



AUBURN BOOSTER GUIDE



Auburn University enjoys a rich tradition of academic and athletic achievement. This commitment at the highest level has been possible as the result of the vision of our coaches, student-athletes, administrators, and loyal friends to achieve competitive excellence. This competitive excellence has been by possible by adhering to the fundamental values of the Auburn Creed including those of honesty and integrity.

Our steadfast commitment to the Creed and its values requires adherence to compliance with all Auburn University, Southeastern Conference (SEC), and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules. In helping the Auburn Athletics Department maintain its commitment to excellence, we ask for your assistance in continuing to promote an atmosphere of compliance.

Because you have been a generous benefactor to the University and Auburn Athletics, you are also considered a representative of athletics interests or "booster" under NCAA rules. A booster is defined as anyone who has made a financial contribution to the Auburn Athletics or participated in a group that supports Auburn Athletics. Being a booster is a status you will retain indefinitely. Thus, NCAA rules will always apply to you.

The guide was created to provide basic information on pertinent rules and regulations set forth by the SEC & NCAA. We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to these rules, and for your continued support.



President

Christopher B. Roberts



Athletics Director

John Cohen



Head Football Coach

Hugh Freeze





CONTENTS

4 *Role in Recruiting*

6 *Extra Benefits*

8 *Extra Benefits:
Vehicles & Housing*

10 *Awards &
Memorabilia*

11 *Extra Benefits:
Employment &
Complimentary
Admissions*

12 *Name, Image, &
Likeness (NIL)*

13 *Collectives*



PROSPECTIVE STUDENT-ATHLETES DEFINED



A prospective student-athlete ("prospect") is any student who has started classes for the ninth grade, including those attending prep schools, junior colleges, students who have withdrawn from a four-year institution, or those who have entered the transfer portal.

A prospect is a prospect regardless of athletic ability or whether Auburn is recruiting the individual. Pre-existing relationships do not exist in this space. A prospect maintains this status until they complete all high school or transfer academic requirements. This means a prospect remains a prospect even after verbally committing or signing a National Letter of Intent.





EXAMPLES OF IMPERMISSIBLE BOOSTER INVOLVEMENT

- Having contact on or off-campus with prospects or their family/friends;
- Written correspondence or telephone communications with prospects or their family/ friends;
- Making arrangements to provide anything to prospects or their family/friends, including money, financial aid of any kind, gifts, transportation, meals, etc.;
- Assisting with the evaluation of athletic talent at the direction of the Auburn coaching staff;
- Providing free or discounted tickets to athletic events to prospects or their family/friends;
- Posting messages on prospects' social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) trying to convince them to attend Auburn; or
- Arranging or facilitating NIL opportunities.



INFRACTIONS CASE EXAMPLE 2017

An institution lacked institutional control by allowing multiple boosters to provide prospective and current students-athletes impermissible recruiting inducements and extra benefits. These included monetary payments, use of automobiles, lodging and transportation to get to campus, meals, and apparel. Other violations included impermissible recruiting contacts, arranging access to a booster's private hunting land, and allowing a prospect to stay overnight with an assistant coach. Although the head coach promoted an atmosphere of compliance and expected his staff to adhere to the rules, penalties in the case include three years of probation, a two-year postseason ban for the football team, a financial penalty, scholarship and recruiting restrictions, vacation of wins, and permanent disassociation of multiple boosters.



EXTRA BENEFITS

The NCAA governs the relationships you may have with Auburn student-athletes. In general, you may not provide anything to, or make any special arrangements for, student-athletes or their families and friends. Such arrangements are considered “extra benefits” and are expressly prohibited by NCAA bylaws.

In the changing landscape of collegiate athletics, the NCAA Committee on Infractions has continued to maintain that extra benefits are impermissible regardless of the magnitude or scope of the benefit and has continued processing infractions cases as such.

"BOOSTERS ARE INVOLVED WITH PROSPECTS AND STUDENT-ATHLETES IN WAYS THE NCAA MEMBERSHIP HAS NEVER SEEN OR ENCOUNTERED... IN THAT WAY, ADDRESSING IMPERMISSIBLE BOOSTER CONDUCT IS CRITICAL..."

- Committee on Infractions, 2023



EXTRA BENEFIT EXAMPLES

- Providing cash, loans, or gifts of any kind;
- Providing spare tickets to a student-athlete or their family;
- Providing use of a car or free transportation (e.g., flights);
- Allowing use of private property (e.g., homes, land, property to hunt, etc...);
- Providing free or reduced rent or gameday lodging; or
- Assisting in academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, transcript alterations).



INFRACTIONS CASE EXAMPLE

2023

An institution failed to monitor its football program when they committed a combined 22 Level-I violations including over 200 individual violations. These violations included impermissible recruiting inducements in which the prospects later enrolled and became student-athletes. While student-athletes, the egregiousness of the violations continued and included cash payments to student-athletes' parents for housing and transportation, cash payments for medical expenses, and arrangements for free gameday accommodations and parking. As a result of the violations, a financial penalty of roughly \$9 million dollars was levied against the institution. Additionally, the football program received five (5) years of probation, scholarship reductions, extensive recruiting restrictions, booster disassociation, and vacations of records from when the student-athletes competed while ineligible.

VEHICLES



Boosters may not provide a prospect, student-athlete, or their family and friends, use of vehicles at a free or reduced rate. This includes giving them rides, as well as providing transportation for student-athletes' family and friends to come to campus. If a student-athlete brings their car to a dealership to get repaired, they should only receive a loaner car if it is the general policy of the dealership to give a loaner car to any customer under similar circumstances. The student-athlete should only retain the car for the length of time that their car is being repaired.

HOUSING

Boosters also may not provide a prospect, student-athlete, or their family and friends, free or reduced cost housing or lodging at any time. This includes lodging in your personal home, rental property, AirBnb, VRBO, lake house, or any location for any length of time. If a student-athlete's family rents an AirBnB or VRBO, they must pay the going rate as any other person seeing the listing would be expected to.



A booster who owned a car dealership provided a student-athlete use of a loaner vehicle while repairs were being made to the student-athlete's personal vehicle. However, after repairs to the student-athlete's vehicle were complete, the student-athlete retained use of the loaner vehicle and was considered an impermissible extra benefit by the NCAA. As a result of the overall violations in this infractions case, which includes other impermissible benefits provided by boosters, penalties levied included three years of probation, a two-year postseason ban for the football team, a financial penalty, and vacation of wins.

NCAA[®]

INFRACTIONS CASE EXAMPLE

2017



NCAA[®]

INFRACTIONS CASE EXAMPLE

2023

The head coach's wife introduced a prospect's mother to a local real estate agent, who was also a booster to assist the mother in finding a rental home. When the mother signed her lease, \$1,550 was due at signing, and the head coach's wife provided her with \$1,600 in cash to pay the deposit. The head coach's wife also arranged for another \$1,600 payment to be made to the prospect's mother by an assistant coach when she moved into the rental property later that month. The prospect enrolled as a student-athlete and subsequently competed in 23 games while ineligible, including a bowl game.



AWARDS & MEMORABILIA

Boosters may not purchase any items that belong to a current student-athlete or is signed by a current student-athlete. In addition, you may not trade an item or service for any item that belongs to a current student-athlete or is signed by a current student-athlete. If a current student-athlete attempts to sell any personal items to you, their eligibility will be impacted. This includes the purchase of a student-athlete's apparel, equipment, gear, awards (e.g., CFP rings, SEC rings, etc.), shoes, etc...

COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSIONS

It is also not permissible for a booster to receive complimentary admissions (i.e., game ticket) from an Auburn student-athlete or sell their spare tickets to a student-athlete or their family. Such sales would be an extra benefit for a student-athlete and will jeopardize their eligibility. Furthermore, it may impact your status as a booster for Auburn.



An institution failed to monitor the activities of boosters around its football program that resulted in the provision of impermissible benefits to multiple student athletes. Specifically, the first involved booster offered employment opportunities to the parents of a football student-athlete. He offered to employ the father of the student athlete in his foundation and to also employ the mother at a hospital system affiliated with his foundation. The booster initially paid the father \$3,150, followed by recurring monthly payments of \$3,000 for work that was not performed. The total value of benefits exceeded \$180,000. Since the institution was not aware of the arrangement, the student-athlete competed in 50 games while ineligible. Penalties included a one (1) year self-imposed post-season ban, scholarship reductions, recruiting restrictions, and a vacation of records.

NCAA[®]

INFRACTIONS CASE EXAMPLE

2023



EXTRA BENEFITS: EMPLOYMENT

- The student-athlete must be compensated only for work actually performed;
- The student-athlete must be compensated at the same rate as other employees with similar qualifications performing similar services; and
- Student-athletes must go through the same hiring process as other individuals and must register their job with the compliance office.



NAME, IMAGE, & LIKENESS

Beginning in July 2021, student-athletes have been able to make money through name, image, and likeness (NIL). Like the employment parameters on the page prior, student-athletes still have to do some form of work in exchange for compensation. For example, a student-athlete could sign a permissible NIL contract that required them to sign autographs or make a public appearance in exchange for compensation.



INFRACTIONS CASE EXAMPLE

2023

Dubbed the first major infractions case of the NIL era, an institution's women's basketball program facilitated impermissible off-campus contact between a booster and two prospective student-athletes. Additionally, the program violated publicity legislation when they informed the booster about their official visit to campus which resulted in an impermissible recruiting inducement (i.e., meal at booster's home). The penalties included a three-game suspension for the head coach, reduction in number of recruiting visits and communication, and one (1) year of probation.



AUBURN®

If you have questions or concerns about your relationship with any prospect or enrolled student-athlete, please contact our office.

**ATHLETICS COMPLIANCE OFFICE
ATHCOMP@AUBURN.EDU**

