics. Rather than repay the cost of the impermissible benefit to gain reinstatement, the student-athlete forfeited his final season of competition with Oklahoma State.

The institution argues that this benefit does not rise to a level of a major violation because the family had no prior connection to Oklahoma State Athletics.

New Hampshire Hockey

The University of New Hampshire Men's Hockey Program was placed on two years' probation, including additional recruiting restrictions, following impermissible emails sent to prospects with recruiting software.

An associate head coach sent 923 impermissible emails to 30 prospects during the 2007-2008 Academic Year. The recruiting software included the ability to send mass emails.

These messages were received by the prospects prior to June 15th following the completion of their sophomore year in high school.

Penalties include two years of probation, a one-person reduction in the number of permissible off-campus recruiters from April through October 2009, no official visits for the involved 30 prospects, and a prohibition from signing any of the 30 prospects to a National Letter of Intent.

University of Memphis Basketball

The NCAA has forced the University of Memphis to vacate its 38 victories from its national runner-up finish during the 2007-2008 Men's Basketball season. The school will also be required to return all money received from that season's NCAA Tournament participation.

The vacated wins follow an investigation into the use of an ineligible player throughout that season. The NCAA found that the ineligible player had another individual take his SAT exam to gain admission to Memphis and certification of initial eligibility from the NCAA Eligibility Center. The NCAA also discovered that the ineligible player's sibling may have received free transportation and board during away contests. The University is considering an appeal.

Test Your Knowledge

QUESTION 1

Is it permissible for a booster to provide a student-athlete with tickets to attend Notre Dame athletics events?

QUESTION 2

If a coach is asked whether a prospective student-athlete has verbally committed to Notre Dame, how much information can he/she share in response?

QUESTION 3

Is it permissible for an institutional coaching staff member to entertain a high school, preparatory school, or junior college coach on- or off-campus?

Compliance Alphabet Soup



Amateurism:

Only amateur student-athletes are eligible for participation in intercollegiate athletics. Student-athletes may lose their amateur status and eligibility by using their athletics skill for pay, competing on a professional team, entering into an oral or written agreement with an agent or professional team, or by promoting or endorsing a commercial product.

Booster:

Also known as Representatives of Athletics Interests. You are a booster if you are or have ever been a member of a booster organization that supports Notre Dame Athletics; have made any financial contributions to any area of the university; have made any annual or lifetime membership commitment to a booster organization; are or have ever been involved with the recruitment of a prospect; have provided or are providing benefits to an enrolled student-athlete or their relatives or friends; provided or helped arrange employment for student-athletes; are the parent of a student-athlete; are or have ever been a season ticket holder; or have otherwise been involved in promoting Notre Dame Athletics. Remember, once a booster, always a booster!

Complimentary

Admissions:

Student-athletes may receive complimentary admissions to home and away athletics events. Complimentary admissions must be provided through a pass list. "Hard tickets" may not be issued. It is impermissible for student-athletes or any individual receiving a complimentary admission to sell or exchange the admission for any item of value.

Online Social Networking Update

The relationship between MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and other online social networking venues and NCAA rules has been a hot topic of conversation in recent months. The NCAA recently released guidelines assessing Microblogs such as Twitter and their relationship to existing recruiting rules. In accordance with this update, it is **permissible** for an athletics staff member to publicly microblog or "tweet" about general information, to post a photograph of a prospect after that prospect has signed a National Letter of Intent, and prior to the signing of the National Letter of Intent, to comment publicly on a prospect only to the extent of confirming that the prospect is being recruited by Notre Dame. It remains **impermissible** to publicize a prospect's visit to campus, comment publicly on the prospect beyond confirming recruitment, post a photograph of the prospect during an official or unofficial visit to campus, or direct message a prospect when the coach has knowledge that the prospect receives Twitter direct messages as text messages on his or her cell phone. Ultimately, just as coaches cannot speak about recruits, coaches also cannot tweet about them. Similarly, just as they cannot send unsolicited text messages prior to the signing of a National Letter of Intent, coaches cannot write unsolicited messages on Facebook walls. However, provided that the prospect is a contactable prospect, generally beginning on September 1 of a prospect's junior year in high school, coaches can send direct messages to prospects on both Twitter and Facebook. The NCAA rules interpret these direct messages to be private communications similar to e-mail and not a text message because the prospects must either accept friend requests on Facebook or choose to follow someone on Twitter. However, risks continue to exist with these social networks. Students at some schools have received cease-and-desist letters from the Compliance Office after creating Facebook groups targeted toward enticing a specific prospect to sign with their school. Similarly, the University of Kentucky has previously reported a secondary NCAA violation after some of its boosters began posting on a recruit's MySpace page. With these ever-changing technologies, rules applications are complex, so it is vital for everyone associated with Notre Dame to take great care and to contact the Compliance Office with questions at any time.

Test Your Knowledge

Question 1:

NO. It is NOT permissible for a booster to provide a student-athlete with tickets to attend Notre Dame athletics events. Student-athletes must obtain their tickets to Notre Dame athletics events in the same manner as all other students. In fact, boosters are prohibited from providing any form of entertainment expenses to student-athletes, whether it is tickets to a movie, cover charge at a club, or greens fees at a local golf course. Providing such benefits to student-athletes would be considered an impermissible extra benefit, constituting a violation of NCAA legislation.

Question 2:

A coach is only allowed to confirm that their school is recruiting the prospective student athlete and may not comment any further. Coaches are subject to this rule in responding to media, boosters, or anyone else from the general public.

Question 3:

YES and NO. Entertainment of a high school, preparatory school, or junior college coach is limited to providing a maximum of two complimentary admissions to a home athletics event at any facility within a 30-mile radius of campus. Entertainment may not include food, refreshments, lodging expenses, or transportation expenses. It is not permissible to provide complimentary admissions to any postseason competition (e.g., conference tournament, bowl game, NCAA championship).

NCAA RECRUITING CALENDARS

CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK

September 1– 30, 2009: Contact Period

FOOTBALL

September 1– 30, 2009: Quiet Period
(except for 42 permissible evaluation days)

MEN'S BASKETBALL

September 1– 8, 2009: Quiet Period

September 9– 30, 2009: Contact Period

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

September 1– 15, 2009: Quiet Period

September 16– 30, 2009: Contact Period

BASEBALL

September 1– 10, 2009: Quiet Period

September 11– 30, 2009: Contact Period

SOFTBALL

September 1– 30, 2009: Contact Period
(limited to 50 permissible evaluation days)

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

September 1 – 30, 2009: Contact Period

MEN'S LACROSSE

September 1– 30, 2009: Contact Period
(No Evaluations)

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

September 1 – 30, 2009: Contact Period

ALL OTHER SPORTS

September 1– 30, 2009: Contact Period