

NCAA guidelines regulate the activities of booster clubs in relation to student-athletes. These regulations are intended to prevent clubs from influencing an athlete's decision as to which school and athletic program to enroll in. Improper contact between a club and a prospective athlete can negatively impact the club and the school's athletic program.

Definitions

The NCAA defines boosters as representatives of a school's athletic interests. Boosters support the athletic department's mission and student-athletes.

The NCAA defines a prospective student-athlete, or prospect, as a person who has started the ninth grade or received any financial assistance or benefit other prospective students do not generally receive. According to NCAA regulations, recruiting includes any contact with a student-athlete or his relatives by a school representative for the purpose of encouraging enrollment and participation in the school's athletic program. Additionally, contact is defined as any face-to-face encounter between a prospect or his relatives and a school representative.

Prohibitions

NCAA rules place several limits on booster interactions with prospects. A booster club or its members may not contact a prospect or his/her family for recruiting purposes. Nor may a booster encourage a prospect's attendance or participation in a school's athletic program.

Additionally, boosters may not supply any benefits or special arrangements to student-athletes. This includes loans, payment of the athlete or his family's expenses, or gifts of any kind. Boosters are not allowed to buy student-athletes meals of any kind, including a small snack or drink.

A booster club cannot use the name, picture or appearance of a student-athlete to advertise commercial products or services. Nor can a booster club use an athlete's image to promote an educational or charitable cause unless the appearance is pre-approved by the Compliance Officer.

Allowances

NCAA rules do allow booster club members to interact with a prospect where there is no attempt or talk of recruiting. A booster can continue pre-established friendships with a prospect and his family and engage in normal activities including friendly sports play. A booster can attend events such as neighborhood gatherings or school events where a prospect is in attendance.

NCAA rules also allow booster clubs or its member to speak to a prospect if the prospect initiates the call. The call cannot be for the purpose of recruiting and the booster cannot answer any athletics questions.