

## The New York Times

# *N.C.A.A. Alters Rules for Agents and Draft in Wake of Basketball Corruption Scandal*

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Aug. 8, 2018

College basketball players who declare for the N.B.A. draft will be allowed to hire agents after two N.C.A.A. boards adopted a series of reforms to the sport's rules on Wednesday.

The changes, which also could apply to certain high school players if the N.B.A. changes its draft rules, were made as the N.C.A.A. continues to grapple with the fallout of the federal indictments last year that suggested extensive corruption in recruiting at the nexus of apparel companies and agents. But the governing body stopped short of making the more fundamental changes to the amateur model that some have long sought.

In a stark departure from the N.C.A.A.'s longtime ban on agents' involvement, the reforms would permit college players who declare for the draft to employ agents, and they would extend the same exception to certain high school seniors whom U.S.A. Basketball deems elite — but only if the N.B.A. changes draft rules that currently bar players from going directly from high school to the pros.

Also notable: Players who declare for the N.B.A. draft but are not selected will be allowed to return to their college teams. Under previous rules, players with college eligibility remaining who wanted the option of returning to college could not hire an agent and had to withdraw from the N.B.A. draft well before it took place.

The N.C.A.A. board of governors and the Division I board of directors also approved alterations to the summer basketball calendar meant to increase the transparency, and perhaps reduce the influence, of summer showcases typically sponsored by the same apparel companies — Nike, Adidas and Under Armour — that sponsor most top college basketball teams. New disclosure requirements for those companies as well as for coaches are intended to reveal just who is paying for what, and how much.

And the boards proposed changes to the N.C.A.A.'s governance and penalty structure, some of which need to be ratified at its annual convention in January: increasing penalties; making university presidents and chancellors accountable for violations; adding the first

independent members to the N.C.A.A. board of governors; and permitting N.C.A.A. inquiries to use information found by other investigative bodies. This last change could allow the N.C.A.A. to rely on the work currently being done by federal prosecutors, who have tools like subpoenas and the threat of jail time at their disposal during investigations.

“These changes will promote integrity in the game, strengthen accountability and prioritize the interests of student-athletes over every other factor,” Mark Emmert, the president of the N.C.A.A., said Wednesday in a joint statement with the chairs of the board of governors and the Division I board of directors.

The new rules followed recommendations made in April by a panel that Emmert convened to investigate the corruption crisis and that was led by the former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice.

That group’s most eye-catching suggestion was the elimination of the so-called “one-and-done” rule, the requirement that N.B.A. draftees be 19 years old or a year removed from high school. That rule, created for the 2006 draft, birthed a system in which the most talented college players competed in college during their freshman seasons and then left to play professionally. Change on that front will have to wait for action from the N.B.A. and its players’ union; it is not expected before at least 2020.

In a statement, the N.B.A. said, “We will review the N.C.A.A.’s planned reforms and continue to assess, along with our Players’ Association, the potential for any related N.B.A. rules changes.”

Last September, prosecutors in the United States Southern District of New York charged nearly a dozen individuals, including assistant coaches at major programs, a former Adidas executive, middlemen and others. In some cases, assistant coaches were said to have steered players toward a money manager who had bribed the coaches; in others, Adidas employees were accused of funneling money to prospects’ families in exchange for pledges to commit to teams sponsored by the company and to sign endorsement deals with Adidas once the players turned pro.

Several complaints have implicated prominent basketball teams in Adidas’s stable: Kansas, Louisville (whose former head coach, the Hall of Famer Rick Pitino, lost his job amid the charges) and Miami. Documents and bank records from the investigation, obtained in February by Yahoo Sports, implicated at least 20 top men’s basketball programs.

The federal investigation has brought attention to open secrets in men’s college basketball, including the involvement of agents and the power the gigantic apparel companies exert over the system by showering many millions of dollars every year on both college teams

and precollege grass-roots leagues.

The accusations also raised anew the question of whether to allow some athletes to collect compensation beyond a scholarship and an educational stipend.

While Rice's group, and Rice personally, suggested such fundamental reform made sense, it declined to make any suggestions in this area, citing pending antitrust cases targeting the N.C.A.A.'s restrictions on compensation.

A version of this article appears in print on Aug. 9, 2018, Section B, Page 12 of the New York edition with the headline: N.C.A.A. Alters Rules in Wake of a Scandal