

NCAA Rule of the Month

April 2009

“In Transit” to Official Visit

The NCAA recently responded to questions being asked nationally about how the “in-transit” rules during an official campus visit should be applied. Since there was such confusion on it nationally, they released the following interpretation regarding this rule:

- (a) A **prospective student-athlete (PSA) may receive lodging** in the locale of the University of Colorado-Boulder without beginning the 48-hour official visit period in instances in which he or she arrives in the locale too late in the day to begin the official visit that day. **Such expenses may not be provided for any other individual** who is accompanying the PSA on the official visit (e.g., parents, spouse) prior to the start of the 48-hour official visit period, including the cost of additional occupants in the same hotel room.
- (b) A PSA **may receive a drive-thru or "to-go" meal** while in transit with an athletics department staff member from the major airport or bus or train station nearest the University of Colorado without beginning the 48-hour official visit period. **Such expenses may not be provided for any other individual** who is accompanying the PSA on the official visit (e.g., parents, spouse, and children) prior to the start of the 48-hour official visit period. In other words, no meals may be provided to the parents accompanying the prospect, unless you are willing to “trigger the start” of the 48 hours. Do not allow the parents to order room service at the hotel or charge the meal to the room—only the prospect can do this.
- (c) A PSA may receive a “sit-down” meal at the major airport or bus or train station nearest the University of Colorado while accompanied by an athletics department staff member at the time of his/her arrival for an official visit or a “sit-down” or “drive-in” meal enroute to the CU campus with an athletics department staff member, even if such a meal occurs outside a 30-mile radius of the CU campus; however, such a meal begins the 48-hour official visit period. Under these circumstances, the PSA's parents (or legal guardians), spouse and/or children may also receive such a meal.
- (d) A PSA may receive a meal at or in the vicinity of his or her place of lodging without beginning the 48-hour official visit period in instances in which he/she arrives in the locale of CU too late to begin the official visit that day, **provided no athletics department staff members or student-athletes are present during the meal**. Such expenses may **not** be provided for any other individual who is accompanying the PSA on the official visit (e.g., parents, spouse, & children) prior to the start of the 48-hour official visit period.

A few things to remember—you cannot bring the PSA in two days before or even the morning of and be allowed to “hide them”, if you will. This exception is only triggered when the PSA arrives too late in the day to start the visit on campus—in other words, if the PSA arrives at DIA at 10 am, you would be expected to start their visit, however if the PSA arrives at DIA at 4:15 pm, it would be reasonable to say that it was too late in the day to start the visit and hold-over until the next morning. Keep this in mind when you are scheduling airline flight into DIA.

Secondly—remember, you cannot have a PSA arrive at DIA late in the day, say 4:15 pm and stay in the dorms with a SA and not have the 48 hours begin. We can only hold-over the PSA at off-campus places of lodging.

[References: NCAA Bylaws 13.6.4.1 (48-hour period defined), 13.6.6 (accommodations on official visit), 13.6.7.1.1 (meals and lodging while in transit), 13.6.7.7 (meals on official visit), 13.6.8 (entertainment on official visit for spouse, parent or legal guardian of prospective student-athlete) and 13.6.9 (lodging for additional persons); official interpretation (12/20/88, Item No. 18) and staff interpretation (4/13/94, item b), which has been archived]

Here is a "Q&A" regarding this issue:

Question: Can a parent(s)/guardian(s) of a PSA receive lodging expenses the night before an official visit begins without triggering the start of the 48 hour clock?

Answer: No. CU cannot pay for a hotel room for the PSA's parent(s)/guardian(s). If a parent(s)/guardian(s) pays the cost for additional occupants then it would be permissible. Staying in the same room as the PSA would not constitute a violation, however.

Question: Can a parent(s)/guardian(s) of a PSA receive a meal the night before an official visit begins without triggering the start of the 48 hour clock?

Answer: No. The parent(s)/guardian(s) would have to purchase their own meal the evening prior to an official visit beginning.

Question: What could CU provide to a PSA without triggering the start of the 48 hour clock?

Answer: Coaches can take the PSA through a drive-thru restaurant (e.g. McDonalds, Burger King, and Taco Bell).

Question: Is it permissible to take a PSA to a restaurant that does not have a drive-thru?

Answer: Yes, as long as it is take-out. Restaurants like Subway would be fine since most do not have drive-thru lanes. Also, ordering ahead take-out from restaurants such as Olive Garden, Applebee's, or Red Robin would be permissible.

Question: Denver International Airport is outside the 30-mile radius where CU can permissibly provide meals and entertainment. Can CU provide a meal to a PSA outside of this radius if the PSA is in transit (i.e. on the way to the CU Campus)?

Answer: Yes, but a meal outside this radius would trigger the start of the 48 hour period. Since it would start the 48 hour period, the parents would be permitted to receive the meal, because the 48 hours would have started.