

VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS



***Guide to NCAA Rules
for Alumni,
Fans
and Friends***





Dear Alumni, Fans, and Friends of Virginia Tech,

One of the cornerstones of the Virginia Tech athletics program is the enthusiasm and loyalty of Hokie fans. By your interest in our teams and your attendance at events, you have demonstrated that you are without equal. We appreciate this exceptional support, but caution you not to let your enthusiasm lead us into conflict with NCAA guidelines.

NCAA regulations place upon each university the responsibility to exercise "institutional control." This responsibility extends outside the athletics department to the greater university community and beyond, making the university accountable for the acts of all individuals identified as "representatives of the university's athletics interests." The NCAA definition of this term is very broad and includes all alumni and Hokie Club members, as well as the vast majority of the fans who attend our sports events.

We thank you for your interest in our athletics program, and ask that you please review the enclosed material at your convenience. By knowing and following the applicable NCAA rules, you will assist us in maintaining the level of excellence that Virginia Tech continually strives to achieve.

Gratefully,

Jim Weaver

Director of Athletics

INTRODUCTION

The NCAA constitution provides that each institution will be responsible for ensuring that staff members, student-athletes, and other individuals or groups representing the institution's athletics interests comply with all NCAA rules.

This brochure is intended to provide basic information regarding NCAA rules that apply to fans, alumnus, and friends of Virginia Tech. This brochure does not include all NCAA rules and should not be relied upon exclusively. It is a tool to help you avoid inadvertent involvement in a violation of NCAA legislation.

If you have questions concerning NCAA rules regarding recruiting of prospects, student-athletes, and representatives of Virginia Tech's athletics interest, please contact the Athletics Compliance Office. Direct inquiries to:

Tim Parker, Assistant Athletics Director
349 Jamerson Athletics Center
Blacksburg, VA 24061
tparker@vt.edu
(540) 231-2937 or 231-5497



***Virginia Tech Athletics -
WINNING THE RIGHT WAY
... with your help!***

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

“Representative of Virginia Tech’s Athletics Interests” (i.e. Booster)

A “representative of an institution’s athletics interests” is anyone who:

- Is now, or has previously been, a member of any organization promoting the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program; or
- Has made a financial contribution to the athletics program or an athletics booster organization; or
- Has helped arrange any employment for a student-athlete; or
- Has been involved, in any way, in the promotion of the athletics program.

Remember – Once a person is identified as a “Representative of Virginia Tech Athletics Interests” (Booster), the person retains that identity forever.

Prospective Student-Athlete

A “prospect” is defined by the NCAA as any individual who has begun classes in the ninth grade. This individual remains a prospect until he/she reports for practice or attends class as a full-time student (fall or spring semester) at Virginia Tech.

The NCAA permits a “prospect” to attend summer classes and receive athletics aid prior to his or her initial fall semester enrollment. The “prospect” is treated as a “student-athlete” and is permitted access to Virginia Tech’s athletics facilities, equipment, and academic support staff. In addition, this individual may have contact with athletics staff members.

Student-Athlete

A student-athlete is a student whose enrollment was solicited by a member of the athletics staff or other representative of athletics interests with a view toward the student’s ultimate participation in Virginia Tech’s athletics program.

Recruiting

Recruiting is defined as any solicitation of a prospect, a member of the prospect’s family, or a prospect’s legal guardian for the purposes of securing the prospect’s enrollment and ultimate participation in the Virginia Tech athletics program.

Contact

A “contact” is any face-to-face encounter between a prospect, a member of a prospect’s family or legal guardian and an institutional staff member or booster during which any conversation occurs in excess of a greeting.

In addition, a simple exchange of greetings is considered a “contact” if it is prearranged or takes place:

1. On the grounds of the prospect’s educational institution, or
2. At the site of organized competition or practice involving the prospect or the prospect’s high school, preparatory school, two-year college, or all-star team.

No Contact With Prospects

Boosters of Virginia Tech Athletics are prohibited from making in-person on- or off-campus recruiting contacts. They are also prohibited from engaging in written or telephone communications with a prospect or the prospect’s parents or relatives.

Boosters who find themselves contacted by a prospect via phone, e-mail, in a chat room, or in person, must not enter into a recruiting conversation. Under such circumstances, the prospect should be referred to the athletics department. The same is true if a booster is contacted by a prospect’s parent, guardian, or relative.

No Contact With Prospect’s School or Staff

Boosters may NOT contact a 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 a prospect.



RULES GOVERNING RECRUITING

Only coaches and athletics department staff members can be involved in the recruiting process. All “athletics representatives” or “boosters” who are not employees of Virginia Tech are prohibited from contacting a prospect by telephone, letter, or in-person (regardless of location) for the purpose of encouraging participation in athletics at Virginia Tech.

A booster is not permitted to provide a prospect, a member of a prospect’s family, a prospect’s legal guardian, or a prospect’s friend, any special benefits or arrangements.

A special benefit or arrangement includes, but is not limited to:

- Cash or loans;
- Co-signing or arranging a loan;
- Gifts of any kind (clothing, airline tickets, holiday cards, etc.);
- Special discounts for goods and services;
- Use of an automobile.



A booster is not permitted to provide employment to a prospect prior to the completion of the prospect’s senior year in high school. No employment should be provided to a prospect without first obtaining approval from the Virginia Tech Compliance Office.

A booster is not permitted to entertain high school, prep school or junior-college coaches, or provide them with tickets to any Virginia Tech contests.



A booster is not permitted to pay for a prospect's expenses to attend a Virginia Tech camp or clinic.

What is permitted by the NCAA?

A booster may inform Virginia Tech coaches of prospects in his or her area by contacting a coach via phone, letter, or email. In addition, newspaper clippings may be sent to a coach.

In cases where a pre-established relationship exists between a booster and a prospect, a member of the prospect's family, or a prospect's legal guardian, the booster is permitted to continue normal contacts with the understanding that such contacts are not made for recruiting purposes. These contacts can not be arranged by Virginia Tech athletics department staff members.

NCAA permits faculty and staff to write or telephone prospects for purposes of recruitment. Faculty and staff are advised to discuss recruitment involvement with the coaching staff.

A prospect may receive written correspondence after September 1 at the start of his or her junior year in high school for all sports.

The following rules apply to making telephone calls to prospects:

- A prospect in women's basketball may be telephoned after April 1 of her junior year.
- A prospect in men's basketball may be telephoned after June 15 of his sophomore year.
- A prospect in football may be telephoned after May 1 of his junior year.
- A prospect in all other sports may be telephoned after July 1 following his or her junior year.

Faculty and staff members are also permitted to have an off-campus contact with a prospect during his or her official (paid) visit. This off-campus contact must occur at a site within a 30-mile radius of the Virginia Tech campus.

RULES GOVERNING CONTACTS WITH PROSPECTS

Types of Interaction that are NOT Permitted by the NCAA

1. A booster is not permitted to telephone, write or make in-person contact with a prospect for the purposes of soliciting his or her enrollment at Virginia Tech or participation in the Hokie athletics program.
2. A booster is not permitted to be involved in making arrangements for a prospect, a prospect's family member, a prospect's legal guardian, or a prospect's friend to receive money or financial aid of any kind.
3. A booster is not permitted to provide any transportation to prospects, including transportation to campus to attend athletics events, unless an established, pre-existing relationship exists.
4. A booster is not permitted to contact a prospect's coach, principal, or guidance counselor in an attempt to evaluate the prospect. Additionally, a booster may not visit the prospect's educational institution to pick up films/videos or transcripts.
5. A booster is not permitted to provide free or reduced-cost tickets for any Virginia Tech home or away contests to a prospect, a prospect's family member, a prospect's legal guardian, or a prospect's friend.



There may be times when you, as a fan, alumnus, Hokie Club member or friend of the university, will come into contact with a prospect unavoidably. During such a contact, conversation with a prospect must be limited to only normal civility. The conversation must conclude quickly, and no recruitment may take place.

Any contact which occurs at a prospect's home, school, or at the site of a practice or contest is not considered incidental and will be deemed a violation of NCAA rules.

High School or Junior College Events or Banquets

A booster, on his or her initiative, may attend high school or junior-college athletics events or banquets where prospects are in attendance.

Contact with the prospect or his or her relative(s) is not permitted.

Please direct inquiries from parents or guardians of a prospect regarding Virginia Tech or its athletics program to the appropriate coach at Virginia Tech.

Rules That Affect Alumni

It is not permissible to invite selected high school or junior-college athletes to alumni events.

Alumni are permitted to entertain groups of prospect-age students under certain conditions where athletes are not given preferential treatment.

When Virginia Tech athletics department staff members are invited to speak at an alumni function, be sure to inform them in advance if any prospects will be in attendance. This is extremely important because there are certain time periods during the year when coaches are prohibited from any contact with a prospect away from campus.

RULES GOVERNING BENEFITS FOR ENROLLED STUDENT-ATHLETES

Impermissible Benefits

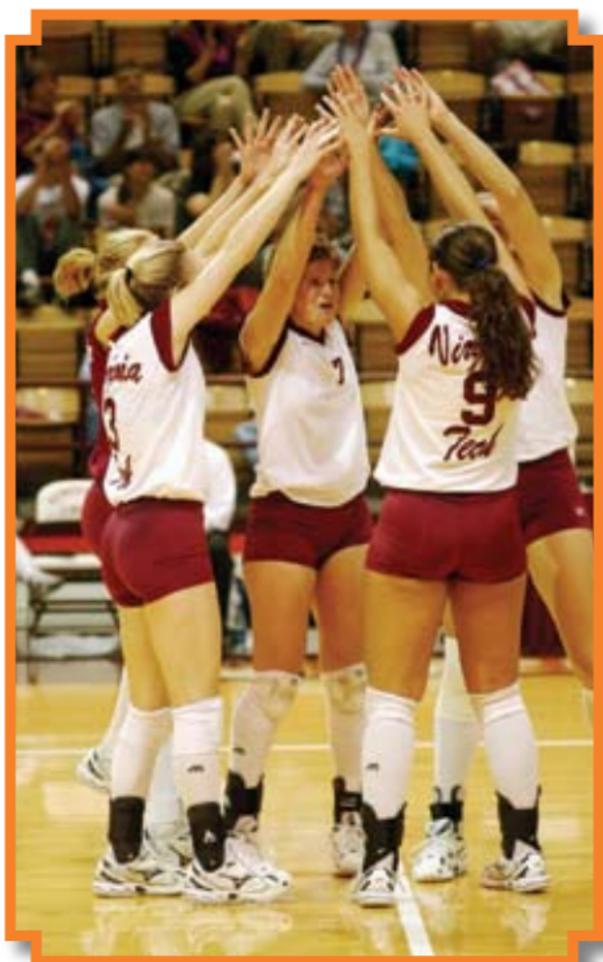
The following may NOT be provided to student-athletes:

1. A booster is not permitted to provide a student-athlete with any "extra benefit" or special arrangements, such as:
 - Expense money,
 - Movie passes,
 - Free meals at restaurants, or
 - Reduced-price housing.
2. A booster is not permitted to provide preferential treatment or discounted professional services (medical, dental, legal, etc.) because of a student-athlete's athletics reputation or pay-back potential as a professional athlete.
3. A booster is not permitted to provide gifts or awards to a student-athlete for his/her athletic accomplishments. All awards from any source must conform to NCAA restrictions and must be approved by the Virginia Tech Compliance Office.
4. A booster is not permitted to use the name or picture of a student-athlete to directly advertise, recommend or promote the sale or use of a commercial product/service of any kind.
5. A booster is not permitted to pay any expenses incurred by student-athletes, their relatives or friends. This includes expenses for a student-athlete to travel home, as well as expenses (transportation, hotels, meals) for family or friends to visit campus or attend an away-from-home event.



Benefits That May Be Provided by Boosters

- A booster may contribute funds to finance a scholarship for a particular sport or position. However, it is not permissible to finance a scholarship for a particular prospect or student-athlete.
- A booster may provide a student-athlete or an entire team with an occasional meal under the following conditions:
 - o The meal must be provided in the booster's home (not in a restaurant) and may be catered;
 - o The meal must be approved in advance by the respective head coach; and
 - o These meals must be restricted to infrequent or special occasions.
- A Virginia Tech team that is "on the road" may be invited by a booster for dinner or to meet with alumni/friends in or near the city where the team is competing. Always make arrangements for such activities through the head coach.



PLEASE NOTE

Most of the impermissible actions detailed in this brochure will immediately render the involved student-athlete ineligible for competition.

STUDENT-ATHLETE EMPLOYMENT

Involvement of Boosters

1. A booster may employ prospective and enrolled student-athletes during the summer, regardless of any financial aid he or she may be receiving. However, the rate of compensation must be consistent with the area rate for like services and the student-athlete may only be compensated for work actually performed.
2. A booster may employ a student-athlete during the academic year. However, the implications from such employment vary for each student and each sport. Therefore, always contact the Virginia Tech Compliance Office before employing any student-athlete during the academic year.
3. A booster may not provide any benefits for employed student-athletes (e.g., transportation) unless the benefits are provided for all other employees.

It is not permissible for a student-athlete to receive compensation related to his or her speaking or lecturing at an institutional athletics booster club function.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Student-athletes may be compensated only for work actually performed and must be paid at a rate commensurate with the going rate in the area for similar services.



Involvement of Virginia Tech's Athletics Department

Virginia Tech is permitted to arrange employment for prospective student-athletes during the summer prior to their enrollment as freshmen.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student-athlete may not be eligible for participation in intercollegiate athletics if he or she accepts any remuneration for, or permits the use of his or her name or picture to advertise, recommend or promote the sale or use of a commercial product or service of any kind.



If a student-athlete's name or picture appears on commercial items (e.g., posters, playing cards, photographs, t-shirts) or is used to promote a commercial product without the student-athlete's knowledge or permission, the student-athlete and the institution are required to take steps to stop such activity in order to retain the student-athlete's eligibility.

Use of a student-athlete's name, picture or appearance to support any charitable, educational, or non-profit promotional activities requires prior approval from the Virginia Tech Athletics Department. The authorized representative of the organization or event must complete a form that is filed with the Compliance Office.

WE HAVE YOUR ANSWERS

Five Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: Are former season-ticket holders or former Hokie Club members – who have not attended a game or paid dues in several years – still considered “representatives of the university’s athletics interests” (boosters) by NCAA legislation?

Answer: Yes. A representative/booster retains that classification for life.



Question 2: Can I give a birthday/holiday card or gift to a student-athlete?

Answer: No. The provision of anything tangible or anything of value (including reduced price products or services) due to an individual’s status as an athlete is not permissible.



Question 3: Is the restriction on contacts with prospects and their family members applicable to friends and neighbors that I have known for years?

Answer: No. However, please remember that your contacts with these individuals should not be made for recruiting purposes and should not be initiated or directed by a member of the university’s athletics department.



Question 4: Does a prospect remain a prospect (for the purposes of NCAA recruiting legislation) even after he or she signs a National Letter of Intent?

Answer: Yes. The status of a prospect does not change until he or she attends classes for a fall or spring semester, or reports for preseason practice, or receives athletic aid and attends summer classes before his or her first academic semester at Virginia Tech.



Question 5: If I meet the parents of a student-athlete, can I purchase soft drinks for them during a game at Lane Stadium or Cassell Coliseum?

Answer: No. Nothing of value (no matter how small) may be provided by a booster to the family of a student-athlete.



CONSEQUENCES FOR NCAA VIOLATIONS

The Virginia Tech Athletics Department is required to notify representatives of athletics interests of consequences regarding rules violations.

Consequences are severe if NCAA rules are broken. Boosters found in violation of NCAA regulations are subject to losing benefits and privileges, including season tickets.

Many infractions cases result in an NCAA mandate that the involved booster be forced to disassociate himself or herself completely from the university athletics program.



Please contact the Compliance Office if you have any questions regarding NCAA rules. Again, this brochure should not be relied upon exclusively, as NCAA rules are complex. It is a tool to help avoid inadvertent involvement in a violation of NCAA legislation. We encourage you to contact the Compliance Office to determine the application of NCAA rules.

**Always remember to
ASK BEFORE YOU ACT!**



**Virginia Tech Compliance Office
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