



The Irish Interpreter

A monthly publication from the Athletic Compliance Office

February 2007

Volume 1 Issue 3

University of Notre Dame Athletic Compliance Office

Mike Karwoski,
Associate Athletic
Director
(574)631-4107

Lisa Deibler,
Assistant Athletic
Director
(574)631-3248

Nina Stephan,
Director of Rules
Education
(574)631-3041

Allen Greene,
Coordinator of
Compliance
Information
(574)631-7358

Joyce Center
Notre Dame, IN 46556

FAX (574)631-9961

In this issue:

- National Letter of Intent
- Gambling Reminder
- Infractions Around the NCAA
- Recruiting Calendar
- Division I Football Landscape

Coming in March: The
NCAA's Academic
Progress Rate

What is the National Letter of Intent?

The National Letter of Intent (NLI) program, administered by the Collegiate Commissioners Association, includes 55 leagues with more than 500 institutions participating. The basic goals of the program are to reduce and limit recruiting pressure on prospective student-athletes and to promote and preserve the amateur nature of college athletics.

In general, only prospective student-athletes enrolling in a four-year institution for the first time may sign an NLI. The only midyear enrollees who may sign an NLI are junior college football transfers who graduate from the junior college at midyear. A walk-on may not sign an NLI.

By signing an NLI, a student-athlete agrees to attend the designated college or university for one academic year. In turn, the participating institutions agree to provide athletics financial aid for one academic year to the student-athlete, provided he/she is admitted to the institution and is eligible for financial

aid under NCAA rules. An important provision of the NLI program is a recruiting prohibition applied after a prospective student-athlete signs a Letter of Intent. This prohibition requires participating institutions cease recruitment of a prospective student-athlete once an NLI is signed with another institution.

If a prospect does not attend the institution with which he/she signed or attends the institution for less than one full academic year, the basic penalty is that the student will lose one year of eligibility in all sports and must serve one year in residence at the next NLI institution. The NLI remains valid if the coach of the prospect's sport leaves the institution.

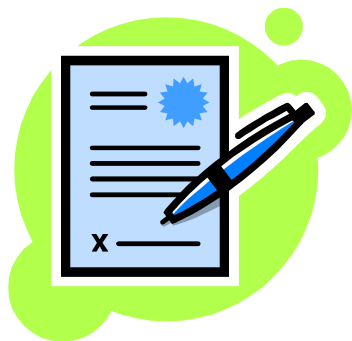
A verbal commitment is a non-binding oral agreement between the prospect and the institution. The NLI program does not recognize verbal commitments. A student may verbally commit to one institution and subsequently sign an NLI with another institution

without consequences.

All sports, with the exception of men's and women's soccer and football, have an early signing period and a late signing period. The early signing period for the 2006-2007 academic year occurred in November 2006 and the late signing period will be coming up in April 2007. However, the signing period for **men's and women's soccer** begins next week – **February 7, 2007** and goes through August 1, 2007. The signing period for **football** also begins **February 7, 2007** and goes through April 1, 2007. Prospective student athletes in these sports may not sign an NLI outside of this date range.

After a prospective student-athlete signs an NLI, he/she remains a prospective student-athlete and does so until he/she officially registers, enrolls and attends classes full-time at the institution or participates in regular season practice/competition that occurs before the beginning of the term. Only coaching staff

Continued on page 2



What is the National Letter of Intent?

Continued from Page 1

members may contact prospective student-athletes, including those who have signed an NLI. Boosters may not telephone, have written correspondence (including e-mails) or have on- or off-campus contact with a prospect. [See blue box below for the definition of a booster.] There is one exception to this rule: a booster may telephone a prospect regarding summer employment arrangements, provided the employment does not begin until the prospect graduates from high school. Prospects may be employed by boosters during the summer following their graduation from high school or junior college, provided the prospect is paid only for work actually performed and at a rate commensurate with the going rate in the area for similar services.

Boosters may not offer, provide or arrange financial assistance, directly or indirectly, to pay a prospect's expenses (educational or otherwise) for any period prior to or after his or her enrollment in college.

The same prohibitions against the provision of extra benefits to prospects and their family and friends still apply to the prospect even after he or she signs a NLI.

Additional rules and regulations are as follows:

- **Comments Before Signing.** Prior to the time a prospect signs a NLI, a coach may comment only to the extent of confirming recruitment of the prospect. The coach may not comment about the prospect's ability or the contribution that the prospect might make to the institution's team. In addition, the coach may not comment as to the likelihood of the prospect's signing with the institution.
- **Press Releases.** An institution may issue a press release regarding a prospect's commitment to attend the institution only after the prospect has signed a NLI. There are no limits on the number of times an institution may release the information. An institution may not purchase or receive commercial advertising (e.g., print, media, billboard) to be used to identify a prospect.
- **Press Conferences.** An institution may make an announcement on the institution's campus for the sole purpose of presenting at one time to the media the names of all prospective student-athletes who have signed an NLI. No prospects (or their relatives or friends) may be in attendance.
- **Independent Announcement by Prospect.** It is permissible for a prospect to arrange a press conference to announce his or her signing, provided there is no arrangement or involvement by the institution or boosters.

More information on the National Letter of Intent program, including the text of the NLI agreement, can be found at:

<http://www.national-letter.org/>

Definition you should know... Representative of Athletics Interests

You are a representative of Notre Dame's athletics interests, more commonly known as a "booster", if you meet any of the following conditions:

- You have ever been a member of any organization that promotes Notre Dame's athletics program (e.g., Quarterback Club, Three Point Club, Fast Break Club).
- You have made a financial contribution to the Notre Dame athletics department or its booster organization.
- You are or have been a season ticket holder in any sport.
- You have provided benefits (e.g., summer jobs or occasional family meals) to enrolled student-athletes.
- You have ever, in any way, promoted the athletics program at Notre Dame

A representative of athletics interests can be an individual, independent agency, corporate entity (e.g., apparel or equipment manufacturer) or other organization who is known to have met the above conditions. Once an individual, independent agency, corporate entity or other organization has been identified as a booster, they retain that identity indefinitely.



Gambling Reminder

On Sunday, February 4th, the Indianapolis Colts and the Chicago Bears will face off in Super Bowl XLI in Miami, Florida. A great deal of the hype surrounding the game will center on the point spread, office pools and other forms of wagering on the game.

The NCAA specifically prohibits athletics department staff members and student-athletes from wagering on intercollegiate athletics events and those professional events involving sports in which the NCAA sponsors a championship. Wagering/betting includes receiving or offering any item that has a tangible value (e.g., cash, clothes, dinner) based on the outcome of an athletics event. Any type of pool, including office pools and pools organized by family, friends, or neighbors, for cash or other prizes is prohibited. Participating in any gambling activity through a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling is also prohibited. A student-athlete who participates in any type of gambling activities will be severely sanctioned by the NCAA (partial or permanent loss of eligibility). Staff members found in violation of the NCAA rule on gambling will be subject to disciplinary or corrective action immediately.

Infractions Cases Around the NCAA

In November 2006, The University of Iowa was penalized by the NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions for major violations related to the men's swimming program. The case involved fraud in the admissions process for three men's swimming athletes. The three former student-athletes were international transfers who competed while ineligible during their transfer year in residence and falsified admissions documents by omitting previous college attendance. In addition, the former head men's swimming coach had knowledge of the former student-athletes' previous college attendance prior to their enrollment at the institution and failed to report this information to university officials. In one particular instance, the former head coach reported that he discarded an application submitted by one of the former student-athletes that disclosed prior enrollment and sent the former student-athlete a second application.

The Committee on Infractions imposed the following penalties on this case: public reprimand and censure; two years probation; resignation of the former head coach (self-imposed by the university); limit on scholarships, in the sport of men's swimming for three years; dismissal of the three former men's swimming student-athletes from the institution (self-imposed by the university); a \$5,000 fine for the ineligible participation of the three former student-athletes (self-imposed by the university); and if the former head men's swimming coach seeks employment or affiliation in an athletically related position at an NCAA member institution during a five year period, he and the involved institution shall be requested to appear before the Committee on Infractions to consider whether the member institution should limit his duties ("show cause" penalty).



The University of Kansas was penalized in October 2006 by the NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions for major violations in the sports of men's basketball and football and lack of institutional control. These violations include a booster providing more than \$5,000 in benefits to two basketball players and their families; the majority of the benefits were provided to one student-athlete before and after he enrolled at the university. Two other boosters provided graduation gifts to outgoing basketball players with the knowledge of athletics department personnel. In football, seven transfer student-athletes received improper benefits after they moved on campus in the summer before they were admitted, and a former graduate assistant football coach committed academic fraud by providing answers to test questions for two of these student-athletes.

As a result, the Committee on Infractions imposed the following penalties: public reprimand and censure; three years of probation; reduction of recruited two-year college transfers for two years (self-imposed by the university); reduction of three initial scholarships in football for two years; reduction in scholarships for men's basketball for two years; reduction in the amount of allowable official visits in men's basketball; the former graduate assistant football coach who committed academic fraud was given a three-year "show cause" order... this means any NCAA college or university seeking to hire him over the next three years must appear before the Committee on Infractions to "show cause" why he should be allowed to work in intercollegiate athletics; the university must disassociate the booster who provided more than \$5,000 in benefits to two men's basketball players for a four-year period.



Definition you should know...

Football Bowl Subdivision – (formerly I-A) includes those programs that compete in an effort to participate in the postseason bowl system (the 32 NCAA-licensed events which includes the Bowl Championship Series).

Football Championship Subdivision – (formerly I-AA) includes those programs that compete in an effort to participate in the NCAA championship postseason structure (one of the 88 NCAA national championships).

February Recruiting Calendar

Baseball

- February 1-28 – Quiet Period

Men's Basketball

- February 1-28 – Evaluation Period

Women's Basketball

- February 1-28 – Evaluation Period

Men's Lacrosse

- February 1-28 – Contact/Evaluation Period

Women's Lacrosse

- February 1-28 – Contact/Evaluation Period

Football

- February 1-3 – Contact Period
- February 4 – Quiet Period
- February 5-8 – Dead Period
- February 9-28 – Quiet Period

Softball

- February 1-28 – Contact/Evaluation Period

Volleyball

- February 1-28 – Contact/Evaluation Period

Men's and Women's Soccer

- February 5-8 – Dead Period

In The NCAA News: Task Force to Assess Division I Football Landscape

A task force of Division I Football Issues Committee members, coaches and other stakeholders will be appointed to examine the future direction of college football. Among items the task force will address are non-scholastic camps and clinics, and coaches making on-campus contact in the spring with prospective student-athletes and with student-athletes who already have signed a National Letter of Intent. Other items include possibly establishing an early signing date in the sport and examining the feasibility of a fifth year of eligibility for football student-athletes.

Stakeholders see the non-scholastic camps and clinics as a building influence during the recruiting process. Football issues committee members want to further examine the role such camps play in evaluations. "We want to know whether coaches have to be seven places at once when recruiting," said Steve Pederson, chair of the football issues committee and director of athletics at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. "Is the time they are spending good recruiting time or are they just at places to be seen because other institutions are there?"

Grant Teaff, executive director of the American Football Coaches Association, said coaches believe additional access would help them acclimate prospects to campus. Currently, student-athletes who sign a national letter of intent are allowed one visit to the campus in the spring, but coaches aren't allowed to have contact with them.

Committee members also discussed the playing rules effective this season that were designed to speed up the game. Changes included the game clock starting after a change of possession and when the ball is put in play on kickoffs.

The rules led to an average decrease in game time of 15 minutes. In the 11 Football Bowl Subdivision conferences, the average number of plays, yardage and points decreased as well. The Big East Conference and the Southeastern Conference were the only leagues that saw an increase in average yardage and points.