

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS
DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK
(Revised August 11, 2008)

Introduction

WELCOME to MSUB and Yellowjacket Athletics! This Student-Athlete Handbook has been developed to help you learn about a wide variety of topics related to your role and responsibility as an NCAA Division II student-athlete. Please keep checking for updated revisions since we anticipate adding sections on a regular basis.

NCAA Division II: Life in the Balance

Higher education has lasting importance on an individual's future success. For this reason, the emphasis on the student-athlete experience in Division II is a comprehensive program of learning and development in a personal setting. The Division II approach provides growth opportunities through academic achievement, learning in a high-level athletics competition, and development of positive societal attitudes in service to the community. The balance and integration of these different areas of learning opportunity provide Division II student-athletes a path to graduation, while cultivating a variety of skills and knowledge for life ahead (NCAA Facts and Figures).

At MSUB, we sincerely appreciate the importance of **balance** in everyone's lives. We work hard to help our student-athletes achieve a balanced approach in planning their time devoted toward athletics excellence, academic excellence, community involvement, personal/social growth and development, and other areas of their lives. We realize the vehicle of intercollegiate sport provides us many opportunities to lead our student-athletes toward strong, positive growth in many important areas of life, including receiving a great education at a fine university in a beautiful part of the country. NCAA student-athletes are role models for young people in our society; consequently, student-athletes are held to a higher standard of behavior and expectations.

Class Attendance

MSUB student-athletes are expected and required to attend all university classes unless traveling for athletic competition, sick, or unexpectedly affected by some emergency circumstances. If you are sick or have an unexpected emergency, you should immediately communicate with your head coach to let him or her know about your situation. You should also attempt to make contact with your instructors by phone or e-mail to communicate your absence in advance.

Class Absences for Athletic Travel

At the beginning of each semester, your coach will give you a letter from the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics that you will be expected to take, along with a copy of your team's travel schedule, to each of your academic instructors well ahead of any athletic travel. Meet with each of your instructors and politely explain when you will be out of town for athletic team travel. Ask each instructor if he or she prefers to have you make up missing work either ahead of your class absence or after your class absence.

Remember that, although your class absence is excused due to athletic team travel provided you communicate with your instructors in advance, you are expected to make detailed arrangements for these class absences prior to your team travel, and you are expected to make up all of the assignments, tests, etc., that you miss. It is extremely important to communicate very well with each of your instructors about missing class. Continue your communication with your instructors throughout the semester.

If you have any specific issues with regard to missing certain classes or assignments, be sure to meet with your head coach immediately about this. He or she will help you resolve these issues, and Dr. Scott Harris, our NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative, will also be available to help if necessary.

Minimum Number of Credits

All student-athletes are encouraged to register for at least 15 credits per semester (12-18 credits are the same cost). The NCAA requires that you must, at all times, be registered for at least 12 credits. At no time are you permitted to drop below 12 credits; if you do, you render yourself immediately ineligible to compete for the remainder of the semester. You should visit with both your academic advisor and your head coach if you ever anticipate dropping a course, even if the pending drop will not put you below 12 credits.

The NCAA requires that each student-athlete completes a minimum of 24 credits per academic year with a minimum grade point average of 2.0. Specific coaches might have higher standards than the minimum..Communicate regularly with your coaches not only about the number of credits you are taking but also how you are doing in each of your academic courses, whether you anticipate needing any tutoring, and other academic information.

NCAA Banned Substances

The NCAA bans the use of certain substances, many of which are also illegal. You should have already received a copy of these banned substances, but, if for any reason you did not, please ask your head coach or one of the athletic trainers for a copy. You may also find the list of NCAA banned substances on our MSUB Athletics website under “Athletic Training.” You may be tested for any of these banned substances at any time either by the NCAA or MSUB. Significant sanctions, explained on both the NCAA and MSUB drug testing consent forms, exist for testing positive for the use of any of these banned substances.

Drug Testing

NCAA Division II conducts random drug testing at certain regional championship tournaments. You could be tested at one of these regional events. In addition, at least once every two years, each NCAA Division II institution is selected to have an unknown number of student-athletes randomly tested. This could occur any time on a year-round basis, and you could be randomly selected for this testing. Finally, MSUB Yellowjacket Athletics conducts its own drug testing program, both on a random basis and for reasonable suspicion. In addition to signing the NCAA’s drug testing consent form, you are also required to sign the MSUB drug testing consent form before you will be able to participate in practices or games.

It is extremely important, both for your own health and well being and also since the NCAA prohibits it, that you not consume any of the published NCAA banned substances. Be completely aware of everything you ingest; do not take pills or supplements unknown to you or given to you by someone else. Make your coaches and athletic trainer(s) aware of prescription medications you are required by your physician(s) to take, just in case any of those medications are banned.

MSUB Student Handbook

Each year, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Office publishes a “Student Handbook,” which defines a variety of important policies and rules for all MSUB students. This handbook is available for all students at no cost; you should be sure to pick up a copy from the university bookstore or another location and read it carefully. Among other things, it contains important sections on “Student Affairs Policies and Procedures,” “Rights and Responsibilities of Students in the Academic Community,” “Student Records,” “Student Complaint Procedures,” “Liquor Consumption of MSUB Campus,” “Code of Conduct,” and “University Withdrawal/Disenrollment Policy.”

Team Rules

Your head coach will give you a written list of team rules and expectations that you will be expected to follow to maintain membership on your team. If you do not understand

these rules or if you have questions about them, you should discuss your questions with your coaches. Similarly, if you have questions about possible sanctions for violating any of these rules, you should have that conversation with your coaches too. You will be expected to follow your team's rules and expectations on a consistent basis. Failure to do that could result in a variety of sanctions. It could even result, depending upon the severity of the violation(s), in the loss of team membership and/or athletic scholarship.

Good Sportsmanship

MSUB student-athletes are expected at all times to conduct themselves within both the letter and the spirit of the sport's rules and demonstrate ethical behavior and exemplary sportsmanship. You are, by virtue of your being an NCAA Division II student-athlete, a role model for young people in our community. All sports penalize acts of poor sportsmanship as defined in the rules of the game. You could also be sanctioned by your coach or the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics for demonstrating poor sportsmanship, including, but not limited to, using foul language.

Alcohol Use

The MSUB Student Handbook explains the university's policy for alcohol consumption on university property. In addition, each head coach has his or her own rules related to the consumption of alcohol, and you should make sure you clearly understand your team's specific rules and sanctions related to the consumption of alcohol. In every case, it is illegal in Montana, as well as every other state, for individuals under the age of 21 to possess or consume alcohol. Please make sure you have all of your questions answered concerning this important subject.

Legal Charges

If you are ever charged with a misdemeanor or felony while you are an MSUB student-athlete, you are required to inform your coaches immediately. A student-athlete who is formally charged with a misdemeanor or a felony may be suspended from active participation in all athletics activities until such time as his or her legal matter is resolved. This suspension is imposed without presumption of guilt; you will need to devote your time and attention to resolving your legal matter. If suspended, you may appeal your suspension at any time, requesting either partial or full reinstatement, to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics using the department's defined appeal procedure.

Hazing

NCAA legislation describes a shared responsibility between the NCAA and its member institutions to protect the health and safety of our student-athletes. Consequently, hazing is prohibited at MSUB. Hazing is defined by the NCAA as "any act committed against someone joining or becoming a member or maintaining membership in any

organization that is humiliating, intimidating, demeaning, or endangers the health and safety of the person.”

The NCAA also states that “hazing includes active or passive participation in such acts and occurs regardless of the willingness to participate in the activities. Hazing creates an environment/climate in which dignity and respect are absent.”

MSUB Yellowjacket Athletics prohibits all forms of hazing or initiation activities among its student-athletes. A student-athlete who participates in any way in such activities is subject to disciplinary action, such as verbal or written reprimands, community service, suspension, loss of scholarship, and/or termination from the team.

Outside Competition

Once you become an NCAA student-athlete, the NCAA regulates your athletic involvement as a matter of eligibility. The rules vary from sport to sport in whether you may compete in outside competition (i.e., in competition outside of your team’s competition) during the academic year and even outside the academic year. Be sure to check with your coaches before you compete in any competition outside your MSUB competition so you do not jeopardize your NCAA eligibility.

Boosters

The NCAA regulates involvement in our athletics program by individuals outside our Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, frequently referred to as “boosters.” While boosters are important in helping our athletics program in many ways, there are many things the NCAA prohibits them from doing. For example, boosters may not give you money, gifts, or other things of value. You should check with your coaches about your involvement, if any, with boosters.