# [***Clarett claims Ohio State lied about paperwork for trip;***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47K7-2YC0-01JV-C0JN-00000-00&context=1516831) [***The star rusher was prevented from leaving Fiesta Bowl practice in Arizona to go to a friend's funeral.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47K7-2YC0-01JV-C0JN-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Maurice Clarett accused Ohio State officials yesterday of lying when they said he hadn't filed paperwork to qualify for NCAA emergency funds to fly home for the funeral of a slain friend.

The freshman tailback blasted school officials on Monday for giving him "the runaround" when he tried to get an airline ticket home to Youngstown, Ohio. Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger said the university probably would have approved the request but that Clarett had not filled out the forms.

Clarett said he completed all of the paperwork before he left Ohio on Thursday for practice for the national championship.

"They can't lie about that," Clarett said yesterday, circled by reporters at Fiesta Bowl media day. "I won't sit here and let them lie about that."

The No. 2 Buckeyes will meet No. 1 Miami on Friday night for the championship.

Heather Lyke Catalano, Ohio State's associate athletic director in charge of NCAA compliance, said Geiger told her not to answer reporters' questions.

She said Geiger and sports information director Steve Snapp would speak for the university.

"I talked to Heather last night and she said he has not filled out the proper paperwork," Snapp said yesterday.

In a statement released last night, Geiger said Clarett had not submitted a Free Application For Federal Student Aid Form to Ohio State as of Monday.

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

Clarett also said university officials put football ahead 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 he learned of the death of his good friend Juaquin A. "Juan" Bell, 23, more than a week ago. Youngstown police said Bell was shot several times Dec. 21. They said drugs, money and bullet casings were found at the scene.

The running back said he had asked coach Jim Tressel about going home, and Tressel referred the matter to the university's compliance department, which approves any financial aid or benefits given to student-athletes.

Clarett said his mother filled out the paperwork last week and he submitted it to university officials.

His mother, Michelle, declined comment, adding, "I just don't want to feed it."

Clarett said he was most upset that Lyke Catalano had not contacted him after he filed his paperwork. "The compliance lady said she'd get back to me in my room. She never called back in my room or on my ***cell phone***. That's the real reason I was mad," he said.

Tressel wouldn't comment on Clarett's latest charges, although he didn't think they would be a distraction for Friday's game.

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