

NCAA Rules Education for Staff Stetson University

Stetson University is committed to full compliance with NCAA and conference rules. As part of this commitment, the University provides regular rules education to relevant constituent groups – student-athletes, the coaching staff, athletics department personnel, and select University staff and administrators. Since the University would be held accountable for any violations of NCAA rules by any of its staff members, it seems prudent to provide a summary of rules and policies that relate specifically to staff members.

NCAA Bylaw 16.01.1 Eligibility Effect of Violation (Awards, Benefits and Expenses for Enrolled Student-Athletes)

“A student-athlete shall not receive any extra benefit. Receipt by a student-athlete of an award, benefit or expense allowance not authorized by NCAA legislation renders the student-athlete ineligible for athletics competition in the sport for which the improper award, benefit or expense was received. If the student-athlete receives an extra benefit not authorized by NCAA legislation, the individual is ineligible for competition in the sport for which the improper award, benefit or expense was received.”

NCAA Bylaw 16.02.3 Extra Benefit

“An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or a representative of the institution’s athletic interests...” (often referred to as a “booster”) “...to provide a student-athlete or the student-athlete’s relative or friend a benefit not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation. Receipt of a benefit by student-athletes or their relatives or friends is not a violation of NCAA legislation if it is demonstrated that the same benefit is generally available to the institution’s students or their relatives or friends or to a particular segment of the student body (e.g., international students, minority students) determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability.”

Examples of impermissible extra benefits include...

- Free or reduced-cost housing, meals (other than “occasional” meals), drinks, or snacks
- Use of computer or other facilities, unless use is available to all students or a (non-athlete) sub-group of students
- Loans (even if interest is charged) or guarantee of bond
- Use of telephone (long distance), faxes, photocopiers or credit cards
- Free or reduced-cost products or services
- Special payment arrangements for products or services
- The use of an automobile or provision of transportation (including a “ride home”)*
- Signing or cosigning on a loan on behalf of the student-athlete
- Gifts of any kind (even something as simple as a birthday card or cookies)
- Handling any student-athlete conduct issue in a manner any different from which you would handle such behavior by any other student.

* - there are limited exceptions to the rule, as long as the benefit is provided on an occasional basis. Please consult with the Athletic Compliance Office in advance.

Allowing such “extra benefits” puts the student-athlete, his/her team, and the university in jeopardy. Not only would the student-athlete be penalized for receiving the extra benefit, but the institution would be guilty of a violation of NCAA rules. On the other hand, staff members should not refuse to provide support services for student-athletes that they would normally or reasonably provide to other students.

Communication Between Staff Members and the Coaching Staff

Coaches are **not** permitted to contact employees in the admissions, financial aid, or the registrar’s office (other than the designated liaison, subject to current policy) regarding a student-athlete or prospective student-athlete, unless the communication was initiated by a staff member in one of those offices. Coaches should direct necessary contact through the Associate Athletics Director for Academics. If any staff member feels as if he or she is being pressured to do something outside of normal operating procedures or if he or she is contacted by the coaching staff directly, he or she should contact the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative (Dr. Mike Bitter, 822-7422 or mbitter@stetson.edu) or the Associate Athletics Director for Compliance (822-7490 or compliance@stetson.edu) immediately.

Staff Involvement in Recruiting

- 1) Staff members can assist the coaching staff in the recruiting process by notifying them of any prospect they think would be a strong addition to the university and the athletics program [Note: a “prospect” is generally defined as a student who has started classes in the 9th grade]. Staff members may also send the coaching staff any newspaper clippings, web site links, or other information about prospects which they think would be of interest. The coach, at his or her prerogative, can then make the appropriate contact. Staff members may not contact a prospect’s coach, principal or counselor in an attempt to evaluate the prospect or visit the prospect’s educational institution to pick up game films or transcripts.
- 2) A staff member is permitted to view a prospect’s athletics contest on his or her own initiative, provided that the staff member does not contact the prospect, or the prospect’s parents/legal guardians, on such occasions.
- 3) An “unavoidable incidental contact” between a staff member and a prospect (or his/her parents, legal guardians or relatives) off-campus is permissible **if** the contact is not prearranged, does not take place on the grounds of the prospect’s educational institution or at the site of organized competition or practice involving the prospect or the prospect’s team (i.e., high school, preparatory school, two-year college or all-star team), is not made for the purpose of recruiting, and involves only normal civility (e.g., exchange of greetings). Exception – “contacts” initiated by a student-athlete at any location is permissible provided the encounter was not pre-arranged and is limited to an exchange of greetings.

- 4) A staff member may also have on-campus contact with a prospect and/or his or her parents/legal guardians during either an “official visit” or an “unofficial visit” to the campus. These contacts, if for academic purposes, may be arranged by an athletics department staff member.
- 5) A staff member may also have contact with a prospect if he or she is an established family friend or neighbor. Such contacts may not be made for recruiting purposes and shall not be initiated by a coaching staff member.
- 6) A staff member may have a phone conversation with a prospect **only** if the prospect initiates the call and the call is not for recruiting purposes (although “academic advisors” may both make and receive calls related to admissions or academic issues). Such a call may not be prearranged by an institutional staff member. The staff member must refer any questions about the university’s athletic program to the proper athletics department staff member.

Conclusion

If you have any questions regarding NCAA Bylaws or related compliance issues, please contact the Associate Athletics Director for Compliance (compliance@stetson.edu or 822-7490), or Dr. Mike Bitter, Faculty Athletics Representative (mbitter@stetson.edu). If you have any questions regarding NCAA eligibility requirements, athletic academic support, or academic monitoring of student-athletes, please contact Dr. Bitter the Associate Athletics Director for Athletics Academic Support (822-8141).

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