

“Student-athletes in California will be allowed to sign endorsement deals”



In this March 14, 2012, file photo, a player runs across the NCAA logo during practice at the NCAA tournament college basketball in Pittsburgh. California will let college athletes hire agents and make money from endorsements, defying the NCAA and setting up a likely legal challenge that could reshape U.S. amateur sports. Photo by: Keith Srakocic/Associated Press

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff
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SACRAMENTO, California — College athletes in California will be allowed to hire agents and make money under a new law. They can get deals to advertise for sneaker companies, soft-drink makers and other sponsors, just like professional athletes.

The move defies the NCAA rules for colleges. The NCAA stands for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It is the group that oversees student-athletes in the U.S.

The law is the first in the nation, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom on Monday, September 30. It is set to take effect in 2023. The change could turn amateur sports upside down in the U.S. It could also face legal challenges.

Schools Get Rich Off Unpaid Athletes

Newsom and others say the law is an attempt to bring more fairness to big-money college athletics. It will let players share in the wealth they create for their schools. Critics have complained that universities are getting rich from the work of athletes — often, black athletes struggling financially.

"Other college students with a talent, whether it be literature, music or technological innovation, can monetize their skill and hard work," the governor said. Athletes, however, can't be paid for sports. Meanwhile, their colleges make millions of dollars, often at risk to athletes' health and careers, he said.

Newsom predicted other states will introduce similar legislation. The NCAA, which had called on him to veto the bill, argued that it would destroy the distinction between amateurs and pros and give California an unfair advantage in attracting athletes.

1. What are the arguments FOR and AGAINST the new law?	
Benefits of the law	Drawback to the law

The NCAA said it is considering its next steps. It did not elaborate on what those plans are, though. In a statement, the NCAA said it is working to revise its rules on making money off a player's name and likeness. However, it said any changes should be made at the national level through the NCAA, not through a patchwork of state laws.

California's law applies to all sports at public and private universities, but not community colleges.

Student-athletes won't get salaries. However, under the law, they can't be stripped of their scholarships or kicked off the team if they sign advertising deals.

There are some limitations. Athletes can't make deals that conflict with their schools' existing contracts. For example, if your university has a contract with Nike, you can't sign with Adidas.

2. What does the law NOT cover or allow?

California Leadership

The law represents another instance of California leading other states in social and political change. The movement to allow student-athletes to profit from their labors has been simmering for years, portrayed as a matter of fairness and civil rights.

"A majority of these athletes, it's no secret, are African-American," said California Senator Steven Bradford, a co-author of the bill who is black. "It's an issue of fairness, and it's an issue that has been long overdue."

Newsom shared a video online of him signing the law alongside basketball superstar LeBron James. He is one of many professional athletes who have supported the law.

James, whose 14-year-old son is a closely watched basketball prospect in Los Angeles, California, will be 18 years old when the law takes effect. He celebrated the law on Instagram, saying it will "change the lives for countless athletes who deserve it!"

Basketball rookie Jordan Poole of the Golden State Warriors in California also welcomed the new law.

His teammate, three-time NBA champion Draymond Green, went further. "The NCAA is a dictatorship," the former Michigan State star told reporters Monday, September 30. "I'm tired of seeing people get ripped off, and I'm tired of seeing these college athletes being ripped off."

3. Why do many professional athletes support the CA law?

Before the governor signed the law, the NCAA said it might bar California universities from competitions. That means powerhouses such as the University of Southern California, UCLA, Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley could be banned.

If that were to happen, California schools could form a new group and get schools from other states to join, threatening the NCAA's power.

The governor, a former college baseball player, said he doubts the NCAA would kick California schools out. California is the most populous state in the country with 40 million people. The state also has the fifth-largest economy in the world. That makes it too big to lose, Newsom said.

The NCAA "can't afford to do that," he said.

4. The NCAA said it might bar California universities from competitions but why does CA governor, Newsom think they won't?

Big Help For Women And Low-Income Athletes

State Senator Nancy Skinner was the bill's author. She said it could especially help female athletes, who have limited opportunities for professional sports after college.

"College is the primary time when the spotlight is on" them, Skinner said. "For women, this might be the only time they could make any money."

5. How would female athletes benefit from this law?

NCAA rules bar players from hiring agents, and the NCAA has also refused to pay players in most cases. However, a committee is studying other ways players could make money, and its report is expected in October.

The NCAA does let some athletes accept money in some instances. Tennis players can accept up to \$10,000 in prize money per year, and Olympians can accept winnings from their competitions. Also, many schools pay players yearly living expenses of \$2,000 to \$4,000.

"We just kind of joked every kid is going to want to go to college out here in Cali now," Warriors player Glenn Robinson III said.

"I think it's time. A lot of people are waking up and starting to see how much money that these universities are making off of players," he added. "Where I went to school, a lot of players couldn't afford lunch."

ARTICLE RECAP

Until recently, college athletes were NOT allowed to be paid in any way for their labor as athletes. What does the California law do to change that? (EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS.)

WHY is California making this law? Why do they think it's necessary?