



MEMORANDUM

December 1, 2025

TO: NCAA Division I Football Student-Athletes with Remaining Eligibility.

FROM: Chris Howard
NCAA Director of Enforcement.

SUBJECT: Information Regarding the 2026 National Football League (NFL) Draft, Tryouts and Agents.

We understand that you may have remaining intercollegiate eligibility but may also have a desire to “test the waters” as it relates to your pursuit of a potential professional football career. You may attempt to gauge your readiness for competition at the next level through a variety of methods, including tryouts with professional teams, and you may undoubtedly rely on a number of individuals to assist in the decision-making process.

At the end of this process, you may in fact reach the conclusion that it is not in your best interest to pursue a professional career at this time, but rather to continue athletics participation at the intercollegiate level while pursuing your academic degree.

Involvement in activities during this process can affect your intercollegiate eligibility. The following information is designed to help you protect your eligibility if you decide to “test the waters.”

Key Dates.

- NFL’s College Advisory Committee evaluation request deadline (to ensure an evaluation is completed): December 12, 2025.
- College Advisory Committee evaluation request final deadline (with no guarantee that an evaluation will be completed): January 2, 2026.
- Early-entry deadline for underclassmen consideration for all-star game participation (postseason must be completed): January 5, 2026.
- Early-entry deadline for underclassmen not participating in the CFP Championship game: January 14, 2026.
- Early-entry deadline for underclassmen participating in the CFP Championship game January 23, 2026

N a t i o n a l C o l l e g i a t e A t h l e t i c A s s o c i a t i o n

Supporting student-athlete success on the field, in the classroom and for life

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- Early-entry withdrawal deadline for underclassmen: 72 hours after the early-entry deadline (midnight January 26, 2026).
- Last day to opt-out of the NFL Draft (student-athletes four years or more removed from high school with remaining eligibility): February 19, 2026.
- 2025 NFL Draft: April 23-25, 2026, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Frequently Asked Questions.

Entering the NFL Draft.

1. Who is eligible for the 2026 NFL Draft?

Any college football player who participated in, or who would have participated in, his fourth season of full-time eligibility during the 2025 college football season will be deemed to be automatically eligible for the 2026 NFL Draft. In most cases, these players would have been listed as “seniors” on their school’s official roster for the 2025 college football season.

For purposes of the 2026 Draft, a “senior” will be regarded as a player who (a) first enrolled in 2021 or earlier, or (b) enrolled in 2020 and received a redshirt in 2020. This includes players who elected not to participate during the 2020 college season and players who attended schools that cancelled their 2020 seasons. Because these players are deemed to be automatically eligible for the 2026 NFL Draft, it is not necessary for such players to notify the NFL League office to confirm their eligibility.

Any college football “senior,” as described above, who intends to return to school to play college football during the 2026 fall season and who does not wish to be considered for selection in the 2026 NFL Draft must submit written notification to the NFL by the close of business on Thursday, February 19, 2026. The names of these players will be included in a list that will be made available to all NFL clubs. These players will not be eligible to be selected in the 2026 NFL Draft or to be signed as undrafted free agents for the 2026 season. Such players will be eligible to be scouted as seniors during the 2026 fall season and will be eligible for selection in a future NFL Draft.

2. Am I allowed to enter the NFL Draft early?

YES! If you are three years removed from your high school graduation date, you may enter the NFL Draft one time during your collegiate career without jeopardizing your eligibility; provided you are not drafted by any team and you declare your intention to resume intercollegiate participation within 72 hours following the NFL’s draft declaration date. This declaration of intent must be in writing to your director of athletics. Student-

athletes who enter the NFL Draft early are required to sign and have notarized a petition for special eligibility with the NFL, which renounces all remaining collegiate eligibility unless revoked within 72 hours of the draft declaration date.

Note: NFL rules require you to be three years from high school graduation to enter the NFL Draft early

3. May I request information from the NFL about my potential draft status without jeopardizing my eligibility?

YES! If you are seriously considering petitioning for special eligibility to enter the NFL Draft, you may request a confidential draft evaluation from the NFL without jeopardizing your eligibility. The NFL has a College Advisory Committee comprised of high-level personnel evaluators from the NFL's clubs and the League's two sanctioned scouting organizations. Through this program, student-athletes who are at least three years out of high school may receive a limited assessment of their potential to be drafted by objective, experienced professionals who have no financial interest at stake. Student-athletes who are "just curious" of their potential draft status or who are interested in obtaining an evaluation for insurance reasons are not eligible for this service. Student-athletes will be advised by the College Advisory Committee of one of the following: (a) that you have the potential to be drafted as high as the first round, (b) that you have the potential to be drafted as high as the second round and (c) that you should remain a student-athlete maturing as a potential professional prospect while continuing your education. The College Advisory Committee's evaluation is a nonbinding best estimate and does not guarantee that an athlete will be drafted in a specific round or at all. This evaluation will not include strengths, weaknesses or how an athlete may improve. Student-athletes may request an evaluation upon the conclusion of their regular collegiate football season. To ensure that an evaluation is completed, requests should be received by the College Advisory Committee no later than Friday, December 12, 2025. Though requests will be accepted through Friday, January 2, 2026, there is no guarantee that an evaluation can be completed for requests received after December 12, 2025. A representative of the commissioner's office will contact the student-athlete and his head coach with the projected draft round. Results are not given to agents, family members, media or NFL clubs.

NFL Combine and Tryouts.

1. Am I allowed to participate in the NFL Combine in February/March and maintain my eligibility?

NO! The NFL Combine occurs from February 23 through March 2, 2026 which is after the deadline for withdrawing from the NFL Draft. Only student-athletes who have committed to entering the NFL Draft can participate in the NFL Combine.

2. *Can I participate in on-campus “pro days” for NFL teams if school is still in session?*

YES! Participation in on-campus “pro days” for NFL teams is considered participation in a tryout for an NFL team. If you are enrolled as a full-time student at the institution, you may participate in these workouts provided that you do not miss any class time.

3. *Is it permissible for the pro day to be televised by the NFL Network or otherwise covered by media outlets?*

YES! It is permissible for pro days to be televised provided the student-athletes with remaining eligibility who are participating are not used to promote network coverage or in any other manner which is inconsistent with the provisions of the promotional activities legislation or the NCAA interim name, image and likeness (NIL) policy.

4. *Can I participate in private workouts/tryouts with professional teams if school is still in session?*

YES! You may tryout with a professional football team (or participate in a combine including that team) during the academic year if you are enrolled full-time, as long as you do not miss class, the tryout does not exceed 48 hours and you do not receive more than actual and necessary expenses from the team. (Note: Similar restrictions apply during the summer.)

5. *Can professional football teams pay for my private workouts/tryouts?*

YES! You may receive actual and necessary expenses from the NFL team in conjunction with one 48-hour tryout per team (or combine including that team). The 48-hour tryout period begins when you arrive at the tryout location. At the completion of the 48-hour period, you must depart the location of the tryout immediately to receive return transportation expenses.

6. *Can I pay for my own private workouts/tryouts with professional football teams?*

YES! A tryout may extend beyond 48 hours if you self-finance all additional expenses, including return transportation. A self-financed tryout may be for any length of time, provided you do not miss class and the workouts are entirely self-financed.

7. *Can any other individual (e.g., agent, runner or “advisor”) pay for my private workouts/tryouts with professional teams?*

NO! It is not permissible for any other individual (e.g., agent, runner or advisor) to pay for your expenses in conjunction with any tryout or workout with a professional team. Unless an NFL team pays for your expenses in conjunction with a private workout or tryout, you and your family are responsible for paying all expenses associated with any tryouts as they are incurred.

***Agents.**

1. *What is an “agent” according to NCAA rules?*

An individual would be considered an “agent” if the individual markets your football skills to any NFL team or other professional teams (e.g., contacts NFL teams to discuss your skills, sets up tryouts with NFL teams) or seeks to obtain any financial gain or benefit from your potential earnings as a professional athlete.

2. *Am I allowed to have contact with an agent?*

YES! The NCAA does not prohibit contact between a student-athlete and an agent as long as the student-athlete and his family and friends do not have an agreement for representation with the agent to market his football skills to an NFL team or other professional teams and do not receive any benefits from that agent or any of the agent's representatives.

3. *What is the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) rule regarding agent contact?*

The NFLPA allows certified agent to have contact with student-athletes. However, the no contact rule still applies to individuals who are not themselves certified by the NFLPA for recruiting prospective players, including individuals who work with the certified agent's business, “runners”/recruiters, financial advisors and marketing representatives.

4. *Am I allowed to have an agreement with an agent for the purpose of marketing my football skills to an NFL team or other professional team?*

NO! You are not permitted to have a written or oral agreement with an agent or anyone who is employed by or acting on behalf of an agent or sports agency (i.e., “runner”) for the purpose of marketing your football skills to an NFL team or other professional team.

5. *What is an “oral agreement” with an agent?*

An oral agreement occurs if you verbally agree to have an agent market your football skills on your behalf OR if you have knowledge that an agent is performing such services.

6. *Is an agent allowed to contact teams on my behalf to arrange private workouts or tryouts?*

NO! You cannot have an agent arrange a private workout/tryout with an NFL team.

7. *Can my family members or other individuals who are associated with me as a result of playing football (e.g., high school coach, summer football coach, etc.) have an agreement with an agent to perform services on my behalf?*

NO! Family members and other individuals are not permitted to enter into any agreements with an agent on your behalf.

8. *Am I allowed to have an agreement with an agent if it is for future representation?*

NO! You are not permitted to agree to a future representation agreement with an agent.

9. *Is an agent allowed to provide me any benefits?*

NO! You, your family or your friends are not permitted to receive any benefits from an agent. Examples of material benefits include money, transportation, dinner, clothes, cell phones, jewelry, etc. Please note that benefits may also include, but are not limited to, activities such as tryout arrangements with a professional team and coordinating tryout schedules.

10. *Am I permitted to have an advisor during this process?*

YES! Provided the advisor does not market you to NFL teams, you are permitted to have an advisor during this process. However, it is not permissible for the advisor to contact teams on your behalf (e.g., to arrange private workouts or tryout). You must compensate the advisor in an amount equal to the value of the services he or she provides; furthermore, you may not receive such services at a free or reduced rate without jeopardizing your eligibility, regardless of whether the advisor does not typically charge clients for such services.

11. May a sports agent or booster play a role in securing a loan to pay for disability insurance?

NO! Do not allow a third party (including a sports agent or a booster) to be involved in any arrangement for securing a loan to pay for disability insurance. However, an institution's president or chancellor (or his or her designated representative from outside the department of athletics) may designate an institutional staff member (or staff members) (e.g., professional sports counseling panel) to assist you with arrangements for securing the loan and insurance.

12. Can an institution cancel my athletics scholarship if I have an agreement with an agent?

YES! An institution is permitted to cancel, reduce or not renew your athletics scholarship if you have an agreement with an agent. The institution is required to provide you the opportunity for a hearing before canceling, reducing or not renewing your athletics scholarship.

Pursuant to NCAA Division I Bylaw 22.3.1, an individual may use professional services, including agent representation, for the purpose of name, image and likeness activities. For assistance with additional questions, student-athletes should consult their institution's athletics compliance department.

Five Points to Remember:

You will lose your eligibility IF:

1. You agree orally or in writing to be represented by an agent or any individual acting on behalf of the agent (e.g., runner).
2. You accept any benefits from an agent, a prospective agent or any individual acting on behalf of the agent (e.g., runner).
3. You participate in a tryout with a professional team that lasts longer than 48 hours, which you have not personally financed.
4. You tryout with a professional team during the academic year and miss class.
5. You enter the NFL Draft AND do not take the appropriate steps to withdraw and declare your intention to resume intercollegiate participation.

Helpful Tips:

- ☐ You should keep your head coach and athletics compliance office informed of all activities during this process.

- ☐ Be careful who you associate with during this process. Do it all yourself or work through your head coach. You may receive the assistance of your family members, provided they are not working with any individual who is marketing your athletic ability (e.g., contacting NFL teams, setting up tryouts with NFL teams).
- ☐ If you do not have knowledge of who arranged a tryout, you have a responsibility to find out who arranged it before you participate in the tryout.
- ☐ The College Advisory Committee has had success serving in a limited advisory capacity for underclassmen seriously considering early entry into the NFL Draft. Student-athletes who are planning to petition for special eligibility should first request an evaluation by the College Advisory Committee for an objective, realistic evaluation of draft potential. Between 2016 and 2020, 1,077 student-athletes were evaluated by the College Advisory Committee and 72% of underclassmen who were evaluated as having draft potential lower than the third round or not likely to be drafted at all, chose to remain in school. The College Advisory Committee can be reached at the following address:

College Advisory Committee

Attention: Player Personnel Department, National Football League
345 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10154

Phone: 212-450-2215

- ☐ You should remain in school and complete your academic courses while you “test the waters.”
 - ☐ If you have questions regarding this information, please contact the NCAA enforcement staff at 317-917-6599 or choward@ncaa.org.
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SIGNATURE

Please sign your name and date below, which confirms that you have reviewed and understand this form and the information contained therein. I understand that if I am found to be in violation of the provisions of any of the information mentioned above, I may be declared ineligible for further intercollegiate competition.

Student-Athlete Signature

Date

Printed Name

Institution

Head Coach

Date

Compliance Officer

Date