NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL PARENTS

UNDERSTANDING NCAA RULES AND HELPING YOUR SON NAVIGATE A POTENTIAL PROFESSIONAL CAREER
Notre Dame’s commitment to playing—and succeeding—within the rules has never been more important than in today’s enforcement climate. That is why we offer this educational piece to help you and your son remain informed about and in compliance with NCAA rules. We have also included practical information for those of you whose sons hope to play professional football.

Thank you for all that you do to make this football program so special, and thank you for helping your son and Notre Dame continue to set the standard for ethical conduct in intercollegiate athletics.

GO IRISH!

Jack Swarbrick
VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS
The NCAA regulates the kinds of interactions that you and your son may have with people who the NCAA defines as “representatives of the University’s athletic interests,” more commonly known as “boosters.” A booster is an individual who: (i) is a member of an organization that supports Notre Dame athletics; (ii) has made any financial contribution to the athletics department; (iii) has been involved in promoting Notre Dame athletics; (iv) has been a season ticket holder; or (v) has provided benefits to student-athletes or their relatives or friends.

Once an individual has been identified as a booster, he/she retains that status permanently. Notre Dame has thousands of alumni, subway alumni and other fans who are eager to support the football program and our student-athletes. Our job is to make sure all such support is in compliance with NCAA rules. Because of the intense interest in Notre Dame football, it is a strong possibility that a person defined as a booster will befriend you or your son. If this occurs, please be aware that your friendship with a booster does not change their status or your responsibility as far as maintaining compliance with NCAA rules is concerned. In general, these individuals may not provide any benefits to you or your son.

The practical problem is, of course, that you often won’t know who is a “booster” when you become friends with someone. Another question that arises frequently concerns accepting benefits from “established” family friends. The NCAA has a four-part test for determining whether a current student-athlete can accept items from someone with whom he has a pre-existing relationship. Because these issues can be complex, we suggest that you contact the Compliance Office to explore specific situations.
EXTRA BENEFITS

Neither a student-athlete nor his family or friends may accept an "extra benefit" from an employee of Notre Dame, a booster or any other person or entity. As a general rule, if something is not available to the Notre Dame student body or the general public, it is an extra benefit. The receipt of an extra benefit by a student-athlete or his parents/guardians, relatives or friends will immediately jeopardize the student-athlete’s eligibility.

Common examples of impermissible extra benefits offered to football parents/guardians include free lodging from a booster for home games, discounted lodging offered by local hotels (because of your status as a student-athlete’s parent/guardian), free game tickets (other than the allowable four complimentary admissions discussed below), and complimentary meals. Please note that NCAA rules allow Notre Dame to secure or reserve lodging at a discounted rate for parents or immediate family members of student-athletes in conjunction with bowl game travel (but does not allow Notre Dame to pay any expenses associated with such lodging).

Common examples of impermissible extra benefits offered to student-athletes include money, gifts, clothing, tickets for professional sports games, haircuts, tattoos, use of a car, payment of long distance or cell phone charges, free or reduced-cost housing, free or reduced-cost merchandise or services, free meals at a restaurant and free drinks or cover charge at a bar.

Another common topic for questions involves what you as parents/guardians of current student-athletes can provide to other current student-athletes who are friends with your son. As a parent/guardian of a student-athlete, you may provide occasional meals for student-athletes in your home. You cannot provide off-campus housing free of charge or at a reduced rate to other student-athletes. For example, if you own a home in South Bend and intend to allow your son’s teammates to live there, you must charge each of them a fair market rate. Please direct specific questions regarding meals and housing to the Compliance Office.

Finally, as we’ve learned from recent public infractions cases, it is impermissible for your son and their friends or relatives to sell (including an exchange or upgrade) any item received incidental to their participation on the Notre Dame football team, including clothes, gear, uniforms or parts of a uniform, awards, bowl game gifts, and Notre Dame or Monogram Club-provided participation awards. In addition, you cannot sell or exchange any item bearing your son’s autograph for personal profit. For example, you cannot place (or have placed on your behalf) a football bearing your son’s signature for sale on eBay or Craigslist.
PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES/COMMERCIAL ENDORSEMENTS

Each year, the Athletics Department and the Notre Dame football program receive many requests from the community for your sons to make public appearances. You and your son also might hear directly from his high school or charities in your hometown. It is permissible for your son to participate in promotional activities only if certain criteria are met:

• Student-athletes may not allow their name, picture or personal appearance to advertise, recommend or promote the sale or use of any commercial products, services or businesses.
• Student-athletes must receive written approval from the Compliance Office prior to participating in any promotional activities.
• Student-athletes may not miss class.
• Student-athletes may not receive payment for their promotional appearances (except they may receive actual and necessary expenses such as a meal or travel costs).

To be clear, your son cannot make any commercial endorsements while he has remaining eligibility. While it may seem obvious that he cannot star in an adidas or Coke commercial, this prohibition also means, for example, that your son cannot offer a testimonial for a hometown gym or even be listed as a client or member at the gym. If you become aware of any type of commercial endorsement, even those that your son did not know about or authorize, please notify the Compliance Office immediately so that we can take appropriate steps.

As a parent/guardian, you may wish to produce a button, T-shirt, jersey or other product that includes the name or image of your son and/or his teammates. However, please note that you may not sell any such item for profit. If you are interested in mass producing any such product and providing it to fellow football parents/guardians at “cost,” please contact the Compliance Office so that we can make sure the activity falls within NCAA rules.
COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSIONS (TICKETS)

Notre Dame may provide a student-athlete with a maximum of four (4) complimentary admissions to each regular-season home and away competition, regardless of whether he competes in the competition. If your son needs additional complimentary admissions, he may obtain them from other eligible teammates who have unused complimentary admissions. Student-athletes may not receive tickets through student managers or the coaches’ ticket list. Student-athletes may not receive “hard” tickets; instead, complimentary admissions may be provided only through a pass list for individuals designated by the student-athlete. Your son may assign complimentary admissions to his family members, relatives and friends (or those of a teammate who requests extras). Any individual receiving a complimentary admission must present identification at the admission gate. Neither the student-athlete nor the individual designated to receive a complimentary admission may exchange the “ticket” for money or any item of value.

RECRUITING

NCAA legislation restricts recruitment of prospective student-athletes to institutional staff members. It is not permissible for a parent/guardian of a current student-athlete to recruit on behalf of Notre Dame. For example, it is not permissible for a parent/guardian to have on- or off-campus in-person contact with a prospect during his recruiting visit to Notre Dame. This means that during a prospect’s visit to campus, parents/guardians may not have contact with the prospect or his parents/guardians at a Notre Dame athletics event, tailgate, etc. In addition, it is not permissible for parents/guardians of current student-athletes to have telephone contact or written contact with a prospect or his parents/guardians. Parents/guardians of current student-athletes are also prohibited from providing prospects or their parents/guardians with any extra benefit, including, but not limited to, complimentary admissions, meals, lodging, transportation, financial aid, loans and employment.

EMPLOYMENT

It is permissible for your son to work during the academic year and vacation periods, with no limit on the amount he can earn in such employment. If your son works, he must be paid only for work actually performed and at a rate comparable with the going rate in that city. A student-athlete may not be hired based solely on the publicity or reputation that he has obtained because of football, and his compensation may not reflect such value.
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Student-athletes must maintain certain academic standards to be eligible for competition. In addition to NCAA rules that require student-athletes to maintain "progress toward a degree," Notre Dame holds its student-athletes to increased academic standards. To be eligible under NCAA rules, your son must be enrolled in a minimum full-time program of studies (i.e., 12 credit hours) and must pass 6 credit hours each semester. As student-athletes progress through each semester, they are required to meet additional NCAA academic requirements.

Pursuant to Notre Dame’s Academic Code, your son must maintain a 1.7 GPA during the first semester of his first year, a 1.85 GPA during the second semester of his first year, and a 2.0 GPA in each semester thereafter. Failure to meet those GPA requirements will land your son on academic probation. Although academic probation normally renders a student ineligible to compete during the following semester, student-athletes who end the spring semester on academic probation may regain their eligibility for fall by achieving certain grades during the summer session. It is also important to note that Notre Dame’s Academic Code calls for automatic academic dismissal from Notre Dame if your son has two consecutive or three non-consecutive semesters on academic probation.

Academic eligibility rules are complex. The Compliance Office partners with Academic Services for Student-Athletes to ensure that your son is tracking on all of the requirements. Feel free to contact either the Compliance Office or your son’s academic counselor for additional information.

FIVE-YEAR CLOCK (“REDSHIRT”)

Student-athletes may not engage in more than four seasons of competition in any one sport within five calendar years. A student-athlete’s five-year clock starts when the student-athlete initially registers in a regular term of an academic year (summers excluded) for a minimum full-time program of studies (12 credit hours) and attends his first day of classes for that term. A student-athlete uses a season of competition if he participates in any competition, regardless of the length of time, during a season. For example, if a football student-athlete plays in one minute of one game, he has used a season of competition. A student-athlete who does not compete at all during one of his seasons will not use a season of competition. This is commonly referred to as a “redshirt” year. An athlete receives only one "redshirt" year within his five-year clock.

In certain circumstances, a student-athlete who suffers a season-ending injury may qualify for a “medical hardship” under NCAA rules that would provide him with an additional season of competition.
FINANCIAL AID

Athletics Aid: A student-athlete may not receive athletics-related aid in excess of a full grant-in-aid. A full grant-in-aid is defined as financial aid that consists of tuition and fees, room, board and required textbooks. Institutions cannot award athletics aid to a student-athlete in excess of one academic year. It is a common misconception that athletics aid is guaranteed for four or five years. In reality, at the end of each academic year, the head coach has the option to renew, reduce or cancel the athletics aid. Notre Dame is required to notify your son by July 1 whether his athletics aid has been renewed, reduced or canceled for the following academic year. In general, Notre Dame does not reduce, cancel or non-renew athletics aid due to injury or athletic performance.

Additional Aid: In limited situations, it may be permissible for a football student-athlete to receive aid (e.g., institutional scholarships, outside awards) in addition to an athletic scholarship. Because receipt of these scholarships has many NCAA implications, please consult the Compliance Office to discuss specific situations. If such additional aid is allowed, please know that all checks must go to the Notre Dame Financial Aid Office and cannot be provided directly to you or your son.

Pell Grant: One of the most overlooked aspects of financial aid for football student-athletes is the Federal Pell Grant. All undergraduate students—including those on full athletics scholarships—can file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). By doing so, some students may qualify for a Federal Pell Grant based on their calculated estimated family contribution. During the 2010-11 academic year, eligible students could receive assistance up to $5,550. The FAFSA may be found at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The priority submission deadline for each academic year is generally in February (but forms may filed late), and the form should be completed on an annual basis. The IRS W-2 and 1040 are required for submission. Questions regarding the FAFSA may be directed to the Notre Dame Financial Aid office at (574) 631-6899.
SAOF: The Compliance Office manages an NCAA-provided fund called the Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund (SAOF). This fund is completely separate from scholarship money, and is available to help student-athletes who lack financial resources with various needs, including emergency travel, health insurance and clothing. Although the Compliance Office automatically contacts football student-athletes who are Pell Grant eligible and others who are identified by the football coaches and staff about SAOF, you should feel free to contact the office for more information.

DRUG TESTING

The NCAA and Notre Dame test for substances found on the list of “NCAA Banned-Drug Classes.” Testing is done year round. All nutritional supplements carry some risk of containing an NCAA-banned substance because they are not well regulated and may be contaminated. Your son’s failure to review a supplement with his sports medicine staff prior to use may result in a positive drug test. Ultimately, student-athletes are responsible for anything they ingest. Please be aware that a no-show is considered a positive test.

The consequences of a failed test under the NCAA drug-testing program include: for the first positive test of any substance, the student-athlete is ineligible for 365 days and loses one year of eligibility. A second positive test for “street drugs” will render the student-athlete ineligible for another 365 days and result in the loss of another year of eligibility; a second positive for performance-enhancing drugs results in permanent ineligibility. Consequences under the Notre Dame drug testing policy include mandatory education for a first positive test (any drug) and a permanent ban from participating in athletics at Notre Dame for a second positive (any drug).

GAMBLING

The NCAA opposes all forms of legal and illegal “sports wagering.” This means that your son cannot place any wager—regardless of the nature or value of the item at stake (e.g., cash, dinner, clothing, a drink)—on any sporting event whatsoever, including such seemingly innocent events as a round of golf or a football drill run in practice. Your son obviously cannot place bets on professional or college sports games, either through the Internet, a bookie, or at a casino. The NCAA gambling rules even apply to fantasy leagues, March Madness brackets, Super Bowl squares and other similar activities. Such activities are prohibited if the activity both requires a fee to participate and awards a prize or prizes to the winner. In other words, your son can play fantasy football only if there is no entry fee to participate.
POTENTIAL PROFESSIONAL CAREER

AGENTS

Under NCAA rules, only amateur student-athletes are eligible for intercollegiate athletics. Your son could jeopardize his amateur status if he has inappropriate contact with agents or their representatives. Prior to completion of your son’s eligibility, neither you nor your son may:

- **Agree, orally or in writing, to be represented by an agent for the purpose of marketing his athletic ability;** your son will lose his eligibility even if the agreement was not dated, the agreement was dated after he has completed his eligibility, or it is agreed that the agent will only represent him in future negotiations after completing his eligibility.

- **Negotiate or enter into any kind of agreement, either orally or written, to compete in professional athletics.**

- **Receive transportation, preferential treatment, other benefits or services, including loans, because of his athletic reputation or money he may make as a professional athlete.**

It is permissible for a student-athlete to secure legal advice from a lawyer concerning a proposed, professional sports contract, provided the lawyer does not have direct contact with the professional sports team on behalf of the student-athlete and does not market the student-athlete’s athletic ability. A lawyer may not have any direct contact (in person, by telephone or by mail) with a professional sports organization on behalf of the student-athlete.

Your son may seek information from the NFL, including information about his market value, without affecting his amateur status. You should work closely with the football coaches and staff regarding NFL evaluations and agent selection. The Compliance Office can also provide valuable information regarding agents.

DISABILITY INSURANCE

Certain football student-athletes may be eligible for disability insurance to protect against career-ending injuries via the NCAA “exceptional athlete insurance program” or through an outside carrier. This insurance is available only to those student-athletes entering their junior year or later and who project as 1st - 3rd round (NCAA program) or 1st - 5th round (for other programs) draft choices in the next NFL draft. Evaluations are generally conducted and insurance procured in the summer months entering into the junior, senior and/or fifth year. In sum, depending on the potential draft status, student-athletes may qualify for anywhere from $250,000 through $5 million in coverage. Premiums run approximately $8,000 per $1 million in coverage. If a student-athlete qualifies and is interested in purchasing insurance against career-ending injuries, NCAA rules allow the student-athlete to procure a loan to cover the premium; such loans are repayable once the student-athlete signs his professional contract.
DISABILITY INSURANCE (CONTINUED)

The Compliance Office generally attempts to notify those football student-athletes for whom the insurance is available, but any parent/guardian should feel free to contact us for additional information regarding disability insurance. The purchase of any disability insurance covering your son for athletic-related injuries must be approved by the Compliance Office.

CONTEMPLATING AND TRAINING FOR THE NFL DRAFT

As you know, football players become “draft eligible” following the fall of their junior year. At that time, some young men have a tough choice to make between remaining at Notre Dame to finish their degree/college career and pursuing their dream to play professionally. While in the decision-making process, it is important for the student-athlete to maintain his amateur status. As discussed above, your son may have discussions with agents, runners and/or financial advisors during this time, but should not agree to be represented by an agent or accept any benefit whatsoever if there is even a slight chance of returning to compete for Notre Dame. Our staff will meet individually with those student-athletes dealing with this decision to ensure their understanding of the NCAA rules.

Obviously, those student-athletes who either complete their eligibility or forego their remaining eligibility and are preparing for the NFL Draft no longer have to worry about their own NCAA eligibility. However, there are still many NCAA implications to consider related to relationships with former teammates who are still competing for Notre Dame. As recent news suggests, there are often issues associated with training gyms/facilities and NFL draft parties. One example of a seemingly innocent situation is when the former student-athlete who is preparing for the NFL Draft brings his college teammate who is still competing in college football with him to train at a gym or with certain trainers. Typically, the NFL-bound player will have his “membership” and other expenses paid for by his agent. If the current student-athlete is allowed to work out for free (a likely scenario), that current student-athlete is receiving a benefit from an agent, albeit indirectly. Another problem area is NFL draft parties paid for by agents. If a draft party will take place for one of our own NFL-bound players and is paid for by an agent, current student-athletes may not accept any benefit at the party (including food and drink).

TUITION FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES WHO LEAVE EARLY

If a football student-athlete leaves Notre Dame prior to completion of his undergraduate degree to pursue a professional career, NCAA rules (unfortunately) do not allow Notre Dame to pay for such a student to return to Notre Dame and complete his degree in most circumstances. Notre Dame can pay only for such subsequent efforts to complete a degree once a former student-athlete has participated in professional football: (i) if he completed his four seasons of competition and is receiving the aid within six years of his initial college enrollment or (ii) if he did not compete for four years but is no longer playing professional athletics, is not under contract with any professional team, and is no longer receiving any remuneration from a professional team. Even if an exception to NCAA rules exists, please note that there is no guarantee that funding will be available.
We appreciate your attention to NCAA rules, and hope that this information proves helpful to you and your family. Any violation of NCAA rules is serious and, depending on the severity, may jeopardize your son’s eligibility to compete in college athletics—in some cases, even if your son did not have any knowledge of the events and circumstances that led to the violation. Our compliance staff works hard to educate your sons and all others associated with Notre Dame Athletics. Your help with these efforts is an important part of our ability to succeed the right way. Please contact any member of the Compliance Staff for assistance; we always welcome the opportunity to interact with the parents and guardians of our student-athletes.