



Introduction

As a member of the Mid-American Conference (MAC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Kent State University must abide by the rules and regulations established by the MAC and NCAA as they apply to all aspects of its athletics program. In addition to ensuring that all coaches, administrators, University faculty and staff, and student-athletes are aware of and following these rules, the athletic department is responsible for the actions of any individual who is a “representative of athletics’ interests” (see definition below) otherwise known as a donor.

The information below is meant to provide you with basic “dos” and “don’ts” of being a donor. If you have additional questions or concerns about the rules and how they apply to your involvement with our student-athletes or prospective student-athletes, please contact Phil Tizio, Associate Athletic Director for Compliance at 330-672-8400.

You are receiving this information because you are a Donor under NCAA rules. A representative of athletic interests—or a “donor”—is defined as anyone who has made a financial contribution to the Kent State Athletics Department, including a season ticket holder and/or an individual who has traveled as a guest of the Athletics Department to a home or away contest. Once you become a donor for Kent State, you will always retain that identify, regardless if you cease supporting Kent State financially.

We want to make sure that you know the rules because Kent State and its student-athletes can be held responsible for your actions. In addition, you could be disassociated from Kent State and lose your athletic tickets for your actions

FIVE BASIC RULES TO REMEMBER

1. Do not provide anything for a prospective student-athlete, or an enrolled student-athlete, without permission from Kent State University Athletic Department.
2. Only coaches and Kent State University Athletic Department staff members may be involved in the recruiting process. Alumni, friends and other athletic representatives who are not employed by the institution may not contact any prospect (or his/her family or guardian) via written correspondence, telephone, or in-person (either on- or off-campus) for the purpose of soliciting their enrollment and ultimately their participation in the institution and its Intercollegiate Athletic Program.
3. A prospective student-athlete remains a prospective student-athlete until he/she enrolls (e.g. begins classes) full-time at Kent State University, or until he/she begins official team practice immediately prior to the start of classes –even if the prospect signs a national letter of intent or other commitment to attend the University.
4. An enrolled student-athlete risks losing his/her athletics eligibility if he/she accepts any benefit based on his/her athletic skill, or a benefit not generally afforded to other students.
5. NCAA rules applicable to enrolled student-athletes are not only applicable during the academic year, but are also applicable during the summer months. Enrolled student-athletes are bound by NCAA rules until the end of the academic year in which their athletic eligibility is completed. And, even then, some actions, including providing a benefit to such an individual, may cause an NCAA violation.

Prospective Student-Athlete (Prospect, PSA, Recruit)

A prospective student-athlete (or prospect, PSA, “recruit”) is any student (not just students who are athletes) who has started classes for the ninth grade (seventh grade for men’s basketball & softball). Also, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a prospect if the institution provides such an individual (or his/her relatives or friends) with any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to other prospective students generally. A prospect is also any junior college (two-year) or another four-year college student.

A prospect remains a prospect until he/she begins classes as a full-time student or attends official presentation team practice at Kent State University. Signing a national letter of intent to attend Kent State University does not remove the status of “prospect.”

Recruiting

Recruiting is any intentional effort to solicit a prospect (or the prospect’s family or legal guardian) for the purpose of securing their enrollment and ultimately the athletic participation in the institution’s Intercollegiate Athletics Program by a member of an institution’s staff or by a representative of athletics’ interests.

Other Recruiting Rules for Donors

- You may speak to a prospect via telephone only if the prospect initiates the phone call and the call is not for recruiting purposes. Any inquiry regarding the Kent State University Athletics Program must be referred to the Kent State University Athletic Department.
- You may observe a prospect’s athletics contest on your own initiative but you may not contact a prospect on any such occasion.
- You may not contact a prospect’s coach, principal or counselor in an attempt to gain information that would allow you to “evaluate” the prospect’s value to the Intercollegiate Athletics Program.
- You may not visit a prospect’s educational institution to pick-up film/videotape or transcripts pertaining to the evaluation of the prospect’s academic or athletic eligibility.
- You may send KSU coaching staff information (for example: newspaper clippings) about prospects you think may be of interest.

Unavoidable incidental contact made with a prospect by an athletics representative is permitted, provided:

- a. The contact is not prearranged by the athletics representative or Athletics Department staff member;
- b. The contact does not take place on the grounds of the prospect’s educational institution or at practice or competition sites involving the prospect or his/her team;
- c. The contact is not made for the purpose of recruitment of the prospect; and
- d. The contact only involves normal civility.

You may make a financial donation to a high school athletics program in your hometown’s immediate locale provided:

- a. You make a donation of your own accord;
- b. Your donation is distributed through the normal channels established by the high school; and
- c. Your donation is not earmarked for a specific prospect.

Extra Benefits and Preferential Treatment

Providing a benefit to a prospect or student-athlete will affect their eligibility:

It is a violation of NCAA rules for you to provide a prospect, a student-athlete, their friends or relatives an extra benefit or preferential treatment. An extra benefit is considered any benefit that is not generally available to the student body as a whole. Extra benefits apply “from cradle to grave.” Therefore, it is not permissible for you to provide an extra benefit to a student-athlete even after he or she has exhausted his or her eligibility.

Some examples are:

- Cash, loans of money or the use of a credit card.
- Signing or cosigning a loan.
- Any tangible gifts, including birthday or holiday gifts.
- Free or discounted meals. • Free or discounted goods (e.g., clothing, vehicles, electronics).
- Free or discounted services (e.g., dry cleaning, haircuts, cell phones, long distance calls).
- Free or discounted entertainment (e.g., movie tickets, professional sports tickets).
- Assistance paying bills (e.g., utility bills, rent payments, telephone or cell phone bills).
- Transportation (e.g., purchase of plane, train or bus tickets, etc.) or the use of an automobile.
- Special finance and/or credit arrangements (e.g., for vehicles, apartments, furniture or goods).
- Arranged employment for a prospect’s or student-athlete’s family or friends.
- Admission to an event (e.g., movies, banquets, concerts, sporting events, clubs, special events/ parties, banquets, etc.). • Free or reduced cost housing for any length of time.
- Academic assistance of any kind (e.g., tutoring, editing papers/projects, assistance in completing classwork, use of a computer, etc.).

Employment

Prospective Student-Athletes:

There are many NCAA rules regarding the employment of a prospective student-athlete. If you are planning on hiring a prospect, please contact the Compliance Office prior to the beginning of the employment arrangement to ensure compliance with NCAA, MAC and institutional regulations.

Student-Athletes:

You may only employ a student-athlete if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The student-athlete is only paid for work actually performed;
2. The student-athlete is paid at a rate commensurate with the going rate in that locale for similar services;
3. The student-athlete registers the job by completing the student-athlete employment form and returns it to the Athletics Compliance Office prior to beginning work.

Name, Image, Likeness (NIL)

Kent State Athletics is committed to supporting student-athletes and their pursuit of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) activities in accordance with applicable NCAA and/or state or federal laws while continuing to further the mission of the Department of Athletics - to prepare student-athlete, boldly prepared for life after sports.

Further, Kent State is dedicated to the principle set forth in the NCAA guidelines regarding third party involvement in the recruiting process and NIL agreements. NCAA rules prevent Kent State and/or its staff from organizing, facilitating and/or arranging a meeting between a booster/NIL entity and a prospective student-athlete. Further, such regulations preclude businesses, booster groups, NIL collectives, or other entities from engaging in the recruitment of prospective student-athletes on behalf of Kent State University. Simply put, prospective student-athlete cannot be recruited to Kent State through NIL opportunities.

For current Kent State student-athletes, NIL agreements must be based upon the value that the student-athlete brings to the external group and cannot be connected to participation in intercollegiate athletics at Kent State University or athletics in general.

Complimentary Admissions

It is not permissible for you to receive a complimentary admission (i.e. ticket) from a Kent State student-athlete.

It is also not permissible for you to pay for a complimentary admission from a Kent State student-athlete. Such a sale is an extra benefit and will jeopardize the student-athlete’s eligibility and will impact your status as a donor of the institution.

As a representative of athletics’ interests, YOU MAY...

- Provide an occasional meal in your home to a student-athlete or an entire team. “Occasional” is defined as two or three times per semester, maximum. In order to be eligible to provide an occasional meal, please notify the coaching staff and KSU Compliance to fill out the appropriate documentation.
- Provide transportation to your home for a student-athlete who will be receiving an occasional meal there.
- Provide a job to a student-athlete during the academic years long as you and the student-athlete sign an Employment Verification Form (available in the Athletic Department at Kent State University) prior to the commencement of the employment. The Employment Verification Form indicates that you agree to compensate the student-athlete at a normal rate of pay and not based on his/her value or utility because of his/her reputation or fame, and the student-athlete is paid for work actually performed. Please contact the Compliance Office to secure a copy of the Employment Verification Form
- Provide a summer job to a student-athlete as long as it is at a normal rate of pay for that position and the student-athlete is paid for work actually performed. Please remember to check with the Compliance Office at Kent State University before employing any student-athlete. Student-athletes are required to complete an Employment Verification Form before beginning any employment opportunity.

Possible Penalties for Improper Actions

Violations of NCAA rules are a serious matter. Your actions that result in an NCAA violation, will result in penalties imposed upon a student-athlete (prospective student-athlete or enrolled student-athlete), an institution, a coach, or a representative of athletics’ interests. In some instances, the NCAA may impose penalties on an institution even if the student-athlete involved in the violation has no eligibility remaining or is no longer attending the school.

