



## Five Important Rules to Remember

Volume 4, Issue 2

February 2007

Most of you are aware of how complex the NCAA rules and regulations are. In an effort to simplify things as much as possible, please keep in mind the following five rules pertaining to you as boosters:

1. Only coaches and athletics department staff members are permitted to be involved in the recruiting process. Alumni, friends and "other representatives of athletic interest" who are not employed by the University are not permitted to contact a prospect (or members of the prospects family) by letter, telephone, e-mail, web-postings, or in-person (on or off campus) for the purpose of soliciting their participation in the athletics program. UA faculty members are permitted to have contact with the prospects, but only while on the campus.
2. A prospect remains a prospect even after he or she signs a Letter of Intent or financial aid agreement to attend the University. The prospect does not lose his/her prospect status until the start of classes at UA or the beginning of official team practice prior to the start of classes.
3. The prohibition of contact with a prospect is not intended to relate to unavoidable incidental contacts with a prospect by representatives of a member institution's athletics interest. It is understood that such a contact is not prearranged by the athletics representative or an athletics department staff member; is not made for the purpose of recruitment of the prospect; and involves only normal civility. For example, if you meet a high school student or junior college student-athlete, you can talk with them about anything except UA athletics. If you are attending a public function and find yourself talking to the parents of a prospect, you can talk about anything that doesn't relate to the athletics department.
4. If a student-athlete accepts any benefits or special consideration based on his or her status as an athlete or because of athletic skill, the student-athlete will lose all eligibility for intercollegiate athletic participation. Do not do anything for prospective or enrolled student-athletes without specific authorization from the UA Athletics Compliance Office.
5. Representatives of athletics interest (boosters) are reminded that NCAA rules regarding enrolled student-athletes remain in effect throughout the entire year, including summer breaks. When student-athletes complete their final season of eligibility, the extra benefits prohibition still applies. The NCAA states that just because a student-athlete has exhausted his or her eligibility, he or she is not exempted from the extra benefit rules.

While these are five very important rules to remember, they are by no means the only NCAA rules concerning boosters and their interactions with prospective and current student athletes at the University of Alabama. If you are unsure about what rules apply to you and any situation you may encounter as a booster, please remember...ASK BEFORE YOU ACT!!!

### Inside this issue:

Five Important Rules to Remember	1
Benefits and Pre-Existing Relationships	2-3
Contact with Prospects on the Internet	3
Compliance Website Information	4
Know the Rules Guidelines	4



## Benefits and Pre-Existing Relationships

Boosters are prohibited from providing any type of benefit to a current or prospective student-athlete. NCAA Bylaw 12.1.2.1.6 prohibits preferential treatment, benefits or services because of the individual's athletics reputation or skill or pay-back potential as a professional athlete, unless such treatment, benefits or services are specifically permitted under NCAA legislation.

The only exception to this rule is if there is a clear preexisting relationship between the booster and the student-athlete. The NCAA membership services staff reviewed the application of NCAA Bylaw 12.1.2.1.6 as it relates to factual situations in which an individual (student-athlete or prospective student-athlete) has received benefits prior to collegiate enrollment from someone other than a family member or legal guardian, and agreed that the following objective guidelines generally should be used in determining whether such benefits are contrary to the legislation:

- Did the relationship between the athlete (or the athlete's parents) and the individual providing the benefit(s) develop as a result of the athlete's participation in athletics or notoriety related thereto?
- Did the relationship between the athlete (or the athlete's parents) and the individual providing the benefit(s) predate the athlete's status as a prospective student-athlete?
- Did the relationship between the athlete (or the athlete's parents) and the individual providing the benefit(s) predate the athlete's status achieved as a result of his or her athletics ability or reputation?
- Was the pattern of benefits provided by the individual to the athlete (or the athlete's parents) prior to the athlete attaining notoriety as a skilled athlete similar in nature to those provided after attaining such stature?

The subcommittee, however, noted that the origin and duration of a relationship and the consistency of benefits provided during the relationship are key factors in determining whether the benefits provided are contrary to the spirit and intent of Bylaw 12.1.2.1.6. The subcommittee determined that prior to initial full-time collegiate enrollment, a prospective student-athlete may receive normal and reasonable living expenses from an individual with whom the student-athlete has an established relationship (e.g., high-school coach, nonscholastic athletics team coach, family of a teammate), even if the relationship developed as a result of athletics participation, provided:

1. The individual is not an agent,
2. The individual is not an athletics representative of a particular institution involved in recruiting the prospect, and
3. Such living expenses are consistent with the types of expenses provided by the individual as a part of normal living arrangements (e.g., housing, meals, occasional spending money, use of the family car).

The subcommittee noted that the above mentioned interpretation does not apply to individuals who have no logical ties to the prospect. It also noted that a current student-

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

athlete who, prior to initial collegiate enrollment, has been receiving normal and reasonable living expenses from an individual with whom he or she has an established relationship may continue to receive occasional benefits (e.g., meals during campus visits, reasonable entertainment) from an individual or family with whom the student-athlete has an established relationship. Such expenses may not include educational expenses associated with a grant-in-

## Contact with Prospects on the Internet

aid (i.e., tuition and fees, room and board, and required course-related books).

Pick your favorite University of Alabama chat room, message board, blog, etc. and you will probably see a conversation like this:

**Fan 1:** Hey guys, I saw that Joe All-American has a Myspace webpage. Let's all go leave messages for him letting him know how much we want him to come to Bama.

**Fan 2:** We definitely need to do that. We can't let him get away.

**Fan 3:** Wait a minute guys...I think I read where doing stuff like that breaks some NCAA rule.

**Fan 1:** What!?! We could get Bama in trouble for just leaving messages on a prospect's Myspace webpage.

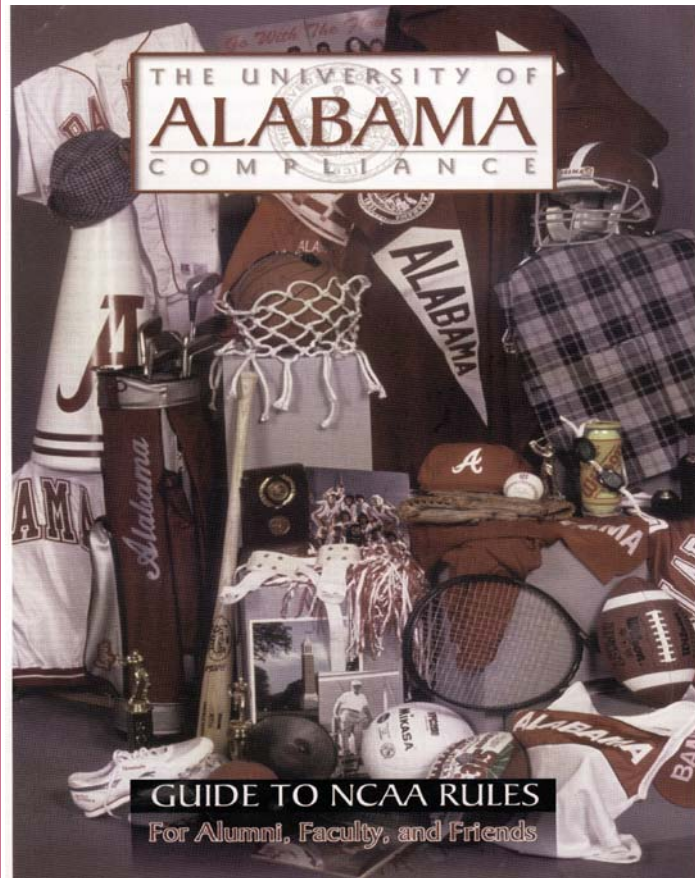
**Fan 4:** Yes, you could get UA in trouble. Please, do not send messages to any of our recruits.

**Fan 3:** Yeah, I just found this information about another school getting in trouble because of something like this:

- **Facts:** Representatives of the institution's athletics interests (boosters) posted notes on four men's basketball prospective student-athletes' (PSAs) respective myspace.com pages, encouraging each to attend the institution.
- **Institution Action:** The senior associate athletics director for student services appeared on a local sports talk show to issue a verbal cease and desist order. Additional interviews were conducted with local and national media. A written cease and desist order was posted on the main message boards for the institution's fans as well as the institution's athletics website. The written cease and desist order contained the screen names of the people involved. The written cease and desist order also referred all those reading it to the educational information concerning limitations on internet and message board contact.
- **NCAA Enforcement Action:** No further action. However, please note that the four PSAs are ineligible for intercollegiate competition at the institution until their eligibility is restored by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff.

**Fan 2:** WOW!! I didn't realize it could cause so much trouble. No way do I want to make recruits ineligible to play for us.

Although the above "chat" is fictional, it was based on several actual "chats" that we have seen posted on UA centered message boards. Also, the information about another school getting in trouble is straight from the NCAA. As you can see, something that you might think of as being a help to UA could actually cause a lot of problems. We would like to encourage all of our boosters to be like "Fans 3 & 4" and become as informed as possible about NCAA and



## COMPLIANCE WEBSITE ([www.rolltide.com](http://www.rolltide.com))

This site contains information for UA athletic staff, current student-athletes, prospective student-athletes, high school personnel, parents, and those individuals who support our athletic program.

Information within the site includes:

- Compliance Resources for Internal and External Supporters
- Announcements and Articles of Interest
- Newsletters for UA Athletic Staff and Boosters
- Question of the Week / Tip of the Month
- Rules Education Materials for Boosters, UA Faculty, Alumni and Local Merchants
- UA, SEC, NCAA Rules and Regulations for Current Student-Athletes
- Information for Sports Agents and Financial Advisors
- Guidelines and Sanctions for Involvement with Gambling
- New and Proposed NCAA Legislation
- Process for Reporting NCAA Violations and Resources
- Forms for Requests of UA Athletics
- Reporting NCAA Violations
- Ask Compliance Staff

## UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA GUIDE TO NCAA RULES FOR ALUMNI, FACULTY, AND FRIENDS

View [www.rolltide.com](http://www.rolltide.com) under Fan Zone on Main Page or the Compliance link on [www.rolltide.com](http://www.rolltide.com) under:

**Information for Boosters, UA Faculty, Alumni and Local Merchants link:**

**[Know the Rules Booster Guide](#)**