

On Behalf of the NCAA Recruiting Class of 2025
October 1, 2024

Senior District Judge
Claudia Wilken
Oakland Courthouse
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Honorable Judge Wilken,

I recently came across a quote attributed to you regarding the NCAA case, "I've found that taking things away from people is usually not too popular." That quote resonated with me and led me to believe you may be unaware of the impact the NCAA case is having on the recruiting class of 2025. The newly proposed roster limits are taking a disproportionate number of recruiting/roster spots away from the class of 2025 - in comparison to both prior and future recruiting years.

This is best illustrated with an example. Take a football team with a current roster of 120 players. Under the proposed ruling the team will be reduced to 105 players, for a decrease of 15 players. For conservativeness and simplicity's sake, ignore redshirting and assume the 120-member team is comprised of equal numbers of recruits from each of the four years represented on the team (30 first-year students, 30 sophomores, 30 juniors and 30 seniors). When the 30 seniors graduate in the spring, that should in theory open 30 roster spots for the incoming class of 2025. However, with an immediately enacted roster limit of 105 players, 15 of those 30 spots will be "absorbed" meeting the new requirement. As a result, only 15 spots will be available for the class of 2025 recruits. That represents a 50% decrease in the likelihood of a 2025 recruit making a D1 team in comparison to both prior and some future years.

Yes, in comparison to some future years too. Under this scenario, the class of 2026 will not be impacted as the class of 2025 took the entire impact of the roster decrease. When the 30 Juniors from the above example graduate in spring of 2026, they will leave 30 roster spots open for the incoming class of 2026 recruits. The roster decrease will not affect another class until 2029, when the smaller class of 2025 recruits graduate and leave a smaller number of positions available. This smaller recruiting class blip will occur every four years until it gradually works its way out of the system through player transfers, players leaving college sports early, etc.

The football team is just an example. This same phenomenon is playing out across other sports as well. Baseball rosters are being decreased from 40 players to 34 players. Like the perfectly equivalent example from above: graduating seniors would have opened 10 spots to the class of 2025, however six of those spots are being "absorbed" by the immediate decrease requirement which leaves only four spots for the class of 2025. The result of these immediate roster changes is having a major impact on the chances of a 2025 recruit making it into D1 college sports.

Of course these are simplified examples, it would be unusual for a team have equal numbers of players from each year. And yes, college coaches could choose to cut some existing players from their teams to open more positions for the class of 2025. But how much harder is it to cut the kid you have been coaching, mentoring, and training for a few years versus not extend an offer to a potential recruit that you have met a few times.

A potential solution - Have those proposing the changes considered roster tapering over four to five years as those are the number of recruiting classes included on most teams? Taking the football team with 120 players that needs to reduce numbers to 105, they would be allowed to reach the 105-player roster limit with reductions of 3-4 players each year over a four-year period thereby affecting each of the next four recruiting classes instead of squeezing only the recruiting class of 2025. Recruiting moving forward for future years would also be on an equivalent basis, eliminating the four-year blip in 2029 and each fourth year thereafter. Yes, the approach will take longer and may require additional reporting effort, but it would give the 2025 recruits their fair shot. These athletes have worked for years knowing what it takes to reach the next level – then overnight all the rules changed.

This case has unfolded and continued in the real time of recruiting and applying to colleges. National signing day for non-football, non-basketball athletes is November 13th and the early decision college application deadline is November 1, yet coaches still do not know how many spots they will have available for these recruits. This is a most difficult time to be a recruit!

Thank you for your consideration of this matter -

A party who wishes to remain anonymous