

NCAA Rule of the Month

July 2011

Extra Benefits and Preferential Treatment

Student-athletes and prospective student-athletes are not allowed to accept extra benefits or preferential treatment based on their athletic abilities or athletic status. But what does this mean? Below are some distinctions between the two and a few examples of what is and what is not permissible.

Extra Benefit

An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or a representative of the institution's athletic interest to provide a student-athlete or the student-athlete's relative or friend a benefit not allowed per NCAA rules.

- This rule is specific to a benefit that would be given by a university employee or representative of athletics interest to a student-athlete, their relatives, or friends.
- If a benefit is generally available to the institution's students, a particular segment of the student body (not distinguished by athletics), or their relatives or friends determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability, it is then permissible.
- For example: if a professor is having their entire class over for a meal then it is permissible for the student-athlete to attend since it is available to everyone and not just student-athletes.

Preferential Treatment

Preferential Treatment is considered benefits or services provided based on the student-athlete's athletics reputation or skill. When examining whether something is considered preferential treatment, the origin and the duration of a relationship and the consistency of benefits provided during the relationship are key factors.

- This rule applies to student-athletes receiving benefits from anyone outside of the institution based on their status as an athlete or their athletic ability.
- Student-athletes should not accept anything of value from an agent.
- Student-athletes cannot sell memorabilia to receive discounts or free services at local establishments.

The main difference between extra benefits and preferential treatment is who is providing the benefit. Extra benefits are benefits from an institutional employee or a booster while preferential treatment occurs with no knowledge by the institution. If there is a question regarding extra benefits or preferential treatment, do not hesitate to contact the Compliance Office for clarification.