# [***COLLEGE FOOTBALL; Ohio State And Clarett Continue Argument***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47K6-W470-01KN-204H-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:**  By JOE DRAPE

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**Body**

Ohio State tailback Maurice Clarett today disputed the contention of university officials that he failed to file the proper paperwork to allow him to return to his hometown to attend the funeral of a boyhood friend.

Clarett said he filled out the paperwork Thursday, before the Buckeyes departed for their national title game matchup with Miami here in the Fiesta Bowl on Friday night. The National Collegiate Athletic Association requires the form for an athlete to qualify for emergency money, as Clarett would have needed for a plane ticket to his home in Youngstown, Ohio.

"They can't lie about that," Clarett, a freshman, said defiantly before a throng of reporters at Sun Devil Stadium on media day. "I won't sit here and let them lie about that."

On Monday, Clarett said university officials first ignored him, then gave him "the runaround" when he asked to fly home to attend services for Juaquin A. Bell, who was found fatally shot on Dec. 21. His funeral was Monday.

Ohio State's athletic director, Andy Geiger, said that the university would have allowed Clarett to go home but that he had not filled out the proper form.

In a statement released tonight, Geiger said Clarett had not submitted the form, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, as of Monday. He said the form, given to all Ohio State student athletes during orientation, requires information on family income from the previous tax year and must be filed annually.

"Maurice may have begun the process," Geiger said, "but at the time we had to make the decision, there was no indication of a Fafsa on file for Maurice. We were therefore compelled to follow the N.C.A.A. rules as they apply to the situation."

At a news conference Monday, Clarett, who set freshman records at the university and helped power the Buckeyes to a 13-0 record, said Ohio State officials cared more about a football game than a loss of life. Geiger disagreed.

"We care deeply about all of our student athletes, and we did everything possible to assist Maurice Clarett in this time of his personal grief," Geiger said. "Unfortunately, given the circumstances, we had no choice other than to react in the manner in which we did."

Clarett said today that he had asked Coach Jim Tressel about going home and that Tressel had referred the matter to the athletic department's compliance section, which reviews any financial aid or benefits given to student-athletes.

Clarett, 19, said his mother, Michelle, filled out the form last week and submitted it to the university. She declined to comment today.

Clarett did not hide being angry about missing the funeral. He said he was most upset that Heather Lyke Catalano, Ohio State's associate athletic director for compliance, did not contact him after he filed his paperwork.

"The compliance lady said she'd get back to me in my room," Clarett said. "She never called back in my room or on my ***cellphone***. That's the real reason I was mad, because she didn't call me back."

Catalano said she could not comment.

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