

3359-48-01 Athletic policy.

(A) Statement on athletics

(1) Purpose

The university of Akron has established an NCAA division I (FBS) athletics program to provide high-quality opportunities for student-athletes via athletic scholarships, practices, and competition. Competitive athletic programs contribute significantly to the learning and development of students, and the athletic programs are designed to work in harmony with the essential educational objectives of the institution. Intercollegiate competition in NCAA athletics helps to foster an enthusiastic sense of shared allegiance and collegiality among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the greater Akron community.

The department of athletics seeks excellence in all areas and strives for balance within its athletics programs. The university's intercollegiate athletics programs are intended to encourage in their participants a desire for excellence, respect for teammates and opponents, fair play, teamwork, leadership, perseverance, integrity, and physical fitness. Athletics provides opportunities for student-athletes to understand the rewards that come from dedication to a larger purpose and to develop their personal, physical, and intellectual skills. The achievements in the competitive arena, in the community, and in the classroom will continue as university of Akron student-athletes, coaches and staff share in the commitment to excellence. Athletics shares with the university a commitment to cultural diversity and equal opportunity. Further, athletics is committed to sound fiscal decision-making and operating with integrity.

(2) Governance

The university of Akron shall maintain active membership in the NCAA division I (FBS) and the mid-American conference (MAC). In accordance with this membership, the institution and its department of athletics shall adhere to all NCAA and MAC rules. These rules govern areas of eligibility, recruiting, financial aid, practice and competition, among others.

Ultimately, the university president is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the athletics program. This responsibility has been delegated by the president to the director of athletics for daily management and implementation.

The members of the department of athletics (students and employees) are subject to all university rules.

(3) Staffing.

(a) Coaches.

The university will maintain a coaching staff that represents the best in athletics instruction and who possess the ability to motivate and inspire student-athletes.

Coaches are primarily teachers and share with the members of the university community the responsibility to educate, train, and assist in the formation of the students entrusted to them. Coaches are expected to abide by the highest standards of personal conduct and are expected to be role models for their student-athletes.

(b) Administrative staff.

The university will provide administrative staffing to support the department of athletics, ranging from leadership to supportive roles. The administrative staff will be charged with ensuring fiscal responsibility, rules compliance, maintaining a focus on student-athlete experience, engaging the university and greater Akron communities, and aligning the department's activities with the goals of the university as a whole.

(c) Faculty athletics representative.

The university president shall designate a faculty athletics representative (FAR) to serve the department of athletics in an advisory capacity, provide support to student-athletes and coaches, provide faculty perspective in athletics matters, and to act as a liaison among student-athletes, coaches, staff, and members of the faculty. This appointee shall hold a faculty rank at the university of Akron and shall not hold an administrative or coaching position in the department of athletics.

(4) Student athlete conduct.

Student-athletes shall represent the university of Akron in a positive manner. They shall be students first, maintaining a focus on academic integrity, making progress toward their degree, and ultimately graduating. Further, student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, sportsmanship, honesty, pride, and humility.

The university of Akron has a highly visible and successful athletics program. The student-athletes' public exposure in the competitive arena and the media place them among the most visible groups in the university community, the city of Akron, Summit county, and the state of Ohio. What they do and the way they do it is often highlighted, placing them in a public position, which requires exemplary behavior.

University of Akron student-athletes are totally responsible for their own behavior. They are expected to obey all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. If student-athletes do not meet these requirements, they are subject to the university code of student conduct and any relevant athletics policies and procedures. The department of athletics shall maintain a student-athlete handbook detailing specific expectations, and coaches may supplement departmental requirements with individual team rules.

(B) Health and wellbeing.

(1) Insurance.

The risk of injury or illness is always present, regardless of athletics participation. Although the department of athletics works diligently to minimize the risk of athletics injury, there is always the possibility of injury through participation in a sports activity. Therefore, the university of Akron shall maintain a supplemental insurance policy to complement existing family plans and other available forms of insurance for use when a student-athlete suffers an injury due to participation in their sport.

(2) Drug education and testing.

Substance abuse is a serious health and safety concern in our society, with negative and sometimes deadly effects. The use of illegal substances is a crime and the use of performance enhancing drugs is detrimental to student health and is a form of cheating.

The department of athletics at the university of Akron firmly believes that substance abuse can have a negative effect on the performance of the student-athlete, both in the classroom and on the playing field. Increased drug and alcohol education and counseling, although critical, are not sufficient by themselves to prevent substance abuse. Drug testing is necessary both to deter drug use and to detect such use as it occurs. Therefore, the department of athletics maintains a rigorous drug testing program, which strictly enforces the prohibition against the use of illegal and performance enhancing drugs.

Students who participate in intercollegiate athletics at the university of Akron are required to participate in the university's drug and alcohol education program and comply with its drug testing policy. Students-athletes also are subject to NCAA and conference regulations concerning prohibited drug and alcohol use and their respective drug-testing requirements.

(C) Admissions.

The university of Akron shall admit student-athletes in accordance with the admissions criteria for all students.

(D) Financial aid.

The university of Akron is committed to a scholarship-based athletics model, where student-athletes receive scholarship support for their athletic participation. To that end, the university shall support athletic scholarships at a "fully-funded" model for athletics, when financially possible. The department of athletics will have the autonomy to determine scholarship allocations among sports, within the budgets provided and in accordance with applicable regulations.

(E) Academic support.

The university of Akron and its department of athletics are committed to the academic success of student-athletes. To support this commitment, an athletics academic support staff will be maintained to aid student-athletes in their academic endeavors. This academic support program will prioritize student-athlete academic success, while monitoring academic progress and academic eligibility. However, the ultimate responsibility for athletic eligibility and academic performance rests with the student-athlete.

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