

Student-Athletes,

Below please find an informative NCAA article about nutritional supplements. Especially note the bold language. Should you have any questions, please contact an athletic department staff member.

NCAA Bylaw 16.5.2 - (g) Nutritional Supplements

Each and every year, the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS), hears appeals of positive drug tests by **student-athletes who claim they only used dietary supplement products they obtained legally, at local retailers, at the gym, or over the Internet and that they checked out the ingredients against the NCAA list of banned substances before using the product.**

The tragedy of these claims is that some of them are likely true. The outcomes of studies conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles Olympic Lab and reported in the Washington Post in October 2005 **identified supplements that contain banned ingredients that are not listed on the product label, illustrating the risk involved in using products from an industry that does not need to prove purity, efficacy or safety before putting products on the market.** In fact, it is only after extensive reporting and investigation that any problematic dietary supplement is pulled off the shelves by the Federal Drug Administration, following years of reports of adverse effect to consumers in this "buyer beware" market. This was clearly illustrated in the case for ephedra, which is banned by the NCAA and other sports organizations, but until two years ago was available in over-the-counter dietary supplement products. (Its chemical cousin, ephedrine, is still available over the counter, and still banned.)

The bottom line for the supplement industry is its bottom line, not the health or eligibility of NCAA student-athletes. The bottom line for NCAA student-athletes is that a positive drug test resulting from using a supplement product that contains an NCAA banned substance sends the user out of NCAA sports participation for one year, most never to return.

Because of concerns for student-athletes' health and safety, and a commitment to maintain fair and equitable competition, the NCAA restricts the kinds of nutritional supplements member schools may provide to student-athletes, per NCAA Division I Bylaw 16.5.2-(g), and bans the use of performance enhancing substances by student-athletes per Division I Bylaw 31.2.3.

Seems a simple task? Unfortunately, the billion dollar supplement industry pulls out all the stops to convince student-athletes and those who work with them that not only will they be better athletes by using sports performance supplement products, but that by not using these products, as one supplement promoter put it, . . . "means you are not serious about reaching your potential. . . ", or as another posted on their Web site, these products are for collegiate student-athletes who "aspire to maximize his or her college experience and become world class student-athletes."

Division I Bylaw 16.5.2-(g), provides that only nonmuscle-building nutritional supplements may be given to student-athletes for the purpose of providing additional calories and electrolytes, as long as the supplements do not contain any NCAA banned substances.

The Pacific-10 Conference first introduced this legislation in 1999 to address concerns about the growing distribution by athletics departments of nutritional supplements that could be considered performance-enhancing and potentially harmful to student-athlete's health and safety. The (CSMAS) recommended language to identify as permissible only those nutritional supplements that fall into one of four categories:

Carbohydrate/electrolyte drinks, energy bars, carbohydrate boosters, and vitamins and minerals. Those permissible categories were selected because they provide for hydration and calorie replacement only; they do not create a competitive advantage through strength/muscle building. The vitamins and minerals category was created because of the general acceptance by the public and the widespread inclusion in foods.

The clear intent of the nutritional supplement legislation is to allow institutions to meet the needs of student-athletes to replace calories and fluids expended in large amounts during training and competition. By limiting distribution of supplements, the legislation intended to root out those that could be deemed to provide an unfair advantage or potentially be harmful to health. A more complete reading of the application of this legislation, originally published in The NCAA News, May 23, 2005, can be found at www.ncaa.org/health-safety, under the "Education and Wellness" link.