

# NCAA RULES: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES



*The NCAA has many rules that govern what student-athletes may and may not do on and off the playing field. As relatives of student-athletes there are NCAA rules that pertain to you. This pamphlet is an overview and is not intended to be exhaustive. Contact the compliance office at (804) 287-6551 if you seek further information.*

At the University of Richmond, conducting our program with integrity is very important. Please read both sides of this flyer to learn how you can help carry on this tradition.



## **Definitions to know & understand:**

### ***Extra benefits***

An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or a representative of the institution's athletics interests to provide a student-athlete or their relatives/friends a benefit not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation. Receipt of a benefit is not a violation if it is demonstrated that the same benefit is generally available to the institution's student body (relatives/friends) determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability.

- Parents may not be given benefits, gifts, or discounts by institutions, other parents, or RAIs. Parents may not receive discounted or free items or service based on their son or daughters status as a student-athlete (i.e. special hotel rate, free meal, etc.)

### ***Institutional Control***

The control and responsibility for the conduct of intercollegiate athletics shall be exercised by the institution itself and by the conference(s). This includes, but is not limited to actions of individuals affiliated with the athletic program (boosters, staff, etc.) and expenditures made for, or on behalf of the athletic program.

### ***Representatives of Athletics Interest***

The NCAA defines those who support a collegiate athletics program as Representatives of Athletics Interest (RAI), or the more common classification is a booster. When parents donate, or contribute anything of value to the athletic department or a specific athletic program they become RAIs (or boosters) and all the NCAA rules applicable to this group need to be followed. Once an individual or organization is identified as a RAI, they retain that classification indefinitely.

- RAIs may not be involved in recruiting, or providing benefits to prospects, student-athletes and the relatives of student-athletes.

## **Why the rules affect you:**

As a parent of a student-athlete you now potentially fall into two different categories according to NCAA rules. First, there are rules that govern the actions and interactions between institutions and parents, other relatives and friends of student-athletes, like extra benefits for instance. Second, if you donate or provide any support to your son or daughter's team, you will also be considered a RAI.

## **Ways that you may be involved:**

In the event that you would like to do something special for a team, below are some specifics on that that means for what you may and may not be able to do.

### ***Meals***

On an occasional basis parents may provide a team with a meal, either while they are traveling or near the institution. University of Richmond policy related to occasional meals:

- Meals in the home of a student-athlete's parent must be preapproved and documented through the athletic department.
- Meals in a restaurant may not be paid for directly by parents. Rather, the team will pay for the meal, and the family can contribute the cost of the meal to the department at a later time.

### ***Gifts and Goodies***

While many gifts for a team may be impermissible, there may be certain gifts that fit within the rules. Parents should communicate with coaches or the appropriate administrative staff if there are items they would like to donate to a team. Below are two examples:

- A parent would like to buy practice uniforms for the team ... the uniforms are donated and given to the equipment room and distributed according to the department's equipment issuance policy. The parent would receive a donation receipt from the Spider Club.
- A team is traveling and a parent who lives nearby would like to give each player a gift bag with sunscreen, bug spray and some candy ... the parent would provide an estimated value of each gift bag prior to giving them out. The coach will work with the compliance office to document the gift, which will be deducted from the yearly participation award allotment.

Keep in mind that you may always give your own child gifts and goodies.

### **When to be careful:**

#### ***Gifts and Goodies***

Student-athletes, their friends/relatives may not be provided with what the NCAA defines as an "extra benefit". An extra benefit is anything that is not generally available to the student body (or general public) or some larger subset of the student body. So ...

- Student-athletes may not accept gifts or services at reduced prices (e.g., a parent may not buy ipods for each member of a team as a holiday gift).
- Parents may not get a special discounted hotel rate arranged by the athletic department when they come to visit, or travel to the site of away competition.

#### ***Meals***

Institutions may provide relatives of student-athletes with reasonable refreshments on an occasional basis, but may not provide free meals at any time. Examples:

- If you are at a competition site and the coach takes the team out to dinner, you may eat at the same restaurant, but you must pay for your own meal.
- If a team hosts a banquet and parents (relatives, or friends) are invited, they must pay for the cost of their meal.

Parents may always provide their own child with food and meals at any time.

#### ***Transportation***

An institution may not provide parents with transportation to contest sites or to campus.

- Example, parents may not ride on the team bus at any time.

Additionally, parents may not provide team members who are not traveling with the team a ride to an away contest. Parents may always provide transportation to their own child.

#### ***Recruiting***

There are complex rules regarding recruiting and who is allowed to talk to prospective student-athletes and when. As parents, you may forward information about prospects that you know to coaches, but you should not have recruiting conversations with prospective student-athletes. For example, a player on your son or daughter's former team has really improved to one of the best players in your home region, you may forward their information to a coach, but you may not approach the prospect and have a recruiting conversation. Please note that forwarding information about prospects is viewed as supporting an athletic program, which triggers classification as a RAI.

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Violations of NCAA rules often require the student-athletes and their families to repay the amount of money, (or equivalent if it was a service). If the amount of the benefit is in excess of \$100.00 the student-athletes becomes ineligible for competition until the NCAA reinstates them. This process can take time, so student-athletes may be in jeopardy of missing competition.

### **ALWAYS ASK BEFORE YOU ACT!**

NCAA rules are in place to protect the integrity of college athletics, and while they may seem restrictive it is important to always seek the advice of the institution as you become closely involved with a team. For further information contact the compliance office at (804) 287-6551. For questions about donations or gifts, contact the Spider Club at (804) 289-8759.