

Frequently Asked Questions about NCAA Amateurism Rules for Prospects Involved in Amateur Sports Clubs

Prospective Student-Athlete (Prospect): A prospect is defined as a student who has started classes for the ninth grade. A student who has not started classes for the ninth grade may become a prospect if an institution provides that individual (or that individual's relatives or friends) any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospects generally. An individual remains a prospect until he/she either enrolls full time at a four year collegiate institution or participates in a practice at a four year institution.

NCAA Bylaw 12.1.1.1.4.3: An individual may not receive expenses from an outside amateur sports team or organization in excess of actual and necessary travel, room and board expenses, and apparel and equipment (for individual and team use only from teams or organizations not affiliated with member institutions, including local sports clubs as set forth in Bylaw 13.12.2.3) for competition and practice held in preparation for such competition. Practice must be conducted in a continuous time period preceding the competition except for practice sessions conducted by a national team, which occasionally may be interrupted for specific periods of time preceding the competition. Please note, this bylaw is applicable in all three NCAA divisions.

Q: May I accept apparel and equipment from an amateur club team that I belong to if I am representing that amateur club in competition?

A: Yes, a club team may provide apparel and equipment, actual and necessary travel expenses and room and board expenses to a prospect representing that club team in competition and for any practice held in preparation for such competition.

Q: May a representative of athletics interests (booster) from an institution I am interested in attending help with fundraising efforts for my amateur club team?

A: No, unless the representative of athletics interests acts independently of the institution, the funds he or she contributes are distributed through channels established by the club and the funds he or she contributes are not earmarked for a specific prospect.

Q: May I use my athletics ability (e.g., "walk-a-thons", "5k-run") for a fund raiser for my amateur sports club?

A: Yes, provided the money you raise is contributed directly to the club and the decision as to how the money is used rests exclusively with the club (e.g., money is not earmarked for you).

Q: May my local amateur sports club waive my membership dues to participate in the amateur club?

A: Yes, provided you qualify for a waiver of the fee under the club's established waiver policy and athletics ability is not a part of the criteria under such a policy.

Q: May I receive expenses from a local amateur sports club or outside organization to cover membership dues?

A: No, unless the dues are related to the actual and necessary expenses for participation on the team. Actual and necessary expenses are defined as any expenses related to travel, room, board, apparel and equipment tied to a competition and/or practice held in preparation for such competition. If membership dues are required to obtain entrance into a gym and or facility where your club team practices, then your amateur club team may provide those dues.

Q: If I am a prospect and my local amateur sports club team has currently enrolled college student-athletes on it, may those student-athletes be involved in fund raising activities?

A: Yes, provided the collegiate student-athlete is an active member of the club and the funds received from the fund raising event go into the general fund to cover costs associated with the club's practice and competition.

Q: Is it permissible to accept prize money before I enroll in a two-year or four-year school?

A: For eligibility purposes at Division I institutions it is permissible for a prospect to accept prize money based on their place finish or performance in an open athletics event (i.e., an event that is not invitation only). The amount of prize money that a prospect may accept can not exceed his or her actual and necessary expenses to compete in that event and can only be provided by the sponsor of the open event.

For prospects that plan on competing at the Division II level, it is permissible to accept prize money prior to enrolling in a collegiate institution.

For prospects that plan on competing at the Division III level, it is permissible to accept prize money prior to enrolling in a collegiate institution provided the prize money is awarded by the sponsor of the event, the United States Olympic Committee or the appropriate national governing body.

Q: May an outside team or organization forward an award or cash prize I have won (that I am not permitted to receive per NCAA rules) in an event to an escrow account, trust fund or third party, even if I do not withdraw the funds until exhausting my collegiate eligibility?

A: No, any award provided to an individual as a result of participation in an event can not be forwarded to a third party or into an escrow account without the transfer violating NCAA amateur regulations.

