

## ***The Recruitment of Lance Stephenson: Is a visit to Under Armour Educational?***

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Bylaw 13 of the NCAA Manual details recruiting rules regarding prospective student-athletes. Specifically, NCAA rules detail what is permissible during an “unofficial” or “official” visit by a prospect to an institution’s campus. In 2009, prominent high school basketball player Lance Stephenson’s official visit to the University of Maryland generated controversy when he visited Under Armour’s headquarters, ostensibly to discuss a future endorsement contract with former Maryland football player and Under Armour founder Kevin Plank (Prisbell & Yanda, 2009). Though Stephenson eventually signed to play basketball at the University of Cincinnati, limited details regarding the Maryland/Under Armour encounter have created numerous questions regarding appropriate off-campus activities during campus visits (Forrester, 2009).

This presentation will discuss NCAA recruiting rules and the enforcement of the rules in regards to athletic competition and educational opportunities. In particular, the presentation will focus upon the problems and benefits the NCAA will encounter if it enacts stricter rules regarding off-campus activities in the wake of Stephenson’s Under Armour excursion. Though students have long considered curriculum options as a key aspect of an institution, the importance of procuring internships and future employment opportunities while attending school has recently increased. The Stephenson-Under Armour visit could be perceived as an improper recruiting inducement or a clandestine endorsement solicitation; however, it could also be viewed as a student investigating potential off-campus educational opportunities. The presentation will discuss the potential difficulties enforcement of these activities could encounter.