

PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

SAVING COLLEGE SPORTS

Executive Orders

July 24, 2025

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered:

Section 1. Purpose and Policy. College sports are a uniquely American institution that provide life-changing educational and leadership-development opportunities to more than 500,000 student-athletes through almost \$4 billion in scholarships each year. College athletics also provide substantial support to local economies and form an indelible part of family activities, pastimes, and culture in many communities. While major college football games can draw tens of millions of television viewers and attendees, they feature only a very small sample of the many athletes who benefit from the transformational opportunities that college athletics provide. Sixty-five percent of the 2024 United States Olympic Team members were current or former National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) varsity athletes, and approximately seventy-five percent were collegiate athletes. The 2024 United States Olympic Team earned 126 total medals, leading the overall medal count for the eighth consecutive Summer Olympic Games.

Beyond driving our unrivaled success in international competition, college athletes are more likely to report better outcomes in important respects during college and after graduation. A substantial majority of female executives at the largest American companies participated in sports during adolescence, many at the high school or collegiate level, and examples of business leaders and former Presidents who played

college sports are legion. It is no exaggeration to say that America's system of collegiate athletics plays an integral role in forging the leaders that drive our Nation's success. Yet the future of college sports is under unprecedented threat. Waves of recent litigation against collegiate athletics governing rules have eliminated limits on athlete compensation, pay-for-play recruiting inducements, and transfers between universities, unleashing a sea change that threatens the viability of college sports. While changes providing some increased benefits and flexibility to student-athletes were overdue and should be maintained, the inability to maintain reasonable rules and guardrails is a mortal threat to most college sports.

To illustrate, following a 2021 antitrust ruling from the United States Supreme Court striking down NCAA restrictions, the NCAA changed its rules to permit players to receive compensation for their name, image, and likeness (NIL) from third parties. But guardrails designed to ensure that these were legitimate, market-value NIL payments for endorsements or similar services, rather than simply pay-for-play inducements, were eliminated through litigation. Other limits on player transfers among schools were also taken down through litigation.

This has created an out-of-control, rudderless system in which competing university donors engage in bidding wars for the best players, who can change teams each season. Meanwhile, more than 30 States have passed their own NIL laws in a chaotic race to the bottom, sometimes to gain temporary competitive advantages for their major collegiate teams. As a result, players at some universities will receive more than \$50 million per year, mostly for the revenue-generating sports like football. Entering the 2024 season, players on the eventual college football national champion team were being paid around \$20 million annually. By the 2025 season, football players at one university will reportedly be paid \$35-40 million, with revenue-sharing included.

This not only reduces competition and parity by creating an oligarchy of teams that can simply buy the best players — including the best players from less-wealthy programs at the end of each season — but the imperative that university donors must devote ever-escalating resources to compete in the revenue-generating sports like football and basketball siphons away the resources necessary to support the panoply of non-revenue sports. Absent guardrails to stop the madness and ensure a reasonable, balanced use of resources across collegiate athletic programs that preserves their educational and developmental benefits, many college sports will soon cease to exist.

A national solution is urgently needed to prevent this situation from deteriorating beyond repair and to protect non-revenue sports, including many women's sports, that comprise the backbone of intercollegiate athletics, drive American superiority at the Olympics and other international competitions, and catalyze hundreds of thousands of student-athletes to fuel American success in myriad ways.

Attempting to create some guardrails and shelter from litigation, colleges have adopted a new regime, deciding to pay athletes directly and simultaneously limit the total number of athletes on their campuses. Given that the new roster limits, by exceeding the scholarship limits they replace, will increase the potential number of scholarships available in many sports, this opportunity must be utilized to strengthen and expand non-revenue sports. Simultaneously, the third-party market of pay-for-play inducements must be eliminated before its insatiable demand for resources dries up support for non-revenue sports. Otherwise, a crucial American asset will be lost. It is the policy of my Administration that all college sports should be preserved and, where possible, expanded. My Administration will therefore provide the stability, fairness, and balance necessary to protect student-athletes, collegiate athletic scholarships and opportunities, and the special American institution of college sports. It is common sense that college sports are not, and should not be, professional sports, and my Administration will take action accordingly.

Sec. 2. Protecting and Expanding Women's and Non-Revenue Sports and Prohibiting Third-Party Pay-for-Play Payments. (a) It is the policy of the executive branch that opportunities for scholarships and collegiate athletic competition in women's and non-revenue sports must be preserved and, where possible, expanded, including specifically as follows with respect to the 2025-2026 athletic season and future athletic seasons:

- (i) collegiate athletic departments with greater than \$125,000,000 in revenue during the 2024-2025 athletic season should provide more scholarship opportunities in non-revenue sports than during the 2024-2025 athletic season and should provide the maximum number of roster spots for non-revenue sports permitted under the applicable collegiate athletic rules;
- (ii) college athletic departments with greater than \$50,000,000 in revenue during the 2024-2025 athletic season should provide at least as many scholarship opportunities in non-revenue sports as provided during the 2024-2025 athletic season and should provide the maximum number of roster spots for non-revenue sports permitted under the applicable collegiate athletic rules; and

(iii) college athletic departments with \$50,000,000 or less in revenue during the 2024-2025 athletic season or that do not have any revenue-generating sports should not disproportionately reduce scholarship opportunities or roster spots for sports based on the revenue that the sport generates.

(b) It is the policy of the executive branch that any revenue-sharing permitted between universities and collegiate athletes should be designed and implemented in a manner that preserves or expands scholarships and collegiate athletic opportunities in women's and non-revenue sports.

(c) To preserve the critical educational and developmental benefits of collegiate athletics for our Nation, it is the policy of the executive branch that third-party, pay-for-play payments to collegiate athletes are improper and should not be permitted by universities. This policy does not apply to compensation provided to an athlete for the fair market value that the athlete provides to a third party, such as for a brand endorsement.

(d) Within 30 days of the date of this order, the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, shall develop a plan to advance the policies set forth in subsections (a)-(c) of this section through all available and appropriate regulatory, enforcement, and litigation mechanisms, including Federal funding decisions, enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, prohibiting unconstitutional actions by States to regulate interstate commerce, and enforcement of other constitutional and statutory protections, and by working with the Congress and State governments, as appropriate.

Sec. 3. Student-Athlete Status. The Secretary of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board shall determine and implement the appropriate measures with respect to clarifying the status of collegiate athletes, including through guidance, rules, or other appropriate actions, that will maximize the educational benefits and opportunities provided by higher education institutions through athletics.

Sec. 4. Legal Protections for College Athletics from Lawsuits. (a) The Attorney General and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission shall work to stabilize and preserve college athletics through litigation, guidelines, policies, or other actions, as appropriate, by protecting the rights and interests of student-athletes and the long-term availability of collegiate athletic scholarships and opportunities when such elements are unreasonably challenged under antitrust or other legal theories.

(b) Within 60 days of the date of this order, to advance the purposes of subsection (a) of this section, the Attorney General and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission shall:

(i) review, and as necessary revise, litigation positions, guidelines, policies, or other actions; and

(ii) develop a plan to implement appropriate future litigation positions, guidelines, policies, or other actions.

Sec. 5. Protecting Development of the United States Olympic Team. The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and the Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison shall consult the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and other appropriate organizations of American athletes about safeguarding the integral role and competitive advantage that American collegiate athletics provide in developing athletes to represent our Nation in international athletic competitions.

Sec. 6. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(d) The costs for publication of this order shall be borne by the Department of Education.

DONALD J. TRUMP

THE WHITE HOUSE,

July 24, 2025.