

This guide was developed to offer a general overview of key NCAA rules regarding the interaction between athletics representatives and prospective student-athletes and enrolled student athletes. This is not a comprehensive guidebook. Should you have further questions, please contact:

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Know the Rules

Every supporter, alumnus or Representative of Athletics Interests should have an understanding that there are certain NCAA regulations that you and the university should abide by. These regulations affect everyone. Please know the rules.

Representative of Athletics Interests

A “representative of the institution’s athletics interests,” (athletics representative) or booster, is an individual who is known (or who should be known) by the institution’s staff to:

- a. Have participated in or is a member of an agency or organization promoting the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program (e.g., a booster club, athletic foundation, university club);
- b. Have made financial contributions to the athletics department or to an athletics booster organization of that institution;
- c. Be assisting or to have been requested (by the athletics department staff) to assist in the recruitment of prospects;
- d. Be assisting or to have assisted in providing benefits to enrolled student-athletes or their families (e.g., helping to arrange summer and/or vacation employment); or
- e. Have been involved otherwise in promoting the institution’s athletics program.

Once you have been identified as a Representative of Athletics Interest, You will always retain that status.

Prospective Student-Athlete (Prospect)

A prospective student-athlete, or prospect, is any student who has started classes for the ninth grade. In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a prospect if the institution provides such an individual (or his/her relatives or friends) any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students generally.

Junior College Prospects

The same recruiting rules that apply to high school prospects also apply to junior college prospects.

Four-Year College Prospects

An athletics staff member may not have contact with a student of another four-year college, directly or indirectly, without first obtaining written permission from the first institution’s athletics director, regardless of who makes the initial contact. The first institution is not required to grant, and may deny, such permission. The recruiting rules that apply to high school prospects also apply to four-year college prospects, if permission is granted to have contact.

Recruiting

Recruiting is any solicitation of a prospect (his/her family or legal guardian) by a member of an institution’s staff or by a representative of the institution’s athletics interests for the purpose of securing the prospect’s enrollment (and ultimate participation) in the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program.

A prospective student-athlete becomes a recruited prospective student-athlete when an institution’s staff member(s) or an athletics representative do any of the following:

- a. Provide the prospect with an official (expense paid) visit to the institution;
- b. Arrange an in-person, off-campus encounter with the prospect (or his/her parents or legal guardians); or Initiate or arrange a telephone contact with the prospect (or family member or guardian).

Who is permitted to recruit for Western Carolina University?

Only Western Carolina University coaches who have successfully completed the NCAA Recruiting Rules Examination on an annual basis may be involved in the recruitment process. Representatives of our athletics interests **may not** make any recruiting contacts. This includes letters, telephone calls, e-mails or face-to-face contact on or off campus with a prospect or prospect’s parents.

Additional Regulations Related to Recruiting for Athletics Representatives.

1. An athletics representative may only speak to a prospect via telephone if the prospect initiates the phone call and the call is not for recruiting purposes. All inquiries regarding an institution’s athletics program must be referred to the institution’s athletics department.
2. An athletics representative may observe a prospect’s athletics contest on his/her own initiative, but may not contact the prospect on such an occasion.
3. An athletics representative may not contact a prospect’s coach, principal or counselor in an attempt to evaluate a prospect.
4. An athletics representative may not contact a prospect’s educational institution to pick up film/ videotape or transcripts pertaining to the evaluation of the prospect’s academic eligibility or athletics eligibility.
5. An unavoidable incidental contact made with a prospect by an athletics representative is permitted, provided:
 - a. the contact is not prearranged by the athletics representative or athletics department staff member;
 - b. the contact does not take place on the grounds of the prospect’s educational institution or at practice or competition sites involving the prospect or his/ her team;
 - c. the contact is not made for the purpose of recruitment of the prospect, and
 - d. involves only normal civility.

Offers and Inducements

Institutional staff members or representatives of athletics interests may not directly or indirectly provide, arrange for the provision of, or offer any financial aid or other benefits to a prospect (or the prospect’s relatives, guardian or friends) other than expressly permitted by NCAA regulations. This shall apply regardless of whether similar financial aid benefits or arrangements are available to prospective students in general.



Extra Benefits to Enrolled Student-Athletes

An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or athletics representative to provide a student-athlete (or his/her relatives, guardian or friends) a benefit is generally available to the institution (or their relatives, guardian or friends) not on a basis related to athletics ability.

Extra Benefits include, but are not limited to:

- a. cash or leans in any amount
- b. co-signing or arranging a loan
- c. gifts or free services (e.g., airlines tickets, cash, restaurant meals)
- d. use of an automobile
- e. rent free or reduced cost housing
- f. money for, or a guarantee of, bail or bond
- g. employment of a student-athlete at a higher rate than the wages paid for similar work
- h. payment to a student-athlete for work not performed
- i. transportation (aside from transportation related to an occasional home meal)
- j. tickets to an athletics, institutional or community event
- k. financial aid for a post-graduate education
- l. promise of employment after college graduation
- m. invitations to your home or summer home for purposes other than occasional meal

As a Representative of Athletics Interest, What Can You Do??

You may provide tickets to a professional sports contest to an institution for entertainment of student-athletes involved in an away-from-home athletics contest.

You may provide an occasional meal in your home to a student-athlete or an entire team.

You may provide transportation to your home for a student-athlete who will be receiving an occasional meal there.

You may provide a summer job to a student-athlete as long as it is at a normal rate of pay for that position and the student-athlete is paid for work actually performed, but remember to check with the compliance office at the institution before doing so.

Possible Penalties for Improper Actions

There are many penalties the NCAA may impose upon a student-athlete (prospective or enrolled), an institution, a coach or a representative of athletics interest. Some of those penalties include:

- a. Ceasing recruitment of a prospective student-athlete;
- b. Loss of eligibility of an enrolled student-athlete;
- c. Having to sit out of competition for a limited period of time;
- d. Forfeiture of competitions;
- e. Prohibiting a coach from recruiting off-campus for a period of time;
- f. Institutional fines;
- g. Suspension of a coach for one or more competitions;
- h. Reduction in the number of scholarships an institution may award in a sport(s);
- i. Reduction in the number of expense-paid recruiting visits that an institution may provide
- j. Prohibiting a team from participating in postseason competition; Disassociation of relations with a representative of athletics interest.

“Rules to Live By”

I. Do not do anything for a prospective student-athlete or an enrolled student-athlete without specific permission from the institution’s athletic department.

Only coaches and athletic department staff members may be involved in the recruiting process. Alumni, friends and other athletics representatives who are not employed by the institution may not contact a prospect (or his/her family or guardian) via written correspondence, telephone, or in-person (either on or off campus) for the correspondence, telephone, or in-person (either on or off campus) for the purpose of soliciting their participation in the athletic program.

I. Even if the prospect signs a National Letter of Intent or financial aid agreement to attend an institution, he/she remains a prospect until one of the above occurs. An enrolled student-athlete risks losing his/her athletics eligibility if he/she accepts any benefit based on his/her status as an athlete or because of his/her athletics skill, or a benefit not generally afforded to other students.

NCAA rules applicable to enrolled student-athletes are not only applicable during the academic year, but they are also applicable during the summer month. Enrolled student-athletes are bound by NCAA rules until the end of the academic year in which their athletics eligibility is completed.



Agents

A student-athlete loses his or her amateur status and shall not be eligible for intercollegiate competition in a particular sport if:

One negotiates, signs or enters into any agreement written or oral agreement with an agent

One accepts or receives any extra benefits (including family members) from an agent or anyone who wishes to represent the student-athlete

Athletic skills are used for pay or promise of pay

One competes with a professional sports team or receives any compensation from a professional sports team

Gambling

A student-athlete, coach and or an employee of Western Carolina University may not provide information to individuals involved in any type of organized gambling concerning sporting events. In addition, student-athletes, coaches and employees of WCU may not solicit or accept any wager on any intercollegiate or professional athletics contest.

If a student-athlete has violated the gambling bylaw he or she will be ineligible immediately.

Any other questions
Please call Fred Cantler,
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Western Carolina University Guide to NCAA Regulations For Boosters

