

# Sports

## Gray areas put players in Kangaroo court

Nebraska reserve middle guard Ken-ny Shead gets free sneakers.

He gets them from his "uncle" Darryl Jones, and Charles Edwards — two old family friends.

One problem: Jones and Edwards represent shoe companies. The sneakers come from Kangaroos USA Inc.

Among the 1983-84 NCAA Manual's hundreds of pages and dozens of rules invented to preserve student athletes' amateur status, there is a rule about sneakers.

Shead may or may not be pressing that rule. It's a "gray area."

More gray areas further complicate the Shead sneaker story.

- Jones said he's been giving Shead presents since the boy was born. Jones said he didn't know the NCAA had a rule about sneakers.

- Edwards said Shead tested the sneakers for Kangaroos. He said he didn't want to get Shead in any trouble.

- Jones and Edwards were just giving sneakers — and some T-shirts and maybe a couple of hats — to their "adopted" nephew.

- And to Mike Rozier, Kenny's teammate — just because Rozier liked Shead's sneakers and asked for some.

There are a lot of gray areas in the NCAA manual. One gray area concerns just what friends and relatives can give players — where does gift-giving stop, and pay for play begin?

An NCAA legislative assistant, when confronted with a hypothetical scenario similar to Shead's, said he wasn't sure if the sneaker rule applied.

"It appears that normally there wouldn't be any circumstances where a student athlete could receive shoes directly from a manufacturer without damaging his amateur status," said John Leavens. "But there are lots of gray areas."

Leavens said allegations are considered on a case-by-case basis. Every case could develop into a new rule. Leavens said his office receives 150 to 200 inquiries a day. That means 150 to 200 potential new rules.

### Observers think excessive growth of the rule manual could be hurting the

NCAA system. Such growth does raise questions:

- How and why did the book get so big?

- Is the manual's size creating more problems than it's solving? How?

- Are improvements being made?

What is the future of the NCAA manual?

The NCAA manual contains the organization's rules and by-laws. In the last 25 years, the manual has nearly quadrupled in size. The casebook, which is supposed to clarify the rules and by-laws, listed 154 cases in 1972. Now, the casebook contains more than 400 cases. (See Table 1.)

The rule book may have been thinner and simpler years ago, but concerns of university and athletic officials were the same... even about "gifts." Harvard professor William J. Bingham wrote in 1924:

*"If an athlete is dependent on his own resources to meet college expenses, he must account for every cent he earns. The motive behind every gift is questioned with suspicious apprehension."*

So if the concerns behind NCAA rules have remained basically the same for more than 60 years, how and why has the book blossomed to its present state?

Daily Nebraskan staff members contacted athletic experts and NCAA officials by phone last week to collect opinions on the growth, problems and future of the NCAA manual. Coaches were unavailable for comment because of absence during letter of intent week.

Wayne Duke joined the NCAA staff originally in 1952 to edit the NCAA manual. Now Big Ten commissioner and representative to the NCAA administrative committee, Duke is a member of both the Big Ten rules and NCAA long-range planning committees. Both groups met last week to discuss the burgeoning NCAA rule book.

Duke said the book has grown to such mammoth size because people in athletics don't want to observe the spirit of the rules.

"People in college athletics are inclined

to look for the exceptions. If they didn't ask for all the exceptions, the rule book wouldn't be so thick," Duke said.

Generally, people looking for exceptions fall in two categories: those who intended to get around the rules and those who unintentionally pressed a rule — usually because of ignorance.



One of the most blatant rule-benders in recent years was Oklahoma businessman and Oklahoma State alumnus Jim Treat.

Treat told *Sports Illustrated* in 1978 that he was a "strong advocate of legal cheating."

"I like to sit down with a player and say, 'Son, tell me about your situation. Tell me about your mama and your daddy, your brothers and sisters. How much money can your family send?' If the answer is none, then... I'll take care of the problem."

The only problem with the way Treat liked to do things, he admitted, was that it's "against every rule in the NCAA

book."

NCAA manual gray areas concerning what alumni can and can't do hit a little closer to home earlier this month. Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier, now with the Pittsburgh Maulers, mentioned to the *Pittsburgh Press* that he had received outside help while at UNL.

Rozier's subsequent clarifications indicated that probably no rules were violated, but Coach Tom Osborne said he thought recruiting was hurt this year by the publicity.

So next year, maybe the NCAA will adopt another rule or add another case to clarify again what alumni can and can't do for athletes. More rules, more cases, more room for interpretation and more gray areas.

Catch-22. It's this ever-widening vicious circle of rules and gray areas that concerns many authorities in the sporting world. They think that circle is tightening into a bureaucratic stranglehold, hurting the NCAA, member universities, coaches and players.

William H. Baughn, Big Eight representative to the NCAA administrative committee, said there were 162 rule changes proposed at the NCAA annual convention in January.

"People have always been worried about the gray areas," Baughn said. "That's what causes the 162 proposals. We have to change what's been complained about."

Many complaints are about those elusive gray areas, areas leaving room for too much interpretation. Brian Boulac, assistant athletic director at Notre Dame, said people inside and outside sports find too many "escape clauses."

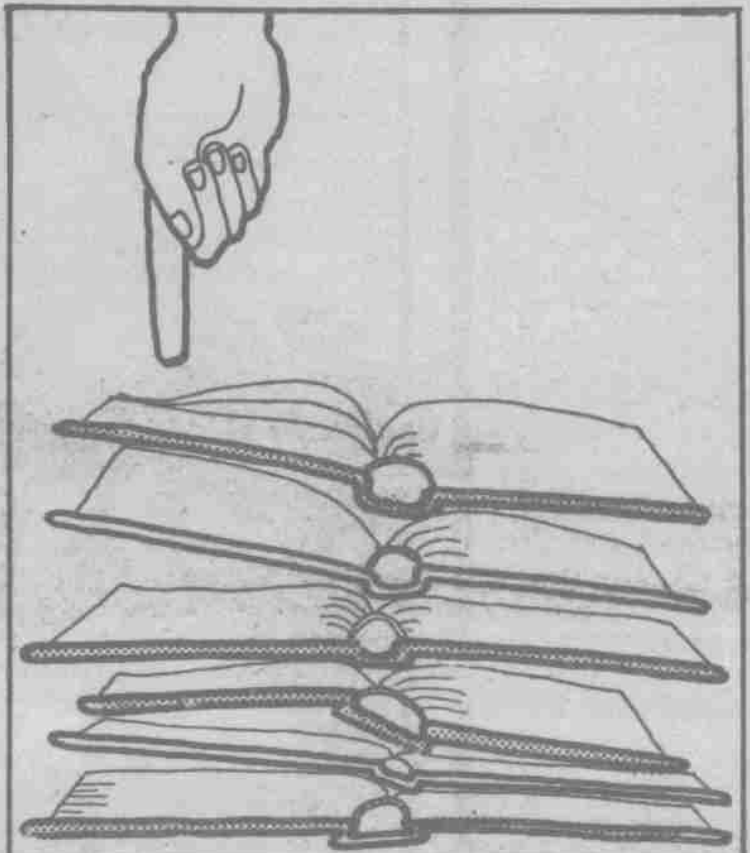
Escape clauses hurt the system. Knowing they exist can prove to be a mighty temptation to coaches and athletes.

Prentice Gautt, Big Eight assistant commissioner, set up a typical temptation scenario.

Coach A approaches Joe player. Coach A offers Joe just what the NCAA manual allows — room, board, tuition, fees.

Continued on Page 9

Table 1: Rule Book Pages



Stories by:  
 Jeff Browne  
 Mona Z. Koppelman  
 Chris Welsch

Artwork by  
 Lou Anne Zacek

**Box 1**

Every school year, major shoe companies send sales representatives to colleges, hoping to get their shoes on the feet of the school's players. If the representative can't sell a contract to the school, some offer individual athletes free shoes, T-shirts, etc.

That's cherry picking.

NCAA rules don't allow student athletes to accept equipment, supplies or clothing if his school doesn't have a contract with the supplier. Accepting gifts damages amateur status.

Randy Reutershan, motion manager for Pony, said cherry picking isn't all that common, because legitimate deals are lucrative for all involved.

Pony pays the entire coaching staff, provides shoes for the team, staff and their families as well as warm-ups and T-shirts. After a certain amount of time, the head coach gets a free trip to Europe.

Pony gets exposure worth thousands of dollars.

Few teams are more visible (and therefore more profitable to manufacturers) than the Nebraska Cornhuskers. Glen Abbott, UNL equipment manager, said Nike gives the UNL football team 300 pairs of shoes every year. Beyond that 300, UNL gets one pair free for every two bought.

Coach Tom Osborne gets a free vacation in an exotic setting ("like a Caribbean cruise"). Abbott and head trainer George Sullivan get one paid working weekend to discuss shoe improvements with other trainers from Nike-contracted schools.

Abbott said he and Coach Osborne have been very satisfied with the Nike agreement. He said he receives few complaints about the shoes from players, and didn't know of any athletes being approached by cherry pickers.

"If I know it's going on, I do a lot of hollering," Abbott said. "Once I tell Coach Osborne, it's out of my hands."

**Box 2**

NCAA rules distinguish between what student athletes can do and what coaches and universities can do.

Student athletes can receive room, board, books, tuition and fees from the university. They cannot sign contracts with manufacturers. They cannot enter into agreements, formal or informal, to accept free merchandise.

Coaches, on the other hand, can sign with whomever they want for whatever they can get, take paid vacations to Guadalajara or, for example, accept shoes for themselves, their family and their in-laws.

They're saving their athletic departments money.

Companies supply free equipment to teams whose coaches or universities are under contract.

The NCAA has no rule forbidding such contracts. But the agreements are disquieting to some officials.

NCAA legislative assistant E. Jamie McCloskey said when a coach is paid by one institution — his university — he has one boss. When a coach is paid by his university, a talk show, Nike and a corn flakes manufacturer, "he's getting pulled in different directions."

These agreements are prevalent on campuses across the country, according to *Sports Illustrated*.

The following is a partial list of individual agreements at UNL and the money saved for the athletic department:

SPORT	COACH	MANUFACTURER	\$ SAVED
Football	Tom Osborne	Nike Shoes	\$50,000 to \$70,000
Strength	Boyd Epley	AMF American	\$30,000*
Holley			
Ball	Terry Patti	Beta Shoes	\$2,000 to \$3,000
Men's Basketball			
Women's Basketball	Nick Iba	Converse Shoes	\$1,250
Ball	Kathy Hill	Converse Shoes	\$1,100

\*\$30,000 for one project one year.