



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

TO: College Football All-Star Game Administrators

FROM: NFL Player Personnel

DATE: November 18, 2022

SUBJECT: 2023 NFL Draft Eligibility/Procedures for College All-Star Games

The following procedures are in place for NFL personnel and their interactions with college all-star game. Additionally, please review the guidelines and clarifications regarding the draft eligibility of prospective NFL players.

- A. **Recruiting for College All-Star Events.** NFL club employees are prohibited from becoming involved, directly, or indirectly, in the recruitment of players for any college all-star event. Such personnel are prohibited from directly participating in the process of selecting and inviting players to any all-star event, though it is permissible to offer opinions about players to the sponsors of such all-star event. NFL club personnel are not permitted to recommend to players or their representatives that they participate in a certain all-star event or withdraw from an all-star event to which they have made a commitment or engage in any other activity that can reasonably be construed as recruiting a player to participate in an event. In addition, such personnel must not discourage players from participating in such events.
- B. **Permissible Activity at College All-Star Events.** NFL club personnel may attend all-star games and all-star game practice sessions provided all participants are draft-eligible players. However, NFL club personnel are prohibited from attending such event if the participants include free agent players, players who are under contract to another professional football league (including draft-eligible players), or underclassmen who have or have not become draft-eligible by petitioning for special eligibility. In addition, NFL club personnel are not permitted to attend combine events or similar timing and testing sessions that are not affiliated with the NFL.

Furthermore, only members of a college all-star game roster may be timed, tested, and interviewed in the metropolitan area of the city in which the all-star game is being held. Draft-eligible players who are not part of the college all-star game are not eligible for such activities.

- C. **Player Eligibility.** As you know, the NCAA provided all 2020 fall sport student-athletes with an additional year of eligibility. As a result of this adjustment, many college football players will be participating in their fourth season of full-time competition this upcoming fall, while also having a fifth season of eligibility to be used during the 2022 fall season.

Since the NCAA has not provided guidance to their colleges on how to label a player's experience, you may notice that some schools have labelled players entering their fourth season of full-time competition as "juniors," while other schools have chosen to label them as "seniors." Given that the experience labels across various colleges may differ (e.g., senior versus junior), college all-star game personnel should be particularly diligent in reviewing eligibility of potential players and should contact the NFL Player Personnel department if there is any uncertainty regarding a specific player's eligibility.

As mentioned in Section B above, college all-star game personnel are reminded that for NFL personnel to be permitted to attend their event, only players that have exhausted their NCAA eligibility or are automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft can be invited to participate. It is *highly* recommended that prior to inviting a player, the compliance office for their respective school be contacted to confirm that they have exhausted their eligibility. We also ask that you share the names of invited players to our office via email (nflplayerpersonnel@nfl.com) for review.

1. **General Rules of Eligibility.** To further assist with the invitation process, please review the following guidelines and clarifications, which were issued last year and remain in place for the 2023 NFL Draft. The NFL's general rules for eligibility state that a college football student-athlete will become eligible for the upcoming NFL Draft if the player meets one of the following requirements:

- a. All college football eligibility of such player has expired through participation in college football (expiration does not include a loss of college football eligibility through withdrawal from school, dismissal, or signing of a professional contract in another football league); or
- b. Such player has graduated and received a diploma from a recognized four-year college or university prior to the beginning of the National Football League's next regular season; or
- c. Five League seasons have elapsed since such player first attended, practiced football at, or participated in football games for a recognized junior college, college, or university; or
- d. Such player did not play or otherwise participate in college football, and four League seasons have elapsed since the player first entered or first attended college; or
- e. Such player has been granted eligibility through special permission of the Commissioner.

Players who only qualify via Subparagraph (b) or Subparagraph (e) above, will be required to notify the Commissioner by a specific date of their intent to enter the 2023 NFL Draft.

Please note that only the East-West Shrine Bowl, HBCU Legacy Bowl, NFLPA Collegiate Bowl, and Senior Bowl, and are permitted to invite graduated underclassmen (Subparagraph (b)) to participate in their all-star games.

2. **Automatic Eligibility.** The following are examples of players who are automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft.
 - a. A player who entered college in 2019, and who did not redshirt in 2019, 2021, or 2022, and was still a member of his school's team in 2020 (including any player who opted out), is automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft.
 - b. A player who entered college in 2018, and who received a redshirt year in 2018, 2019, 2021, or 2022, and was still a member of his school's team in 2020 (including any player who opted out), is automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft.
 - c. A player who entered college in 2018, and who did not redshirt in 2018, 2019, 2021, or 2022, and is a member of his school's team this fall, is automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft regardless of whether the player removed his name from eligibility in the 2022 NFL Draft ("Draft Opt-Out") or was eligible for the 2022 NFL Draft ("Repeat Eligibility").
3. **Clarifications.** The following clarifications are in effect for the 2023 NFL Draft:
 - a. Any college football player who participates in his fourth season of full-time eligibility, as distinguished from those who "red-shirt", during the 2022 college football season will be deemed to be automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft; and
 - b. The 2020 college football season will be considered one season of participation for all college football student-athletes. This includes, but is not limited to: (i) players who "opted out" of the 2020 college season; (ii) players who received a red-shirt year in 2020; (iii) players who were academically ineligible for 2020; (iv) players who attended schools that cancelled their 2020 football seasons; (v) players who attended schools that played their 2020 seasons in the spring of 2021.

It is not necessary for such players to notify the League office to become eligible for the Principal Draft under this provision.

4. **Opting Out of the 2023 NFL Draft.** The deadline for a player to submit a notice to not be considered for the 2023 NFL Draft (an "Opt Out" notice) to the NFL Player Personnel department is **Friday, February 3, 2023**. If a player provides notice by this date, NFL clubs are prohibited from selecting the player in the 2023 NFL Draft. This provision does not preclude a player from informing clubs at a later date that he is returning to school in the fall of 2023. However, if a player informs clubs of his decision after the **February 3** deadline, he may still be selected in the Draft.

If the player subsequently returns the school, the NFL club will retain the player's exclusive negotiating rights as if selected in the 2024 Draft, but with the rookie pool amount allocated in the 2023 Draft.

5. **Frequently Asked Questions.** Below are Frequently Asked Questions regarding 2023 NFL Draft and College All-Star Game eligibility.

Q1. If a player participates in our game, can he still go back to school and utilize his COVID year?

A1. While that decision is in the hands of the NCAA, the NCAA has informed our office that a player who participates in a college all-star game greatly jeopardizes his ability utilize the additional COVID year. Participating in your game or signing with an agent will most likely sacrifice the players ability to return to school.

Q2. Is a player who is listed as a 4th year player, and has not redshirted (excluding the COVID year), immediately eligible to be invited to a college all-star game?

A2. Yes. He may be invited and can participate in the college all-star game because he is automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft.

Q3. If a player is considered automatically eligible for the Draft, does the player's graduation semester have any impact on whether the player can be invited to a college all-star game?

A3. No. If the player is automatically eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft and is not opting out of the Draft, he can be invited, even if he has yet to officially graduate.

As an example, if a player initially enrolled in 2019 and was a full participant in all four seasons (i.e., did not receive a redshirt) then such player is deemed to be automatically eligibility for the Draft. Assuming such player does not opt out of the Draft, then the player may be invited to participate regardless of his graduation status.

Q4. Does a 4th year player, who has redshirted (i.e., must apply for special eligibility), have to be on track to graduate in December to qualify as a "Graduate Underclassmen," so he can be invited to participate in one of the three permissible college all-star games?

A4. Yes. As a reminder, the only college all-star games permitted to invite players categorized as Graduated Underclassmen to participate are the East-West Shrine Bowl, the Senior Bowl, the NFLPA Collegiate Bowl, and the HBCU Legacy Bowl.

Please contact the Player Personnel department if you have any questions.