

# NCAA Rule of the Month

March 2009

## Electronic Correspondence

We have gotten a lot of questions regarding the use of technology in recruiting, specifically regarding a web site called "Twitter." Some coaches are already utilizing this in their recruiting efforts.

We will address Twitter first. For those who are unfamiliar with what Twitter is, it is simply a social networking website that displays the "status" of a person (e.g. "Rob Heuer is excited that the Buffs have Colorado National Golf Course to call home). When you log onto the site, a person can "follow" different people's statuses. In fact, if you have a Twitter account, I would recommend "following" Shaquille O'Neal's Twitter as it is very funny. Here is a response that the Atlantic-10 Conference from the NCAA regarding the use of Twitter in recruiting:

"Twittering could be used by coaches in recruiting in the following way. A coach could keep this electronic tally of what he or she is doing, and a prospect could sign up to receive these throughout the day via etweet and/or twitter text. These communications are treated under NCAA rules, since the etweet could be sent to a 10th grader, and the twitter text could be sent to prospects of all ages. These could be viewed as emails to 10th graders and text messages to prospects, respectively, which would be impermissible."

The NCAA Academic and Membership Affairs staff is "viewing both the activities described above as permissible. In essence, they are viewing twittering as not being a direct contact between a coach and a prospect. Specifically, they are viewing these activities as akin to emails on a Facebook account. Therefore, prospects of all ages can sign up to receive both etweets and twitter texts from coaches."

"However, please be aware that prospects and coaches may not communicate using 'direct-message' tweet. Using direct-message tweet, two people can communicate directly to each other. With the more general etweets and twitter texts, **one person communicates in general**, and any number of people can sign up to receive this communication. **It's the direct interaction between the two people in direct-message tweeting that makes the activity impermissible.**"

In general, electronic communication between coaches and prospective student-athletes is limited to ONLY emails and facsimiles/faxes. The only time a prospective student-athlete can receive electronic communication OTHER than emails or faxes is when the PSA signs a National Letter of Intent with the University of Colorado, meaning that text messaging, instant messaging, or direct-message twitter can be used.

After the PSA signs with CU, it is permissible for ANY staff member to send such electronic correspondence. For example, if a prospective student-athlete had not paid his/her housing deposit, any staff member could shoot that PSA a text message telling him/her to pay that amount to the University.

Unlimited electronic correspondence also can now be sent to WALK-ON student-athletes, ON OR AFTER MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>. In order for that to occur, the PSA must have sent in provided CU **has received his/her room or tuition deposit in response to the institution's offer of admission.**

Bylaws we are referencing: 13.4.1.2 **Electronic Transmissions**, 13.4.1.2.1 **Exception -- Electronic Transmissions After National Letter of Intent Signing or Other Written Commitment.**