



Attorney General

**Josh Stein**

## Attorney General Josh Stein Reaches Proposed Settlement with NCAA over Transfer Rule

“Student athletes should have the same freedom that coaches, administrators, and other students have. I’m pleased that the NCAA came to the table. Now, every student athlete will be able to make whatever decisions are best for them.”

Attorney General Josh Stein



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(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced a proposed settlement with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) that will permanently ease restrictions on Division I college athletes who have transferred schools multiple times and allow them to play immediately after changing teams. The agreement, which must be approved by U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey, removes what the coalition of attorneys general who brought the action views as an illegal restraint on athletes’ ability to pursue their best opportunities.

“Student athletes should have the same freedom that coaches, administrators, and other students have,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “I’m pleased that the NCAA came to the table. Now, every student athlete will be able to make whatever decisions are best for them.”

The NCAA’s transfer eligibility rule, which required athletes who transferred among Division I schools to wait one year before competing in games unless they were granted a waiver, has been widely criticized and challenged. Although it never changed its rule, the NCAA in 2021 began automatically exempting first-time transfers from the regulation. It continued to enforce the rule for subsequent transfers and consistently denied waivers, even when players had legitimate grounds for seeking them. This rule was responsible for temporarily preventing University of North Carolina football player Devontez Walker and Wake Forest University basketball player Efton Reid from playing for their teams last year.

The NCAA's uneven and arbitrary enforcement prompted Attorney General Stein, along with other state attorneys general and the U.S. Department of Justice, to sue the organization in December, accusing it of violating antitrust laws with its unfair restrictions on second-time transfers.

Judge Bailey of the Northern District of West Virginia granted the states' request for a preliminary injunction, forbidding the NCAA from enforcing the transfer rule through at least the 2024 spring sports season. The proposed settlement announced today makes permanent the judge's decision in favor of the athletes.

In addition to ensuring athletes' autonomy, the agreement also:

- Prevents the NCAA from retaliating against institutions and athletes who have challenged the transfer rule.
- Restores an additional year of eligibility to Division I athletes who, because of the transfer rule, were forced to sit out for any season since the 2019-20 academic year.
- Prohibits the NCAA from undermining or circumventing the settlement through future actions, rules, or policies.

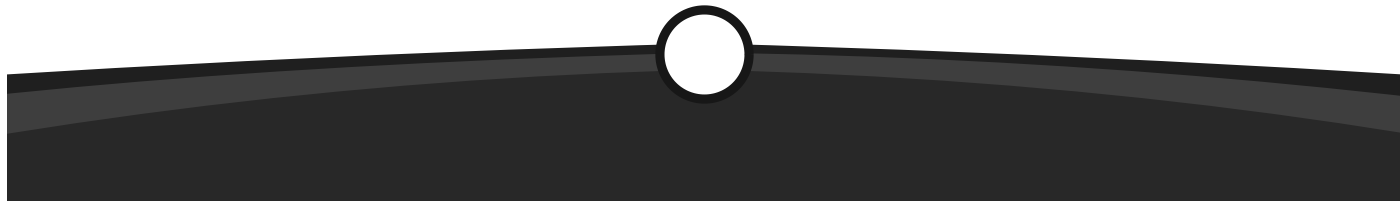
Attorney General Stein was joined in signing on to this agreement by the Attorneys General of Ohio, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, as well as the U.S. Department of Justice.

A copy of the proposed agreement is available [here](#).

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