

# **The University of Wyoming Guide for Boosters**

**Boosters** – the support you provide helps the University of Wyoming compete successfully on a conference and national level, and as “representatives of athletic interest,” you are held to the same NCAA regulations as athletic staff, coaches, and administrators. Thus, we need your help in avoiding any costly NCAA rules violations. Please review the following information to better familiarize yourself with what this entails.

## **UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING MISSION STATEMENT & CORE VALUES**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the University of Wyoming Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is to provide an environment in which student-athletes complete their undergraduate college education and achieve athletics success at the highest possible level. As Wyoming’s only four-year University, we are committed to offering a first-class competitive athletics program at the NCAA Division IA level that promotes the values of the state and assists in carrying out the overall University of Wyoming mission.

### **CORE VALUES**

- We must maintain a proper balance between academics and athletics.
- We support the student-athlete as a whole person – academically, athletically, in career development, community service, and related to personal well being. We believe college athletics develops discipline, character, and teamwork...all necessary ingredients for individual leadership and achievement.
- Our student-athletes, coaches, and staff must uphold a sense of character, honesty, and integrity as they serve as University and state ambassadors on a local, regional, and national level.
- We believe we can achieve athletic success on a regional and national level. We must accomplish this without compromising any of our other core values.
- We believe long-term athletic success increases exposure for the University’s academic and research mission and provides regional and national exposure for the state of Wyoming across the United States.
- We must operate in a fiscally sound manner. We strive to balance state, university, and self-generated resources to create a competitive and appropriate budget.
- We believe first-class facilities are an important part of our ability to compete at the highest level. We are committed to building and renovating the facilities

necessary to be successful as well as maintaining the great facilities we already have.

- We are committed to recruiting Wyoming students prepared for Division IA competition.
- We are committed to being a positive campus partner. We will strive to strengthen and build relationships with students, faculty, administrators, and staff from other areas of campus.
- We are committed to being a positive city, county, and state partner. We strive to strengthen and build relationships with the Laramie City Council and the Laramie City operating departments, Albany County government, The Wyoming Legislature, and Wyoming state elected officials and state agencies.
- We believe in empowering individuals (student-athletes, coaches, and staff) to make decisions that will lead to their success. With that privilege comes responsibility and accountability.
- We are committed to excellence in customer service. Every UW alumnus, ticket holder, fan, or contributor must be treated with the utmost respect. We strive to communicate openly and honestly with every constituent.
- We will promote good sportsmanship in all athletic endeavors.
- We are committed to fair and equitable treatment of student-athletes and staff. We will maintain an environment that promotes gender equity and embraces diversity.
- Our work environment will be positive, enjoyable, and family friendly.

## ***BOOSTERS AND UW - THE BASICS***

*Who are “Representatives of Athletic Interest?”*

A Representative of Athletic Interest is someone who:

- Has ever been a member of a University of Wyoming sport booster club, including the Cowboy Joe Club;
- Has made donations to the booster club or to the Athletic Department;
- Has been involved in the promotion of the University of Wyoming athletics in any way;
- Has assisted or has been requested (by the athletics department staff) to assist in the recruitment of prospects;
- Has assisted in providing benefits to enrolled student-athletes or their families; or
- Is the Parent of an enrolled student-athlete.
- Please note that once you become a booster, you will ALWAYS be a booster.

### *Who are Prospective Student-Athletes (prospects)?*

- A Prospective Student-Athlete is any student between the ninth grade and their initial enrollment at a four year college institution. This includes students who are currently enrolled at a two-year college.
- In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade can nevertheless become a prospective student-athlete if the institution, an alumnus, a Cowboy Joe Club member or an employee of the University of Wyoming provides the student (or the student's relatives or friends) any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students generally.
- Once a student becomes a prospect by definition they remain a prospect even after signing a National Letter-of-Intent to attend an institution until the registrar or director of admissions certifies that the prospect is officially registered and enrolled in a minimum full-time program of studies and the prospect attends a class or classes in any regular term (including summer).

### *What is a (recruiting) Evaluation?*

- An Evaluation is any off-campus activity designed to assess the academic qualifications or athletics ability of a prospect, including any visit to a prospect's educational institution or the observation of any practice or competition at any site at which the prospect participates.

### *What is a (recruiting) Contact?*

- A Contact is any face-to-face encounter between a prospect, the prospect's parents or legal guardians and an institutional staff member (or a representative of athletics interest), during which any dialogue occurs in excess of an exchange of greeting.
- Also, any such encounter that is prearranged (e.g., the staff member or representative of athletics interest positions himself/herself in a location where contact is possible) or that takes place on the grounds of the prospect's educational institution, or at the site of organized competition or practice (involving the prospect's high school, preparatory school, two-year college, or all-star team) shall be considered a contact, regardless of the conversation that occurs.

### *What is an Extra Benefit?*

An Extra Benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional staff member or representative of the institution's athletics interests to provide a student-athlete or the student-athlete's relative or friend with any type of assistance, financial or otherwise, and/or item that is:

- Not generally available to the institution's students or their relatives or friends or to a particular segment of the student body (e.g., foreign students, minority student) determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability.

- Not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation.

## ***THE POKE RULES***

Now that you are familiar with the basics, you can see how they fit in to the rules that all boosters (representatives of athletic interests) must follow.

### **POKE RULE #1:**

There may be no recruiting communication of any kind (e.g. letter, phone calls, e-mails, recruiting contacts, or evaluations) between boosters and prospects. Your contact is with the Athletic Department Staff. Our contact is with the prospects.

**IMPERMISSIBLE** booster actions regarding prospective student-athletes include:

- Contacting an enrolled student-athlete at another four-year or two-year institution (or one who has withdrawn) to investigate the possibility of a transfer;
- Being involved in arranging for, offering or giving financial aid or other benefits not permitted by NCAA regulations to a prospect or his/her relatives or friends, regardless of whether the benefit is available to other students;
- Financing, arranging for or using non-permissible recruiting aids or promotional material, such as newspaper advertisements, bumper stickers or message buttons to publicize the Department's interest in a prospect;
- Providing or arranging for the payment of transportation for a prospect or his/her friends or family to visit the University;
- Making any type of recruiting attempt during casual, unintentional contact with a prospective student-athlete; or
- Entertaining or providing transportation, tickets, gifts or other benefits to a high school, preparatory or two-year college coach.

**PERMISSIBLE** booster actions regarding prospective student-athletes include:

- Having non-recruiting contact with a prospect when the contact is a casual or unavoidable occurrence which involves only normal civility;
- Being involved in luncheons, teas or dinners at which prospective students (athletes and non-athletes) from the local community are present (the event may not be prearranged by a UW athletics staff member and no attempt is made to recruit the prospect);
- Speaking with a prospect by telephone if he or she calls you. However, you should refrain from making any attempt to recruit the prospect and refer the prospect to the Athletic Department should he/she ask any questions about the athletics program;

- Viewing a prospect's athletics contest without the intent to evaluate or contact the prospect; and
- Continuing to make contacts with a prospect by an established family friend or neighbor, it being understood that such contacts are not made for recruiting purposes and initiated by a member of the institutions coaching staff.

## **POKE RULE #2:**

A booster is not permitted to provide a current student-athlete (or their friends or relatives) with extra benefits including: favors, special treatment, or arrangements that are not normally available to all students or expressly authorized by the NCAA.

**IMPERMISSIBLE** booster actions regarding extra benefits include but are not limited to:

- Providing cash or loans to the prospect or his/her family or friends;
- Promising employment prior to, during or after completion of college;
- Providing special discounts or payment arrangements on loans;
- Providing employment to relatives or friends of a prospect;
- Providing free or reduced-cost services, rentals or purchases of any type;
- Providing the use of an automobile;
- Providing a guarantee of bond or bail;
- Providing the gift of any tangible item or merchandise (e.g., clothes, cars, jewelry, stereos, etc.);
- Providing or promise free or reduced housing cost;
- Providing, directly or indirectly, transportation to enroll in class at the institution;
- Providing payment of any expenses (e.g., room, board, transportation) for friends or relatives to visit a student-athlete at the institution for any event;
- Promising financial aid for post-graduate education;
- Promising the purchase of items or services from a prospect or the prospect's family at inflated prices;
- Providing special discount payment arrangements, or credit on a purchase (e.g., airline ticket, clothing) or services (laundry, dry cleaning, tailoring, typing costs, etc.);
- Signing or resigning a note for a loan;
- Providing transportation to or from a summer job or to any other site;
- Providing any financial aid other than that administered by the University of Wyoming, or
- Paying in part or whole registration fees associated with summer sports camps.

The following **PERMISSIBLE** actions are not considered extra benefits by the NCAA:

- Employing student-athletes when UW and NCAA guidelines are followed (see the additional employment regulations below);
- Establishing or endowing awards that are administered by the University;

- Being involved in some activities where you may come into contact with student-athletes at the University (this applies to special circumstances and requires approval from or sponsorship by the University);
- Entertaining teams when they travel to away events, with the prior approval of the UW Compliance Office; or
- Providing an occasional home meal to a student-athlete on a special or infrequent occasion (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas) with the prior approval of the UW Compliance Office.

### **Employment, Extra Benefits, and the NCAA**

To ensure that student-athletes are given employment opportunities that are available to the general public, and are not based on their athletic status (an extra benefit), employers are asked to assist the NCAA and the University of Wyoming tracking student-athletes' employment history and compensation. More specifically:

**Prior to** commencement of employment, the student-athlete and the employer must sign a written statement to be kept on file in the athletics department, which specifies the following:

- The student-athlete may not receive any remuneration for the value or utility that the student-athlete may have for the employer because of the publicity, reputation, fame or personal following he/she has obtained because of athletics ability;
- The student-athlete is to be compensated only for work actually performed; and
- The student-athlete is to be compensated at a rate commensurate with the going rate in that locality for similar services.

**Upon completion** of employment, the employer must sign a written statement to be kept on file in the athletics department, which specifies the following:

- The rate of pay the student-athlete received.
- The dates/hours the student-athlete worked.
- The student-athlete's total earnings for the duration of his/her employment.

### **POKE RULE #3**

Please remember to represent our program and institution as a good sportsman and fan!

As a representative of athletics interest, you are an integral part of what the University of Wyoming Cowboys and Cowgirls are all about. Good sportsmanship must be a part of every sport sponsored by the University-- and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to maintaining the highest standard of ethical conduct. Further, as members of the Mountain West Conference we are bound by the MWC code of conduct, which states:

**All aspects of intercollegiate athletics contests shall be conducted in a sportsman-like manner. It is the responsibility of each member institution in the Mountain**

**West Conference to ensure that all individuals associated with its athletics program conduct themselves in a sportsman-like manner. All members of the Conference shall exhibit ethical behavior at all NCAA and Conference competitions. Conference members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of the NCAA and Conference and the playing rules of the respective sports. The athletics personnel of a member institution shall refrain from making negative comments regarding an opposing institution or its players, teams, coaches, staff or game officials. Each member institution shall create a healthy environment for competition. Administrators, coaches and student-athletes as well as others involved in intercollegiate athletics in the Conference, share this responsibility.**

#### **POKE RULE #4:**

When in doubt contact the Compliance Office with any questions you might have!

The information provided in this pamphlet is very limited. We encourage you to contact the Athletic Compliance Office with any questions or concerns you may have. Remember, we can avoid most NCAA violations if you just ask first. If a penalty were to occur, some of the following may result:

- Prospects may be declared ineligible and may not be able to participate at the University of Wyoming.
- The violator (representative of athletics interests) may be disassociated from The University of Wyoming.
- The University of Wyoming Department of Intercollegiate Athletics could be subject to sanctions, including but not limited to:
  - Reprimand and censure
  - Probation
  - Ineligibility for NCAA Championship play, post-season play and live television coverage
  - Reduction in scholarships and opportunities to recruit

**In Summary, the University of Wyoming Appreciates All Your Support and We Ask That You Please:**

- Support UW athletics by joining the Cowboy Joe Club.
- Contact the UW athletic department if you would like to invite a team for dinner.
- Support UW athletics by attending home or away contests.
- Offer assistance to members of the UW coaching staff who are recruiting in your area.
- Call the Athletic Compliance Office with any questions or concerns.

**Direct any of your questions to Matt Whisenant, Deputy Athletic Director (307-766-5551), Jessica Kumke, Director of Compliance (307-766-4960), or CR Davis, Compliance Assistant (307-7663795).**