



PRESS RELEASE
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Top Ten Questions on Unionization Ruling

On Wednesday, March 26th the United Steelworks (USW) and the National College Players Association (NCPA) earned historic victory when a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) official decided that Northwestern University football players on scholarship are employees and can vote to join a union. In time, the decision could be the most important development in college sports since the creation of the NCAA.

Not surprisingly, the decision has generated more questions than answers. What follows is our attempt to provide some answers to the top 10 questions we are hearing most frequently from student athletes and experts in college sports.

- 1. Now what?** Wednesday, March 26th was the initial ruling. Northwestern University has indicated it will appeal the ruling. It is going to take a long time - months, maybe years - for these things to work their way through the appeals process at the NLRB and then in the courts.
- 2. What does this mean for student athletes right now?** Probably not a lot in the near future. Think of this as your academic advisor telling you on your very first day of school about a course that you might or might not have to take before graduation.
- 3. Does this mean student athletes are going to get paid?** For the vast majority of collegiate athletes, the answer is no. This case involves one football team at one school. And the decision only impacts schools that are private institutions.
- 4. Does this mean the NCAA will start to treat student athletes differently?** No one knows yet. For now, don't expect anything different.
- 5. Does this mean I owe taxes on my scholarship, or any money I get from my school?** If you become an employee of your school, you will owe taxes on what you are paid. And, some tax experts believe your scholarship is a form of compensation. How much tax you owe will depend on the value of the scholarship but it could range from \$3,000 to \$15,000.
- 6. Will I owe union dues?** Only if you belong to a union.
- 7. Will it be easier to be an athlete and a student?** Again, no one knows for sure. It's possible some schools will have different and perhaps lower academic expectations or requirements for student athletes/employees than those for other students.
- 8. Could a school end a program or a sport?** For a school, any athlete that becomes an employee will cost that school more money than just the cost of the scholarship. The school will have to pay various federal and state employment taxes on their athletes, just like any other business. And there are Title IX issues as well. Since athletic budgets tend to be fixed amounts of money, it's not clear what will happen to programs that do not produce revenue.
- 9. What does this mean for Division III?** Not much. This effort was developed on behalf of a select number of Division I football players.
- 10. Is unionizing the only way to improve how collegiate athletes are treated?** No, it's not. Unionization is one way, but it could prove very costly in terms of taxes and lost opportunities. Real progress will only come when colleges and universities begin to take seriously the academic, athletic, and health and welfare needs of all student athletes, regardless of gender or sport played. Hopefully, this will be the wake-up call that the NCAA so desperately needs.

About the APCA – The APCA aims to be the primary independent service and information center for men and women who play sports at the collegiate level and, specifically, on athletic teams sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. We don't prioritize or differentiate services based on gender, NCAA division or sport. We will never charge current, former or prospective student athletes for any of our services – ever. As always, consider us a resource and available to help so don't hesitate to email us at info@apcanow.org.