



The University of South Carolina Office of Compliance Services Presents...

# BOOSTER BULLETIN

Information for Boosters and Representatives of Athletics Interests

For our January 2015 edition, we focus on the fourth Top Tip as described in the September 2014 edition of the Booster Bulletin.

4. Boosters are not permitted to contact prospective student-athletes through any medium of social media, such as Facebook, message boards, chat rooms, or Twitter.

Contact with a prospect or his/her family members may result in NCAA violations and could negatively impact the University of South Carolina's recruitment of the prospect. The NCAA defines recruiting as any solicitation of a prospect or the prospect's family by an authorized institutional staff member **or booster** for the purpose of securing the prospect's enrollment and participation in athletics. Only permissible institutional staff members may recruit on behalf of the institution or its athletics programs.



Each month, the Office of Compliance Services will examine one of the Top Tips for Fans and Friends of South Carolina Athletics listed above in depth.



## Social Media Do's and Don'ts



Boosters *may* utilize social media for the following activities:

- ◆ Boosters can notify coaching staff members about noteworthy prospects in the area.
- ◆ Boosters can speak with a prospect only if the prospect initiates the conversation and the conversation is not related to athletics. Questions about athletics should be referred to a member of the coaching staff.
- ◆ Boosters can follow a prospect on Twitter.
- ◆ Booster groups can create fan/support pages for USC athletic programs (e.g., Swim/Dive Boosters, Dug-out Club)

However, boosters *may not* utilize social media for the following activities:

- ◆ Tweeting at or writing a wall post on a prospect's profile or commenting on a prospect's photo
- ◆ Re-tweeting a prospect or mentioning him/her in a tweet (example: @Gamecock\_PSA).
- ◆ Sending messages through the Facebook message or Twitter direct message functions.
- ◆ Creating a fan group that is aimed at enticing a prospect to commit to USC.
- ◆ Instant messaging (or Facebook chat) with a prospect.

## Upcoming Gamecock Athletics Events

### > Women's Basketball

1/2—Auburn  
1/4—@LSU  
1/8—@Alabama  
1/11—Kentucky  
1/15—@Missouri  
1/19—@Florida  
1/26—Texas A&M  
1/29—Alabama

### > Men's Basketball

1/3— Iowa State (@Brooklyn)  
1/7—Florida  
1/10—@Ole Miss  
1/13—Alabama  
1/17— @Auburn  
1/20— Tennessee  
1/24— Kentucky  
1/28— @LSU  
1-31— Georgia

### > Swimming and Diving

1/3—Georgia  
1/10—@Duke/Harvard  
1/17—Missouri  
1/23-24—Queens NC, Wingate, Vanderbilt

### > Women's Tennis

1/17-19—@Michigan Invitational  
1/23-25—@Grand Canyon/Northern Arizona/  
Kansas/New Mexico  
1/30 @Virginia

### > Men's Tennis

1/17—Elon, Furman  
1/24—Stanford [in Gainesville, FL]  
1/25—Florida, Ole Miss [in Gainesville, FL]  
1/31—Clemson

### > Women's Equestrian

1/31—SMU

### > Track & Field

1/10—@Orange and Purple Classic  
1/16-17—@Virginia Tech Invitational  
1/23-24—@Rod McCravy Memorial  
1/30-2/1—@Armory Track Invitational



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## HOW DO CONTACT RULES APPLY TO NLI SIGNEES?

The beginning of February is an exciting time for athletics programs around the country, as the hectic recruiting schedules that coaches have maintained start to pay off. Prospects in Football, Track & Field, and Soccer will start the process of signing National Letters of Intent (NLI) to play for the University of South Carolina in the future.

Many boosters will be compelled to tweet or post congratulations to NLI signees, is this permissible?

Generally it is not permissible for a booster to contact a prospect. However, after a prospect signs a NLI it is permissible for a booster to have a conversation with the signed prospect, or send a congratulatory message to the signed prospect via social media. It remains **impermissible** for the booster to provide the prospect or his/her family or friends with any benefits. Always check with OCS if you are unsure of the status of a prospect or student-athlete.

## Student-Athletes and Sale of Apparel and Awards

NCAA rules prohibit student-athletes from selling or trading their awards and apparel for anything of value. In 2010, several football student-athletes at the Ohio State University were suspended five games for selling items, including conference championship rings. To regain eligibility, these individuals were required to pay a charity the amount of money they received for their awards and apparel.

Please do not attempt to purchase any items from USC student-athletes. Your cooperation and understanding is essential to the success of our programs. If you have any questions about this information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Compliance Services.

\* Apparel is any clothing item issued to student-athletes, or any clothing items that student-athletes are able to retain at the end of the academic year. Apparel includes, but is not limited to uniforms and warm-ups.

\* An award is anything given to a student-athlete for annual or special event participation, a special achievement, or a championship. It does not matter if the student-athlete's name is not on the award. Examples include, but are not limited to, items received for the following:

- \* "Lettering" in a Sport
- \* Scholar-Athlete Award
- \* Bowl Game Award
- \* Conference Championship Award



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## NLI INFORMATION

The National Letter of Intent is a letter that prospects sign to commit to an institution for an academic year in return for an athletic scholarship or other financial aid. It marks the end of the recruiting process and prevents other schools from contacting that prospect. Although these letters can be signed at any time during a signing period, many are finalized on National Signing Day in February. Signing periods vary based on the sport. National Signing Day in the spring applies to prospects committing in the sports of football and men's and women's soccer.

### Basic Information

- The prospect must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center before a NLI may be sent to the prospect.
- The institution offering the athletic scholarship will mail, email, or fax the prospect two copies of the letter to be signed.
- The prospect signs both copies, sending one back to the institution and keeping the other for his or her records.
- If a prospect verbally committed to one institution, the prospect is allowed to sign a letter of intent with a different institution.
- The prospect may only sign a letter of intent once; however, the scholarship commitment is renewed annually for single-year athletic scholarships.
- If a prospect is under the age of 21, the prospect will need a parent to sign the letter of intent to make it legally binding.
- In accordance with NCAA rules, the prospect's potential coach may not be present during the signing of his/her letter of intent. The prospect may sign the letter even if the prospect has not yet qualified with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

