**Title:** Ryan Boatright: Another Case of the NCAA Abusing Its Power?

**Subtitle:** University of Connecticut guard Ryan Boatright has been at the center of a media firestorm after being suspended for six games and missing three others in the wake of allegations he violated NCAA rules.

**Meta Description:** Ryan Boatright has been at the center of a media firestorm after being suspended for allegations he violated NCAA rules.

**Date:** 1-2-2012

**Author:** Anthony R. Caruso

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University of Connecticut guard Ryan Boatright has been at the center of a media firestorm after being suspended for six games and missing three others in the wake of allegations he violated NCAA rules. Specifically, Boatright and his mother were accused of receiving $8,000 in “impermissible benefits” from two people the NCAA describes as having “improper third-party influence over student-athletes and their families.”

According to the NCAA, "The impermissible benefits included travel expenses for his mother during four official visits to NCAA schools and approximately $1,200. The NCAA also alleged that Boatright was provided travel expenses, hotel, meals, and training expenses during a two-night trip to California.

In its statement about the case, the NCAA did not reveal the identities of the third parties involved, describing them only as individuals with links to "nonscholastic basketball and professional sports." However, the New York Times has reported that one of those individuals is Reggie Rose (brother of NBA star Derrick Rose), a family friend who runs the AAU team for which Boatright played.

While the NCAA claims it was just doing its job, many contend that Boatright’s case is another example of the governing body going too far. As argued by New York Times columnist Joe Nocera in a recent article:

In America, a person is presumed innocent until proved guilty. Unless, that is, he plays college sports.

When the NCAA investigates an athlete for breaking its rules, not only is he presumed guilty but his punishment begins before he knows what he’s accused of. He is not told who his accuser is. The NCAA will delve into the personal relationships of his relatives and demand their bank statements and other private records. And it will hand down its verdict without so much as a hearing. Reputations have been ruined on accusations so flimsy that they would be laughed out of any court in the land. Then again, the NCAA isn’t a court of law. It’s more powerful.

Whether you agree with the NCAA decision or not, it does raise questions about the fairness of the current system. For instance, should the NCAA be required to show how the alleged conduct violated NCAA rules before imposing sanctions? Should athletes be given more of an opportunity to defend themselves? Finally, should student athletes even be punished for the misconduct of their parents?

As a sports attorney, even I will admit, these are complicated issues that cannot be addressed overnight. In fact, they will likely continue to plague the NCAA and college athletes for the foreseeable future.

In this case, although Boatright is happy to be back on the court, his mother Tanesha is said to be contemplating legal action, citing the havoc the NCAA investigation created. We will, of course, keep you updated.

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