



Compliance Corner with Sandy Bell

Boosters Be Aware: Contact with UK Prospects Prohibited

The University of Kentucky recently self-reported a violation of NCAA rules when a booster of our program wrote a letter to a recruit encouraging him to attend UK. That violation, in combination with (1) a recent newspaper article in which a recruit mentions the many letters he has received from UK fans and (2) several internet postings where boosters are raving about their trip to a high school game after which they “chatted up” a potential UK recruit, leads me to the conclusion that the time is right for a discussion of NCAA Bylaw 13.01.5.

This bylaw states that a booster of an institution’s athletics program is “prohibited from making in-person, on- or off-campus recruiting contacts, or written or telephonic communications with a prospect or the prospect’s relatives or legal guardians.” The group of individuals defined as “boosters” certainly includes those who have made financial contributions to the athletics department or a UK booster organization. However, it also includes but is not limited to the following:

- Season ticket holders;
- Anyone who has assisted in the recruiting process, which would include anyone who chose to write a letter, make a phone call, or contact a prospect or their parents or legal guardians;
- Anyone who has provided a summer job to an enrolled student-athlete; and
- Anyone who has otherwise promoted the institution’s athletics program.

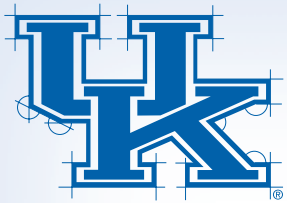
Often people indicate to me that they think it is permissible for them to write, call or contact a prospect because they are not a booster of the

University of Kentucky. However, the second bullet listed above indicates that, as soon as that action is taken, the person becomes a booster. It is also important to note that e-mails and chat rooms are considered correspondence. Therefore, it is not permissible for any supporter of the University of Kentucky to e-mail or participate in a chat room session with a recruit, a recruit’s parents or legal guardians.

These prohibitions do not go away when a recruit signs a National Letter of Intent. A recruit remains a recruit until he or she arrives on campus and starts the first day of classes.

In her 17th year as a member of the UK Athletics Association, Sandy Bell serves as Kentucky’s associate director of athletics for compliance.

If you have any compliance questions or would like to see a particular topic discussed in a future Compliance Corner, please e-mail Sandy Bell at sbell@email.uky.edu.



Compliance Corner

Fans Should Be Aware of NCAA Internet Rules

The advancement of technology in our society has created many new and exciting forms of communication and sources of information. However, in the wonderful world of compliance, this has also created a rather daunting challenge. In the past we have been enforcing rules concerning handwritten letters, telephone calls and face-to-face contact. Now we are faced with chat rooms, instant messaging, video conferencing, message boards, e-mail, Web sites and many other methods of communication that must be regulated by NCAA member institutions.

In this issue's Compliance Corner, we will share with you what we have learned specifically about booster Web sites, message boards and chat rooms.

First of all, please let me emphasize how much all of us in the UK athletics department value the supporters of this program. The fact remains, however, that the NCAA does hold us responsible for the actions of all our boosters. That is why we want to take every opportunity possible to educate those who support this athletics department.

Booster Web Sites and Message

Boards: The Internet has provided the opportunity for boosters from all over the world to communicate with each other in a way that was not possible before. The following regulations regarding those sites are very important for all boosters who participate on these message boards to know:



Sandy Bell

1. The NCAA does not consider the boosters who run these Web sites to be media. Therefore, when the administrators of these sites contact a prospect, interview them and place that interview on their Web site, we are held responsible for an impermissible contact. Recently, we had a situation where some football recruits were interviewed by the administrator of such a Web site which resulted in a violation

for UK. As a result of this violation we had to declare both those recruits (who eventually signed

includes anyone who contacts a recruit on behalf of the institution. Therefore, as soon as someone on a message board e-mails or sends a message out to a recruit, they automatically become a booster and are subject to the NCAA rules prohibiting such contact.

3. Chat rooms and instant messaging are considered by the NCAA as telephone calls. Since boosters are not permitted to call a recruit, participating in a chat room with a recruit or instant messaging is not permitted.

As electronic communication technology continues to advance, the opportunity for the boost-

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with UK) ineligible at our institution and appeal to the NCAA to have that eligibility reinstated.

2. Boosters participating on a message board are not permitted to write, call or e-mail a recruit. Sometimes we will read on a message board that someone thinks it is okay to contact a prospect once they sign a National Letter-of-Intent with UK. However, that signing does not change the fact that he or she is a prospect and all prohibitions against booster contact continue to apply. We often also hear comments that because a person is not a graduate of UK or a season ticket holder, they believe that they are not a booster and it is okay for them to contact a prospect. However, part of the NCAA's definition of a booster

er of an athletics program to have impermissible contact with a recruit or that recruit's family is greatly increased. However, the school's responsibility for that contact remains the same. To protect this athletics program and the young people who compete for all of us, we ask that all boosters who enjoy access to the type of Web sites described above assist us in following the guidelines that govern those sites. As always, your efforts to help us remain compliant are greatly appreciated.

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