



# The Huskie Compliance Corner

Volume 1, Issue 3 February 2007

Northern Illinois University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics

## RECRUITING CALENDARS

Sport	Dates	Recruiting Period
Baseball	February	Quiet Period
Men's Basketball	February	Evaluation Period
Women's Basketball	February	Quiet/Evaluation Period: *subject to 85 Recruiting-Person Days
Football	2/1 - 2/3 2/4 2/5-2/8 2/9 - 4/14	Contact Period Quiet Period Dead Period Quiet Period
Softball	February	Contact/Evaluation Period
Volleyball	February	Contact/Evaluation Period
All Other Sports	February	Contact/Evaluation Period
-Soccer	February 5-8	Dead Period

## RECRUITING PERIOD DEFINITIONS

**Evaluation Period:** Permissible to be involved in off-campus activities designed to assess the academic qualifications and playing ability of prospects. NO in-person, off-campus contacts may be made during evaluation periods.

**Dead Period:** NOT permissible to make in-person contacts or evaluations on- or off-campus or to permit official or unofficial visits.

## Compliance Questions of the Month

**Question 1:** Is it permissible to decorate a prospect's hotel room when he or she comes to campus on a recruiting visit?

**Question 2:** Is it permissible for a booster to provide benefits to a prospect's coach?

**Question 3:** Can a jersey with a student-athlete's name on the back be raffled off for charity?

**Question 4:** 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 ABC'S

### *H – High School Coaches*

NIU coaching staff members are limited in their opportunities to entertain high school, preparatory school, or junior college coaches both on- and off-campus. The **ONLY** permissible form of entertainment of a high school, preparatory school, or two-year college coach or any other individual responsible for teaching or directing an activity in which a prospect is involved (e.g., athletics director, AAU coach, club coach) is **providing a maximum of two complimentary admissions, via official pass list**, to a home athletics event at any facility within a 30-mile radius of campus. These tickets must be issued on an individual game basis. Entertainment **may not include** food, refreshments, greens fees, tickets to concerts or professional sporting events, lodging, or transportation.

## RECRUITING PERIOD DEFINITIONS

**Contact Period:** Permissible to make in-person, off-campus, recruiting contacts and evaluations.

**Quiet Period:** Permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts **ONLY** on the NIU campus.

## COMPLIANCE ABC'S

### *I – Initial Eligibility*

In Division I, all prospective student-athletes who want to participate in intercollegiate competition as freshmen must register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse evaluates prospective student-athletes' amateur and academic records, including core courses, grade point average, and standardized test scores, to determine eligibility for practice, competition, and athletic aid during the freshman year.

### *J - Jobs*

Student-athletes are permitted to work during both the academic year and summer, provided they are compensated at the going rate for work actually performed; they do not receive any benefits that are not available to all other employees in a similar position; and the compensation is not based on any value to the employer because of the athletic reputation of the student-athlete.

## VIOLATION REPORTS

### New Violations at the University of South Carolina

Jerri Spurrier, wife of South Carolina Head Football coach Steve Spurrier, was cited for a secondary, or Level II, violation of NCAA rules for sending handwritten notes to families of players who had signed with the Gamecocks. The notes wished the newest players well as they got ready to join her husband's team.

Three other incidents, two involving the football program, have also been documented. One took place when an academic department improperly certified degree applicable hours for two student-athletes in football and men's basketball. The second took place when a football assistant impermissibly called a prospective athlete during June and July when such calls could not be made until Sept. 1. This violation is a Level I violation, and will thus be referred by the Southeastern Conference to the NCAA enforcement staff for review. The third, also a Level II infraction, took place when a volleyball player impermissibly made free phone calls on an athletic department phone.

South Carolina is currently serving a three-year NCAA probation for violations that occurred when Lou Holtz was the school's head football coach from 1999 through 2004.

### Track Violations at the University of Arkansas

The Arkansas men's track program has self-reported five NCAA rule violations committed by a former assistant

coach, his wife, and his sister-in-law. The violations involved their relationship with a single prospective student-athlete. The violations included providing transportation to the prospect to and from the airport and to work, providing the prospect with an apartment for 21 days without payment of rent or the cost of utilities, and assisting the prospective student-athlete with enrollment in a correspondence course prior to full time enrollment at the University of Arkansas. In addition, the assistant coach arranged for his sister-in-law to provide multiple math tutoring sessions to the prospect at no cost, and the coach's wife and sister-in-law provided food and transportation to and from St. John's and Great Bend, Kansas for the athlete to take his midterm exam.

Upon discovery of the violations, the university reduced its total of available track athletics-grants-in-aid by 3. The matter is scheduled for consideration by the NCAA Committee on Infractions in June.

## MYSFACE, FACEBOOK, AND OTHER INTERNET ISSUES

Intercollegiate athletics scandals fueled by widely publicized negative internet photos are hardly new. For example, in 2003, internet photos of Iowa State University Head Men's Basketball Coach Larry Eustachy at a party in a student apartment near the University of Missouri campus in Columbia eventually led to his demise as Iowa State's Basketball Coach. However, in recent months, internet issues have resurfaced to create difficult and scandalous scenarios for both Northwestern University and the University of Colorado.

### Website Photos Lead to Hazing Allegations at Northwestern

In May 2006, the Northwestern University women's soccer team was suspended after a website revealed photos of an alleged hazing incident. The pictures appeared on [www.badjocks.com](http://www.badjocks.com). The suspension prohibited the team from gathering for organized activities until the conclusion of the investigation. The photos were allegedly from a freshman hazing night, depicting the women blindfolded with their arms tied behind their backs, as well as in other compromising situations.

### CU Internet Postings Led to Dismissals

On January 31, 2007, the University of Colorado announced that no further disciplinary action would be taken against six members of the institution's track and field team who had recently been dismissed from the squad. CU officials determined that the matter "is not prosecutable" and would not be referred to the university's "Office of Judicial Affairs."

The situation arose after the six student-athletes posted photos of themselves in mock sexual positions and partying wearing Colorado athletic attire on Facebook.com. A spokesman for the university called the dismissals “proactive and very swift and severe,” noting that the student-athletes had been warned about this type of conduct. He also mentioned that, “had photos been posted on Facebook of student-athletes engaging in non-offensive behavior, there would not have been an issue.” However, “if they’re half-clothed and drinking, it’s a problem for us.”

This scenario follows a 2005 situation resulting in a CU football player and CU track team member leaving their teams “after posting a menacing, racist Facebook message” to a Hispanic fellow student-athlete.

### **Myspace.com and Institutional Coaches**

The Big East Conference has reported receiving several questions regarding myspace.com. Specifically, the questions concern whether it is permissible for a coach to have an account for recruiting purposes. Although it is permissible for a coaching staff member to have an account, the same rules apply as for other personal websites, based on an interpretation by the NCAA.

*September 30, 1999 Web Site Information It is permissible for an institution's web site or an athletics department staff member's personal web site to include information related to the institution's athletics programs and a hyperlink to the institution's athletics web site, provided neither the institution's web site nor the athletics department staff member's personal web site contains: (1) information regarding prospective student-athletes, except as permitted under Bylaw 13.11.8; (2) any hyperlink to the web site of a recruiting/scouting service or a noninstitutional publication that reports primarily on the institution's athletics program; (3) recruiting videos or other audio/video materials, except as permitted under Bylaw 13.4.2.1.*

Ultimately, coaches are advised that, if they do have an account with myspace.com, they CANNOT have any pictures/comments from PSAs appearing on their personal webpage. It is strongly recommended that coaches do not allow PSAs to become friends or comment on their personal pages. The Big East Conference has been informed by the NCAA that if any coaches do have PSA pictures/comments on their personal pages, it is a secondary violation.

### **UK Fans’ Web Posts Create Violation**

University of Kentucky fans posted comments on a top prospect’s personal webpage on myspace.com. These

Included 20-25 postings that were recruiting pitches for UK. These postings are similar to a booster having face-to-face contact or a phone conversation with a prospect. The university is reporting this as a secondary violation and continues to monitor the website.

### **MyStack.com Attracts High School Student-Athletes**

Since its inception in late 2006, MyStack.com has emerged as a prominent social networking site for high school athletes attempting to connect themselves to college recruiters. MyStack is a free website allowing students to list their statistics, upload highlight films, and distribute their profiles to coaches. The site’s founder has described MyStack as the “Monster.com for student athletes.” Jennifer Kearns, Associate Director of Public and Media Relations for the NCAA, has noted that, although this bursting technology often makes communication between coaches and prospects easier, it also carries a burden for coaches and students who feel obligated to constantly respond, thus impacting the amount of time student-athletes can study and coaches’ ability to maintain a life/work balance. Despite these inherent drawbacks, MyStack has already registered profiles for over 12,000 teens.

### **Managing Internet Issues**

The question remains, what are institutional best practices for managing these rising internet concerns? Some institutions, such as Kent State University, have attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to prohibit student-athletes from using a similar site called Facebook. Other institutions have requested that their student-athletes restrict their profiles on community websites. This second approach has been aided by recent changes to the websites themselves. For instance, Facebook has made it easier for clients to restrict their audience and access to their profiles to only those viewers accepted by the clients as “friends.” This approach eliminates public viewing of the postings, which has sometimes been an embarrassment to teams and institutions, while also addressing the concerns of administrators over the possibility of stalking. However, it in no way addresses the appropriateness of individual postings. George Washington University has adopted an Orwellian Big Brother model, managed by institutional coaches. At George Washington, several coaches have signed up for Facebook and routinely monitor the social network to ensure that team members have not posted anything that could lead to scandals mirroring the situations at Northwestern and Colorado.

### **Internet Usage and the Northern Illinois University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics**

Here at NIU, all student-athletes and athletic department staff members are encouraged to be smart in their usage of these websites and are reminded to represent themselves, Northern Illinois University, and their programs in a positive fashion at all times.

## Compliance Questions of the Month

**Answer 1:** NO. NCAA legislation states that an institution may not arrange miscellaneous, personalized recruiting aids (e.g., personalized jerseys, personalized audio/video scoreboard presentations) and may not permit a prospective student-athlete to engage in any game-day simulations (e.g., running onto the field with the team during pre-game introductions) during an official visit. Personalized recruiting aids include any decorative items and special additions to any location the prospective student-athlete will visit (e.g., hotel room, locker room, coach's office, conference room, arena) regardless of whether or not the items include the prospective student-athlete's name or picture.

**Answer 2:** NO. Representatives of NIU's athletics interests (boosters) are not permitted to provide any material benefits (e.g., cash, meals, car) to the coach of a prospective student-athlete (i.e., high school, preparatory school, junior college, AAU).

Boosters are prohibited from being involved in any recruiting activities with a prospect, the prospect's parents, or the prospect's coach. Only coaches and athletics department staff members may be involved in the recruiting process. Boosters may not contact a prospect, or members of the prospect's family, by e-mail, letter, telephone, or in-person for the purpose of soliciting their enrollment at NIU. This prohibition also applies to the prospect's coach. In addition, a booster may not visit a prospect's educational institution to pick up film or transcripts pertaining to the evaluation of the prospect's academic eligibility or athletics ability.

**Answer 3:** NO. A fundraising activity (e.g., auction, raffle) involving items that include the name, picture, or likeness of a student-athlete should be treated in the same manner as a sale. In dealing with sales, per NCAA legislation, any commercial items with names, likenesses, or pictures of multiple student-athletes (other than highlight films or media guides) may be sold only at the member institution at which the student-athlete is enrolled, institutionally controlled (owned and operated) outlets, or outlets controlled by the charitable or educational organization. Items that include an individual student-athlete's name, picture, or likeness (e.g., name on a jersey, name or likeness on a bobblehead doll), other than informational items (e.g., media guide, schedule cards, institutional publications), may not be sold. It is permissible for an institution to sell a photograph of an individual student-athlete that is taken while he or she is engaged in practice or competition, provided the photograph is not included with or as a part of another

commercial item (e.g., coffee mug, autographed photograph, T-shirt). An institution may not sell a photograph that is taken of an individual student-athlete in any other setting (e.g., photo shoot for media activities).

**Answer 4:** 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).

## Need More Information?

Please contact the Compliance Office staff for further information or for answers to NCAA related questions.

<http://niuhuskies.cstv.com/compliance/niu-compliance.html>

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