

## NCAA continues softening testing and sanctions for marijuana use

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Cbssports.com recently reported that the NCAA and its member schools continue to treat the testing of marijuana differently from the testing of performance-enhancing drugs. The article noted that some schools test for marijuana separately and other schools test for it less frequently. In general, this is a trend that demonstrates that in today's larger society marijuana is more socially acceptable and, as it relates to sports, marijuana does not provide any performance-enhancing benefits.

The article noted that many schools have also reduced penalties for marijuana use. For example, Rutgers University's policy on marijuana use imposes possible game suspensions only after a third positive test and possible removal from a team only after a fifth positive test. This was not always the case. In the past, many schools removed athletes from teams after a third violation. However, in 2010, the NCAA's competitive safeguards committee concluded a marijuana positive was not "considered cheating" the same way as a performance-handing drug and, in 2014, the NCAA began scaling back marijuana related sanctions.

Generally, the NCAA's policies and sanctions are reflective of today's society and its views, the reality that recreational marijuana use has been legalized in some states and decriminalized in others, that medicinal marijuana is permitted in a large number of states, and that many Americans support the legalization of marijuana. Another important factor in this trend is and/or should be that athletes do derive medical benefits from marijuana use, for things like pain management. This was briefly discussed in the article but it should be given significant consideration, particularly as it relates to football and the CTE crises.

<https://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/marijuana-and-college-football-softening-penalties-signal-an-important-modern-shift/?ftag=SPM-16-10abi8e>

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