STUDENT-ATHLETES: CONDUCT AND ETHICS

Louisiana State University has established a tradition of ethical conduct at all levels of University life. In accordance with this tradition, all student-athletes associated with the intercollegiate athletics program are expected to represent the University in an honorable manner at all times.

Governing Authorities

Standards of ethical conduct are established and enforced by:

o National Collegiate Athletic Association

Student-athletes are subject to the rules and regulations of the NCAA governing unsportsmanlike behavior, non-therapeutic drug use, gambling and bribery, as well as other forms of misconduct.

o Louisiana State University

All student-athletes are subject to the Code of Student Conduct (Revised March 1990). A student who is charged with a violation of the Code for general misconduct may be referred to a hearing panel of the committee on Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action. Students who have reason to believe that they are being unjustly accused and/or disciplined by a University employee may contact the office of the Dean of Students.

o Department of Athletics

Student-athletes must abide by all rules and guidelines set forth in the LSU Department of Athletics Student-Athlete Handbook. In addition, team rules may be established by each individual sport's Head Coach and his/her staff within parameters set by the Director of Athletics, the Athletic Council and the University. The Head Coach informs team members of the established team and training rules at the beginning of the academic year. The Department's student-athlete conduct policies are summarized below.

Personal Conduct and Responsibilities

The Department of Athletics makes every effort to offer a program that assists each student-athlete in securing a degree and fulfilling the objectives of the University, as stated in Policy 101, Philosophy and Objectives, in this Manual. In agreeing to participate in the intercollegiate athletics program, student-athletes must accept certain responsibilities for their personal conduct. They are as follows:
o Academic

1. Attend classes regularly and complete all academic assignments.

2. Consult with academic counselors and attend tutoring sessions, as directed.

3. Maintain an academic load of at least 12 hours per semester and make satisfactory progress toward a degree.

4. Accept responsibility for maintaining academic eligibility.

5. Strive to obtain a college degree within four (4) years.

6. Earn NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) points each semester by remaining eligible (1 point) and returning to school (1 point).

o Athletic

1. Abide by all University and NCAA team rules.

2. Maintain oneself in top physical condition, within accepted health standards.

3. Attend all organized practices, unless officially excused.

4. Take proper care of equipment and return it in good condition.

5. Treat officials and opponents with respect, and avoid undue confrontations (See "Sportsmanlike Conduct" below).

o General Conduct

1. Know and follow the Code of Student Conduct.

2. Obey residence halls policies and regulations.

3. Obey all federal, state and city laws.


Student-athletes are encouraged to obtain clarification of any Departmental, University or NCAA rule or regulation which he/she does not understand from a member of the coaching staff or the Assistant Athletic Director for Student Services.
Sportsmanlike Conduct

Sportsmanlike conduct means more than the absence of negative actions in public. The Assistant Athletic Director for Student Services, as well as each individual Head Coach, provides instruction on appropriate behavior to student-athletes by disseminating information on techniques for dealing in a positive manner with the following situations which may arise when on the playing field:

- Communicating with officials and opponents on routine matters during athletics events;
- Maintaining control during emotionally charged situations, including assisting a teammate or colleague who appears to be losing control; and
- Reacting in a positive manner to an aggressive action by an individual or a group.

Coaches are to define actions which constitute inappropriate conduct, and suggest ways to avoid such behavior. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Breaking a federal, state or local law;
- Physically abusing officials, coaches, opponents or spectators;
- Throwing of objects;
- Unauthorized seizing of equipment from officials or the news media;
- Inciting players or spectators to negative actions or to any behavior which insults or defiles an opponent's traditions;
- Using obscene or otherwise inappropriate language or gestures;
- Making public statements which are negative, controversial or outside the Department's media policy; or
- Participating in any action which violates the generally recognized ethical standards of intercollegiate athletics, the University or the community.

When the SEC Commissioner becomes aware of a possible violation of sportsmanlike conduct rules (e.g., a flagrant, disqualifying foul on the field of play or at the game site, or any unsportsmanlike act), an investigation is initiated. This investigation may include a study of the game films, reports of game officials or any other available and relevant information. The Commissioner may appoint a board to aid in evaluating the facts. If the Commissioner determines that a penalty is required, the student-athlete may be ruled ineligible permanently or for a fixed period, or may be warned (with or without publicity) that if there is a repetition of such conduct the student-athlete could be ruled ineligible permanently and the penalty imposed publicly.
Gambling and Bribery

The NCAA has established specific guidelines concerning involvement in gambling and bribery at the intercollegiate sports level. In order to educate the student-athlete regarding illegal organized gambling, the University and the Department have developed and implemented a comprehensive educational program which instructs the student-athlete on the nature and prevalence of intercollegiate gambling and bribery, as well as the risks involved for the individual and for the entire University.

In addition to awareness of the gambling and bribery threat to the integrity of intercollegiate sports, student-athletes are responsible for the following:

1. Reporting any offers of gifts, money or favors in exchange for supplying team information or for attempting to alter the outcome of any contest;
2. Maintaining a clear understanding of what constitutes gambling and bribery activities and reporting any suspected infractions;
3. Contacting the coach or a Sports Information Office staff member when questions concerning the release of team information occur; and
4. Increasing one's awareness that participation in gambling or bribery activities can result in disciplinary actions by the University and the NCAA (see "Enforcement" below), as well as local, state and/or federal prosecution of the involved individual(s).

Agents

It is essential that student-athletes know the NCAA rules related to professional sports. An infraction of the rules concerning agents could have severe negative consequences for the University and the student-athlete (see "Maintaining Amateur Status" in Policy 502C, Student-Athletes: Eligibility). NCAA rules forbid a student-athlete from:

- Agreeing, either orally or in writing, to be represented by an agent or organization in the marketing of his/her athletic ability or reputation until after completion of the last intercollegiate contest, including postseason games;
- Negotiating or signing a playing contract in any sport in which the student-athlete intends to compete;
- Asking to be placed on a professional league's draft list;
- Accepting expenses or gifts of any kind (including meals and transportation) from an agent;
o Receiving preferential benefits or treatment (e.g., loans with a deferred pay-back plan) because of reputation, skill or pay-back potential as a professional athlete; and

o Retaining professional services for personal reasons at less than the normal charge from a representative of his/her school's athletic interests. The Department's Pro-Agent Advisory Panel, which consists of the Athletic Director and two (2) other members, as allowed by NCAA. In addition, this panel advises student-athletes on matters related to liability insurance.

For assistance with the selection of professional agents, after eligibility has been exhausted, student-athletes should contact the Department's Pro-Agent Advisory Panel, which consists of the Associate Athletic Director and two (2) other members, as allowed by NCAA. In addition, this panel advises student-athletes on matters related to liability insurance.

**Enforcement**

Any student-athlete conduct violation should be reported immediately to the Director of Athletics, who is responsible for enforcing sanctions for conduct violations. The Director for Student Services assists as requested.

o Legal Violations

When a student-athlete violates a local, state or federal law and the misconduct involves a violent action, drugs and/or a felony charge, the student-athlete may be suspended from participation in intercollegiate athletics until the charges have been addressed by the legal system.

If such action is taken, the student-athlete is given written notification of the suspension, signed by the respective Head Coach and the Director of Athletics. The student-athlete may thereafter request, in writing, a meeting with the Director of Athletics. This request must be submitted within 72 hours of the notice of suspension. Based on all available information, the Director of Athletics may lift or modify the suspension, or leave it in place until the case has been decided by the legal system. A determination regarding further action by the Department and the University is made on a case-by-case basis once the charge has been resolved by the court.

While on suspension, the student-athlete may not practice or compete; however, his/her financial aid will remain in place. Further, the student-athlete's name will remain on the squad list and he/she may utilize student-athlete support services, such as the weight and training rooms, and academic support services.
By suspending the student-athlete the Department and the University are in no way pre-judging the situation; rather, such action is taken in order to protect the intercollegiate athletics program, and specifically, the student-athlete's team from negative media attention. Moreover, it is also assumed the accused student-athlete will have neither the time nor the mental concentration required for effective sports participation until the matter has been resolved.

University, Conference and NCAA Violations

Conduct violations of the University's Code of Student Conduct are reported to the Dean of Students, while violations of Conference or NCAA conduct rules are reported to the student-athlete's Head Coach, the SEC Commissioner and the NCAA, as appropriate.

If a student-athlete is found to be in violation of University or NCAA policy, the penalty imposed depends upon the severity of the offense and may include the following:

1. Probation;
2. Dismissal from the squad;
3. Cancellation or gradation of the grant-in-aid; and/or
4. Dismissal from the University.

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