

1. **Mark your confusion.**
2. **Show evidence of a close reading.**
3. **Write a 1+ page reflection.**

How California Bill Will Impact College Sports, and What Comes Next

Source: Tom Schad, USA Today.com, September 30, 2019

California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Monday that he has signed into law a bill that will allow college athletes in the state to profit off their name, image and likeness — prompting cheers from activists and consternation from the NCAA.

Newsom signed the "Fair Pay to Play Act" alongside Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James on an episode of James' HBO show "The Shop," describing it as a step toward "re-balancing" the power dynamic in college sports. But the law will not go into effect until 2023, and there are certainly a lot of questions that still need to be answered between now and then.

In the meantime, here's a quick look at what the bill aims to accomplish, and what it means for schools, athletes and the NCAA moving forward.

What does the bill do?

The California bill is not about paying athletes, but rather about clearing an avenue through which athletes can be paid.

Under current NCAA bylaws, college athletes are not allowed to sell the rights to their name, image or likeness to another person or company in an effort to make money. So someone like Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence, for example, cannot authorize a T-shirt company to sell shirts with his face on them. Or endorse a brand of shoes or soft drinks. Or team up with a local store to sell Lawrence bobblehead dolls and keychains.

This bill allows all of that, for athletes in California anyway — opening the door for a quarterback at USC or gymnast at UCLA to profit from their star power without necessarily being paid by their schools. It also, notably, allows college athletes to hire agents to help them navigate such deals.

Why does this matter?

The NCAA has long positioned itself as an organization that oversees amateur sports. So even as coaching contracts have skyrocketed, conference executives have raked in millions of dollars and television contracts have reached eye-popping levels, it has insisted that athletes receiving revenue from outside sources would ruin what it calls "the amateur model."

The NCAA has argued that athletes are fairly compensated for their athletic achievements because they are offered full academic scholarships and cost-of-attendance payments — which are intended to be used for cost-of-living expenses like transportation.

But critics say athletes' earning potential is unfairly limited, regardless of scholarship status. If a talented opera singer or actor at a university can monetize their talents while they're in school, critics argue, why can't a talented basketball or volleyball player?

How did the NCAA react?

As you could probably guess, given its stance on amateurism, the NCAA was not thrilled by Monday's news.

"Unfortunately, this new law already is creating confusion for current and future student-athletes, coaches, administrators and campuses, and not just in California," the organization said in part of a statement released Monday.

"We will consider next steps in California while our members move forward with ongoing efforts to make adjustments to NCAA name, image and likeness rules that are both realistic in modern society and tied to higher education."

The Pac-12, a Power Five conference with four schools in California, also bemoaned the bill, claiming it will "lead to the professionalization of college sports."

What happens now?

Because the new law will not go into effect until Jan. 1, 2023, expect plenty of public jockeying — and, in all likelihood, legal action — between California and the NCAA over the next few years.

The NCAA has already threatened to ban California schools from competing for NCAA championships and called the bill "unconstitutional." Meanwhile, one of the bill's authors, Sen. Nancy Skinner, has said that any retaliation from the NCAA would "be a violation of antitrust (law)."

Legal sparring aside, the bill will undoubtedly have short-term impact on recruiting and scheduling. For example: If the early posturing from both sides turns out to be true, someone who commits to play women's basketball at USC this week could one day have the benefit of profiting of her name, image and likeness, but also not be eligible to play in the NCAA tournament.

Another short-term development that will bear watching is the release of a report from an NCAA panel that was appointed to study this issue. That report is expected to be presented at an NCAA board of governors meeting in Atlanta next month.

What about schools in other states?

While the California bill will affect only a fraction of NCAA athletes, it could very well fuel similar efforts in other legislatures across the country. Newsom, in a statement announcing Monday's news, called it "the beginning of a national movement."

Lawmakers in three states — Illinois, New York and South Carolina — have already introduced similar bills, or announced that they plan to do so, while legislative efforts in other states are ongoing.

Possible Response Questions:

- Should college athletes be paid (beyond full academic scholarships)? Explain.
- Predict how this controversy will play out over the next few years.
- Pick a word/line/passage from the article and respond to it.
- Discuss a "move" made by the writer in this piece that you think is good/interesting. Explain.