



The Huskie Compliance Corner

Volume 1, Issue 4 April 2007

Northern Illinois University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics

RECRUITING CALENDARS

Sport	Dates	Recruiting Period
Baseball	April 9–12	Dead
Softball	April 13-30	Contact/Evaluation
Volleyball		
Men's Basketball	April 9 – 12 April 13-30	Dead Contact/Evaluation
Women's Basketball	April 9 – 12 April 13; 16-30 April 14-15	Dead Quiet Evaluation* <i>*Nonscholastic Events Only</i>
Football	April 1–30 April 15-30	Quiet * Evaluation <i>(Only for 4 designated weeks through May 31)</i>
All Other Sports*	April 9-12	Dead Period* <i>(Excludes Men's and Women's Soccer)</i>

RECRUITING PERIOD DEFINITIONS

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

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.

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

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

INVESTIGATIONS AND INFRACTIONS

Duke Sports Medicine

The NCAA and Duke athletics officials are investigating the question of whether sponsorship of a high school basketball tournament by Duke Sports Medicine is an NCAA rules violation. Duke Sports Medicine purchased a \$10,000 sponsorship for a high school basketball tournament featuring three high school games at Cameron Indoor Stadium. Under NCAA Bylaw 13.15.1.2, "an institution may not provide funding, directly or through paid advertisements, to benefit a high school athletics program." The question in this case specifically concerns how the term "institution" should apply.

New Investigation of Possible Recruiting Violations at USC

Southern California is looking into whether it may have violated NCAA recruiting rules while pursuing highly rated football recruit Joe McKnight, who signed a National Letter of Intent with USC in February. At his signing press conference, McKnight made comments suggesting communications with former Trojan Reggie Bush. Under NCAA Rules, former players are barred from telephoning prospective recruits, their relatives, or guardians. USC coach Pete Carroll denied any call took place, stating simply "it never happened." McKnight's high school football coach, J.T. Curtis, said the recruit misspoke during the news conference when he said that Carroll set up a conference call so he and Curtis could talk to Bush and ease concerns that USC might be facing other NCAA sanctions arising from NCAA and Pac-10 investigations into whether Bush or his family received "improper benefits" from agents. Curtis told the LA Times that he spoke to Carroll during McKnight's recruitment, but not on a conference call with McKnight or Bush. Curtis said that McKnight told him Coach Carroll was talking to Bush and McKnight was able to listen and hear Bush's side of the story on the speakerphone. After being informed of Carroll's denial, Curtis called McKnight and later said the recruit never heard Bush on speakerphone.

INVESTIGATIONS AND INFRACTIONS, Continued

NCAA Penalizes McNeese State

The McNeese State University men's and women's track and field programs and men's basketball programs have been penalized for major NCAA rules violations.

The NCAA Committee on Infractions accepted all of the school's self-imposed penalties, including loss of scholarships, decreases in recruiting activities, vacation of all women's track and field and cross country awards earned from 1999-2000 through 2003-04, and a two-year probation period. The penalties do not prevent any of the involved athletic programs from participating in conference or post-season tournaments or meets.

The track and field violations occurred between 1999 and 2003 and involved the participation of an ineligible female athlete, improper benefits, and unethical conduct by the head coach.

Additionally, a 2003 investigation by the school and the Southland Conference discovered multiple violations committed by an assistant men's basketball coach involving academic fraud, impermissible lodging and transportation benefits, official visit violations, and unethical conduct.

University President Dr. Robert Hebert remarked, "we have been waiting for more than two years to bring closure to the investigation into these major rules violations. The NCAA accepted all of the self-imposed penalties and corrective actions recommended by the university, and we have moved forward with both programs." Director of Athletics Sonny Watkins noted that the events happened a long time ago, with both the former assistant men's basketball coach and former head track coach being asked to resign. "We have moved on in both programs."

RECRUITING AND NLI REMINDERS

Remember, NO public comments and NO media releases may be made by the institution regarding a prospective student-athlete's ability to contribute, likelihood of signing with the institution, or commitment to NIU until after the prospect has signed a NLI and Financial Aid Tender or an Official Acceptance of Admission form for a walk-on and has been approved by the Compliance Office.

Compliance Questions of the Month

Question 1: Is it permissible for a coach to participate in a press conference organized by a prospect to announce his/her signing of a National Letter of Intent (NLI) with NIU?

Question 2: What is the difference between a prospect's verbal or oral commitment to attend a particular institution and that prospect's signing of a National Letter of Intent (NLI)?

Question 3: What are the penalties for a student-athlete who violates NCAA gambling legislation?

COMPLIANCE ABC'S

K- Know the Rules!

Your commitment to understanding the importance of adhering to NCAA, Mid-American Conference, and NIU rules will help to protect the eligibility of our student-athletes and maintain our tradition of excellence and integrity.

L - Letter of Intent

The National Letter of Intent (NLI) is a binding agreement between a prospect and the institution. A NLI must be accompanied by a written offer of athletics aid for the entire academic year. All colleges and universities that participate in the NLI program agree not to recruit a prospect who has signed a NLI with another institution.

M - Meals, Occasional

A booster may provide a student-athlete or an entire team with an occasional home meal. Occasional meals must be held in the home of the booster, not at any other location. However, these meals may be catered. The Athletic Compliance Office must approve all occasional meals prior to their occurrence.

DON'T BET ON IT!!!

Gambling and sports wagering have been key themes in previous editions of this newsletter. The first issue of the Huskie Compliance Corner discussed the proliferation of offshore, online gambling sites and some of the potential consequences for coaches, student-athletes, and athletic department staff members who become involved with these sites. The December newsletter discussed new federal legislation banning Internet gambling and sports wagering. This month, given recent events involving another Mid-American Conference member institution, it is crucial to revisit the issue of gambling yet again.

Gambling Allegations at Toledo

On Friday, March 30, 2007, federal authorities charged University of Toledo football player Harvey "Scooter" McDougle, Jr., a 22 year-old senior running-back, in connection with what the FBI called a point-shaving scheme.

McDougle recruited Toledo football and basketball players to participate in the scheme orchestrated by a Michigan man identified only as "Gary" in the criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court. McDougle was arraigned on charges of participating in a bribery scheme to influence sporting contests, before being released on a \$10,000 bond. The charges carry a sentence of up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, if convicted. McDougle has been suspended from the team but is still being allowed to attend classes.

"Gary" allegedly invited the athletes to gamble and dine at Greektown Casino in Detroit. One player was offered \$10,000 to sit out a football game, while others received cash, groceries, merchandise, and other gifts. McDougle told the FBI that he received a car, telephone, and other items of value from "Gary," but the complaint does not allege that players threw any games as part of the scheme. In fact, McDougle told the FBI that he never changed the way he played to affect the outcome of games.

As of Monday, April 2, athletics officials at the University of Toledo were unaware if any additional players would be charged. Deferring to federal authorities taking the lead in conducting the investigation, Athletic Director Mike O'Brien said he has no plans to interview any other athletes. He also did not know if any players changed the outcomes of any games, saying, "we just found out about this Friday."

Authorities listened to multiple phone calls between McDougle and "Gary." During one call in December 2005, McDougle said he would talk to other players and see if they could make money on a game between Toledo and Texas-El Paso. In another call later that month, McDougle asked "Gary" to make a \$2,000 bet for him on the game and said another player would be helping. The Rockets went on to beat UTEP 45-13 in the GMAC Bowl. McDougle was injured much of the 2005 season and did not have any carries in the bowl game.

The school meets with its athletes at the beginning of each season to warn them about gambling, O'Brien said. Posters that say "Don't Bet on It" hang in the locker rooms. "We spend a lot of time talking to young men about how to behave on and off the field," football coach Tom Amstutz said. University President Lloyd Jacobs sent a letter to faculty members on Monday and said the school will begin reviewing how well the athletic department instructs athletes about gambling rules. "While I am aware that currently these are only allegations, I want to register my own deep disappointment," Jacobs said.

Gambling History in Intercollegiate Athletics

A 1999 study by the University of Michigan found that nearly half of the male athletes in the survey acknowledged wagering on college sports. The study indicated that one out of every twenty players leaked insider information to gamblers, shaved points, or bet on his own games. The 2003 National Study on Collegiate Sports Wagering and Associated Health Risks also discovered similar alarming trends, prompting NCAA President Myles Brand to form a national task force to recommend strategies to counteract sports wagering among student-athletes.

Since 1992, numerous college gambling cases have occurred. The University of Rhode Island and Bryant University discovered a gambling operation involving student-athletes. A Northwestern University football player, who eventually became the school's career rushing leader, once intentionally fumbled the football at the goal line to ensure that his team would not cover the spread, thus securing his \$400 bet. A Central Florida men's basketball student-manager was convicted of offering \$15,000 in bribes to players to affect scoring and cover the point spread in a game against Stanford.

Penalties have varied in these cases. Boston College suspended thirteen members of its football team for betting on college sports, three of whom bet against their own team. The University of Maine suspended nineteen members of its football and basketball teams for participating in a \$10,000-a-week gambling scheme. Four former Northwestern football players pleaded guilty to perjury charges after lying to grand juries investigating sports betting at the school. Two Arizona State players were convicted and sent to prison for shaving points. Finally, in a widely publicized case involving student-athletes from multiple institutions, two former Northwestern University basketball players were convicted of rigging games against Penn State, Wisconsin, and Michigan in a point-shaving operation organized by former Notre Dame football place kicker and soccer player, Kevin Pendergast, who was sentenced to two months in prison and two years of probation for bribing the Northwestern basketball players and organizing the scheme.

Keeping Yourself in the Game

Important lessons can be learned from the case at Toledo and should not be ignored. If the Toledo case and the litany of other cases have shown us anything, it may be that athletic departments can, and must, always strive to do more to educate student-athletes about gambling issues. NIU Athletic Department staff members and coaches are to be reminded of the consequences and urged to review gambling issues with our

student-athletes as frequently as possible in order to avoid any negative situations.

Students, please avoid the temptations and lures of any potential gambling opportunity. While the reward may seem enticing in the short run, the end of your college playing career and lengthy criminal legal proceedings may be the steep price you could pay in the end. Overall, for everyone, as always, if you have questions, please visit the following websites and ask any of us in the Compliance Office. With gambling and sports wagering, the stakes are simply too high to make a mistake.

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

<http://www.dontbetonit.org/>

<http://www.ncaa.org/gambling/dontbetonit/2004.pdf>

Compliance Questions of the Month

Answer 1: NO. Although it is permissible for a prospect to independently arrange a press conference to announce his/her signing, there may be NO arrangement or involvement by the institution or representatives of its athletics interests (boosters).

Answer 2: A verbal commitment is when a prospect publicly announces his or her intentions to attend a certain institution. A verbal commitment is a non-binding, oral agreement between a prospect and an institution. The National Letter of Intent program does not recognize verbal commitments. A prospect may verbally commit to one institution and subsequently sign a NLI with another institution.

Answer 3: NCAA gambling legislation prohibits staff members of a member conference, athletics department staff members, and student-athletes from: providing information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics competition; soliciting a bet on any intercollegiate team; accepting a bet on any team representing the institution; soliciting or accepting a bet on any intercollegiate competition for any item that has tangible value (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner); or participating in any gambling activity involving intercollegiate athletics or professional athletics, through a bookmaker, a parlay card, or any other method employed by organized gambling.

A student-athlete who engages in activities designed to influence the outcome of an intercollegiate athletic contest, affect win-loss margins (i.e., point shaving), who solicits or accepts a bet, or participates in any gambling

activity through a bookmaker, a parlay card, or any other method employed by organized gambling that involves wagering on the student-athlete's institution shall permanently lose all remaining regular-season and postseason eligibility in all sports. A student-athlete who accepts or places a bet through a bookmaker, a parlay card, or any other method employed by organized gambling, on any college or professional team other than his or her own, will automatically be suspended for a minimum of one year and be charged with a season of competition. If the student-athlete is determined to have been involved in a subsequent violation of NCAA gambling legislation, the student-athlete shall permanently lose all remaining regular-season and postseason eligibility in all sports.

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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