

The Rules of Amateur Status and NCAA Rules: A Quick Guide for Student-Athletes, Coaches and Administrators

This document includes guidance on the Rules of Amateur Status and associated NCAA rules to help prevent a student-athlete's eligibility or amateur status from being negatively affected. While it is addressed to NCAA golfers, so they know what can and cannot be done, it is equally helpful for coaches and administrators.

This information is not intended to be comprehensive and is subject to change. Therefore, student-athletes, coaches and administrators should always check with their institutional compliance officers for information regarding the applicable NCAA rules. In addition, NCAA member conferences and institutions may have more restrictive rules than the Rules of Amateur Status, and vice versa. This content represents the most restrictive information from both sets of rules.

Golf Professionalism & Contracts

CAN:

- Submit an entry to a professional tournament as an amateur, including a professional tour qualifying school
- Play in an event offering cash prizes if you waive your right to prize money or enter as an amateur golfer
- Work at a golf course as a caddie, shop assistant, shop manager or green-keeper
- Enroll in a Professional Golf Management (PGM) program
- Take and pass the PGA Players' Ability Test (PAT)

CANNOT:

- Submit an entry to a tournament as a professional
- Work or identify as a golf professional
- Join a professional golfers' association (such as the PGA of America or PGA of Great Britain and Ireland)
- Join a tour limited to professional golfers (such as the PGA TOUR or LPGA Tour)
- Agree verbally or in writing to be represented by an agent
- Accept any benefits from an agent or prospective agent
- Sign a contract with a company for marketing or sponsorship purposes

Competition Prizes

The following information applies only when you (the student-athlete) are not representing your institution.

CAN:

- Accept a prize or award (such as merchandise, or a gift certificate or gift card) up to \$750 in retail value for each competition
- Accept a symbolic prize (such as an engraved trophy made of gold or silver), even if its value exceeds \$750
- Play in an event offering cash prizes if you enter as an amateur golfer or otherwise indicate prior to playing that you will not accept any prize money
- Accept free product or gifts (such as golf balls or shirts) when such products or gifts are offered to everyone playing in that competition
- Accept a non-cash prize exceeding \$750 (such as a car or trip) for making a hole-in-one during a round of golf

CANNOT:

- Play for a cash prize in any competition, even if you don't play well enough to earn a cash prize
- Accept a prize or award (such as a watch, golf clubs or merchandise) that exceeds \$750 in retail value (this limit does not apply to symbolic prizes, like trophies)
- Sell merchandise won as a prize in a golf competition
- Accept a cash prize for making a hole-in-one during a round of golf

Golf-Related Expenses

Examples of “expenses” include, but are not limited to, costs associated with transportation, hotel accommodations, meals, entry fees, and caddie fees.

CAN:

- Receive expenses that are reasonable and cover costs related to a particular competition. (See CANNOT below for certain sources, such as agents, that are not allowed help you covering your expenses) **Note:** these expenses may require approval by a national, regional or state golf association
- Receive expenses that are reasonable and come directly from your institution when you compete in a national championship event (such as the U.S. Amateur or U.S. Women’s Amateur). **Note:** these expenses may require approval by a national, regional or state golf association.
- Receive expenses that are reasonable to participate in a competition as a member of a team, including as a member of his or her country’s national team (such as a member of the Curtis Cup or Walker Cup)
- Receive expenses that are reasonable and relate to training and come directly from the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), your country’s national governing body for golf (such as a practice session for the Curtis Cup or Walker Cup teams), or a similar governmental entity

CANNOT:

- Receive expenses for a competition from an agent, professional sports organization or institutional booster.

Instruction

The term “golf instruction” means teaching someone the mechanics of swinging a golf club and hitting a golf ball.

CAN:

- Provide golf instruction free of charge
- Receive payment or compensation for providing golf instruction while employed by an educational institution (such as a teaching assistant for a golf class), provided the golf instruction comprises less than 50 percent of your employment
- Receive expenses, payment or compensation for providing golf instruction as part of a program (e.g., The First Tee) that has been approved by a Governing Body
- Receive payment or compensation for assisting in the operation of a golf clinic at a golf course or club (e.g., supervise, provide transportation, or offer mental coaching), but only if no instruction is provided

CANNOT:

- Receive direct or indirect payment or compensation for providing individual or group golf instruction, (But, see CAN section above for limited exceptions).
- Provide golf instruction while working as a paid employee of a golf club or course (such as pro shop attendant or shop attendant)

Use of Name or Image

CAN:

- Use your name or image, or allow your name or image to be used:
 - to promote your golf association (such as a state golf association or the USGA)
 - to promote a recognized charity or non-profit
 - as part of the promotional activities of an NCAA institution or conference
 - to promote a golf competition or event that is considered to be in the best interests of the game or would contribute to the development of the game
- Receive expenses that are reasonable and a result of participating in the permissible promotional activities listed above
- Receive free equipment or merchandise through your institution (such as golf balls, clubs, clothing or shoes) from the company making that equipment or a person representing that company. **Note:** You are advised to check with your institutional compliance office to make sure accepting this equipment is permitted
- Offer an opinion on a product or service, provided the company is not inducing you to do so

CANNOT:

- Use your name, image or likeness to promote, advertise or sell a product or service
- Use a commercial or personal website or a social media account to promote or advertise a product or service
- Promote or advertise the company or person providing the free equipment or merchandise

Gambling

As an NCAA student-athlete, you may not participate in gambling or wagering, including but not limited to the following:

- placing, accepting or soliciting a wager of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest (this includes an action taken on a student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others);
- internet sports gambling or wagering;
- auctions in which bids are placed on teams, individuals or a contest (e.g., who will win longest drive);
- pools or fantasy leagues in which an entry fee is required and there is an opportunity to win a prize; or
- organized events designed or promoted to create cash prizes