

## Dear Alumni, Faculty, Staff and Friends:

One of the important cornerstones of the Middle Tennessee athletic program is the loyalty and enthusiasm of Blue Raider fans who have demonstrated their interest in our teams by their attendance at our events.

Middle Tennessee athletics appreciates this marvelous fan support, which stimulates and encourages our student-athletes and energizes our department.

We must, however, be cautious not to let enthusiasm for our programs lead us into conflict with the very specific rules and regulations of the NCAA or the Sun Belt Conference.

The NCAA definition of “a representative of athletics interests” is very broad and encompasses many if not all of the people who are regular attendees at our sporting events. If you fall into this category, there are a number of activities regarding contact with student-athletes and athletic recruits that could put the Middle Tennessee State University at risk for NCAA sanctions.

We have summarized the applicable NCAA rules in this pamphlet. Please take time to read it carefully and should you have any questions, please call our Office of Athletic Compliance at (615) 898-5491.

Middle Tennessee State University is charged with the responsibility to exercise “institutional control” of its athletics interests and we are committed to maintaining the kind of responsible program in which all of us take such great pride.

Middle Tennessee State University is grateful for all you do and know all of you would like nothing more than to build MTSU into one of the model programs in the nation. We know, based on our contacts with alumni, faculty, staff and friends, that you share our ambition for athletic success with integrity.

Gratefully,

Michael Moleta  
Director of Compliance  
Middle Tennessee State University

## INTRODUCTION

Institutional control of athletics is a fundamental requirement of NCAA legislation. The NCAA constitution provides that each institution shall be responsible for ensuring that members of the institution’s staff, student -athletes and other individuals or groups representing the institution’s athletics interests comply with all applicable rules. This brochure is intended to provide you with basic information concerning NCAA rules that apply to a “Representative of Athletics Interests.” The brochure highlights rules concerning situations encountered by alumni, faculty, staff and friends of Middle Tennessee State University.

Because of the complexity of NCAA rules, this brochure does not include all applicable situations and should not be relied upon exclusively. We need your help complying with these rules. If you have any questions concerning NCAA rules regarding prospects, student -athletes or representatives of athletics interests (i.e. boosters), please contact the Office of Athletic Compliance:

### ARE YOU A REPRESENTATIVE OF ATHLETICS INTERESTS?

You are considered a “Representative of Athletics Interests” (a booster) if you:

- Are or have been a member of any organization promoting MTSU athletics.
- Have ever made a donation to the Athletic Department or any booster organization.
- Have ever assisted in evaluating or recruiting prospects.
- Have ever helped to arrange or have provided employment to enrolled student-athletes, prospects, or their parents or relatives.
- Participated in the MTSU athletics program.

**Once you become a Representative of Athletics Interests, YOU retain this status FOREVER!**

### CONSEQUENCES TO ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVES FOR NCAA VIOLATIONS

NCAA member institutions are required to notify Athletics Representatives of consequences regarding rules violations. Athletics Representatives found in violations of NCAA rules are subject to losing benefits and privileges received from the University.

**Revocation or Withholding of Privileges:** Any individual who has engaged in conduct that is determined, either by the University, or the NCAA, to be a violation of any NCAA legislation, regardless of whether such violation results in the imposition of sanctions, shall be subject to the revocation or withholding of any athletically related benefit or privilege, received by that individual from the University. Such benefit or privilege may include, without limitation, ticket privileges which may be withheld by the University for that period of time which the University, or NCAA deems appropriate. The revocation of ticket privileges may result in an individual being denied admittance to any University hosted athletic event.

## DEFINITIONS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Prospective Student-Athlete:** A “prospect” is a student who has started classes for the ninth grad. A student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a “prospect” if the student receives any benefits that the institution does not provide to all prospective students in general. The Middle Tennessee State University requests that you treat ALL students as prospects.

**Student-Athlete:** A student-athlete is a student whose enrollment was solicited (i.e. recruited) by a member of the athletics staff or other representative of athletics interests with a view toward the students’ ultimate participation in the intercollegiate athletics program.

**Contact:** A contact is any face-to-face encounter between a prospect or the prospect’s parent or legal guardian and an institutional staff member or athletics representative during which any dialogue occurs in excess of an exchange of a greeting. Any such face-to-face encounter that is prearranged or that takes place on the grounds of the prospect’s educational institution or at the site of organized competition or practice involving the prospect or the prospect’s high school, prep school, two-year college or all-star team shall be considered a contact, regardless of the conversation that occurs.

**Recruiting:** Recruiting is any solicitation of a prospect or the prospect’s family by a University staff member or by a representative of athletics interests for the purpose of securing the prospect’s enrollment at the University and/or participation in the athletic program.

### BASIC POINTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Benefits or Special Arrangements:** Athletics representatives may NOT provide any benefits or special arrangements to an enrolled student-athlete, his or her parents, relatives or friends.

**No Contact With Prospects:** Athletics representatives of an NCAA Division I institution are prohibited from making in-person on- or off-campus recruiting contacts, as well as written or telephone communications with a prospect or the prospect’s parents or relatives. If a prospect initiates a telephone contact with you, or you have an inadvertent face-to-face encounter with a prospect or their parents or relatives, DO NOT enter into a recruiting conversation. Also, under such circumstances, refer questions about the athletics program to the athletics department and advise the appropriate coach of the contact.

**No Contact With Prospect’s School or Staff:** Athletics representatives may NOT contact the prospect’s coach, principal, or counselor in an attempt to evaluate a prospect or visit the prospect’s institution to pick up films or transcripts pertaining to the evaluation of the prospect.

**Attendance at Prospect’s Events:** Athletics representatives may attend events (e.g., contests, banquets) where prospects are present on his or her own initiative, subject to the understanding that the representative may NOT contact the prospect or the prospect’s parents or relatives.

**Inform Middle Tennessee State University Coach:** Athletics representatives may inform the Middle Tennessee State University coaches of prospects in their area by contacting the coach and sending newspaper clippings with the names of particular prospects.

**Pre-Established Relationship:** Athletics representatives who have preestablished relationships (relationship began before the student was being recruited by the institution) with prospects, their parents and relatives may continue normal contacts with the understanding that such contacts are not made for recruiting purposes and are not arranged by members of the institution's coaching staff.

#### LIMITED EXCEPTIONS FOR FACULTY & STAFF

- Faculty and staff members of Middle Tennessee State University are permitted to contact prospects only on the institution's campus.
- Faculty and staff members of the Middle Tennessee State University, at the direction of the coaching staff, may begin to write prospects on or after September 1st at the start of their junior year in high school.
- Faculty and staff members of the Middle Tennessee State University, at the direction of the coaching staff, may telephone prospects (in all sports except football) for the purpose of recruiting beginning July 1st following the prospect's junior year in high school.

#### CONTACTS WITH ENROLLED STUDENT-ATHLETES

**Benefits or Special Arrangements:** Athletics representatives may NOT provide any benefits or special arrangements to an enrolled student-athlete, his or her parents, relatives, or friends.

**Employment for Enrolled Student-Athletes:** Employment for enrolled student -athletes may not be arranged by Athletics Representatives without first receiving prior approval from the Office of Athletic Compliance, (615) 898-5491. NCAA rules require that the student -athlete and the employer sign a written statement PRIOR to the commencement of employment confirming that the employment satisfies the conditions as stated in the NCAA manual. Compensation must be based on work actually performed and at a rate commensurate with the going rate in the locality for services of like character.

**Rules Governing Student-Athlete Participation in Promotional Activities:** Use of a student -athlete's name, picture or appearance to support any charitable, educational or nonprofit promotional activities requires the signature of the student -athlete and the authorized representative and requires written approval from the Director of Athletics. Forms must be obtained from the Office of Athletic Compliance, (615) 898-5491. Student-athletes are not permitted to be involved in advertisement, recommendation or promotion of a commercial organization or its product or service.

**Employment for Prospects:** Athletics representatives may arrange employment for prospective student -athletes. The prospect may not begin the job until after completion of the prospect's senior year in high school. Compensation must be based on work actually performed and at a rate commensurate with the going rate in the locality for services of like character. Do not provide any benefits for prospective student -athletes in your employ (e.g., transportation or meals) unless

the benefits are provided for all other employees.

**Occasional Meals:** Athletics representatives may provide an enrolled student-athlete or an entire team with an occasional family meal. The occasional meal may be catered, must be provided in an individual's home, and must be restricted to special occasions. Transportation may be provided to the student-athlete(s) by the athletics representative ONLY if the meal function is at the home of that representative. Arrangements for TEAM events, for away -from -home competitions, must be made in advance with the head coach and the Office of Athletic Compliance.

**Agents:** Student-athletes lose their amateur status and shall not be eligible for intercollegiate competition in a particular sport if :

- The student-athlete, their parents or relatives enter into a written or oral agreement with an agent.
- The student-athlete, their parents or relatives accepts or receives any benefits from an agent, "runner," or financial planner.

**Gambling:** NCAA rules do not permit student -athletes or athletic department staff members to knowingly:

- Provide information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics competition.
- Solicit or accept a bet on any intercollegiate team.
- Participate in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate or professional athletics through a bookmaker, a parlay card, tournament pool or any other method employed by organized gambling.

#### ATHLETICS BOOSTER GROUPS

Booster groups may finance the following institutional awards and recognition banquets, provided all expenses are paid through the Middle Tennessee State University Athletics Department:

- All sports and Single Team Postseason Awards Banquet
- Single Team Recognition Banquets prior to or during the season may be financed as well as the team's transportation to the event, provided it is not more than 100 miles from campus and no tangible award is provided to the members of the team.

**Published by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics to assist alumni, faculty, staff and friends in complying with NCAA rules and regulations governing MTSU**



# Department of Intercollegiate Athletics

## GUIDE TO NCAA RULES

*..for Alumni,  
Faculty, Staff  
and Friends*

