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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Stacey Osburn
Associate Director of Public Relations
317/917-6117

EIGHT MIAMI FOOTBALL STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST SIT OUT GAMES, REPAY BENEFITS

Eight University of Miami football student-athletes must miss competition and repay benefits as a condition of becoming eligible to play again, according to a decision today by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff. The student-athletes received varying levels of recruiting inducements and extra benefits from university booster Nevin Shapiro and athletics personnel, according to the facts of the case.

Reinstatement decisions are independent of the NCAA enforcement process and typically are made once the facts of the student-athlete's involvement are determined. This is typically well in advance of infractions decisions. The enforcement investigation into the University of Miami is ongoing.

Of the eight football student-athletes, three received substantial benefits as prospective student-athletes from Shapiro and athletics personnel to entice them to enroll at the university, which are considered some of the most serious recruiting violations within the NCAA.

Olivier Vernon, who received more than \$1,200 in benefits primarily from Shapiro, must miss six games and make repayment of the value of the benefits. These recruitment benefits included meals, transportation, access to Shapiro's game suite, drinks, as well as cover charges at two different nightclubs, among others.

Two other student-athletes, Aravious Armstrong and Dyron Dye, will miss four games and must make repayment. Armstrong received approximately \$788 in extra benefits from Shapiro and athletics personnel during his recruitment. Dye received approximately \$738. These student-athletes' benefits included five nights of impermissible lodging from institutional staff during their unofficial visits, transportation, multiple meals, and entertainment at a gentleman's club.

Different than the first three student-athletes, five other student-athletes received impermissible benefits while currently enrolled at the university.

These five student-athletes – Marcus Forston, Sean Ryan Spence, Adewale Ojomo, Travis Benjamin and Jacory Harris – must miss one game and make repayment. Forston received more than \$400 in extra benefits from Shapiro and athletic personnel, including athletic equipment, meals, nightclub cover charges and entertainment at a gentleman's club. Spence received approximately \$275 in benefits, including meals, transportation, as well as cover charges and entertainment at a gentleman's club. Ojomo received \$240 in extra benefits, including a meal and nightclub cover charges. Benjamin received more than \$150 in extra benefits, including meals and entertainment. Harris received more than \$140 in benefits from meals, entertainment, transportation and nightclub cover charges.

During the student-athlete reinstatement process, the staff considers a number of factors including guidelines established by the Division I NCAA Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement for the type of violations and value of benefits, if a significant competitive advantage was gained, the student-athlete's responsibility for the violations and any mitigating circumstances presented by the school, among other factors.

"From regular reviews of our rules to the presidential retreat earlier this month, our members have continually stressed that involvement of third parties during recruitment will not be tolerated, and there must be accountability for inappropriate behavior," said Kevin Lennon, NCAA vice president of academic and membership affairs.

When a school discovers an NCAA rules violation has occurred, it must declare the student-athlete ineligible and may request the student-athlete's eligibility be reinstated. The NCAA staff reviews each student-athlete's reinstatement request individually based on its own merits and set of specific facts, which are agreed upon by the university and the NCAA enforcement staff. The University of Miami has not submitted any additional reinstatement requests at this time.

"The NCAA has informed the University of Miami of their decisions regarding the reinstatement of eight student-athletes who were declared ineligible by the University last week," said University of Miami Director of Athletics Shawn Eichorst. "The student-athletes involved have acknowledged receiving improper benefits and will now be responsible for restitution and, in some cases, the student-athletes will also serve game suspensions. They understand that their actions demand consequences.

"This university has the highest standards in all of our academic and athletic endeavors. We will remain steadfast in our commitment to continue to build winning programs with the utmost of integrity. We will be more vigilant in our compliance and continue to work with the NCAA on the joint investigation to determine the facts.

"We appreciate the diligence and understanding of the NCAA staff and its handling of the student-athlete eligibility issues in an expeditious manner. I would also like to thank Coach Golden and his staff for their professionalism and leadership over the past few weeks."

The reinstatement process typically concludes prior to the close of the enforcement investigation, which must determine the university's responsibility for violations. While it depends on the complexity of the case, most student-athlete reinstatement requests are resolved in about a week after the school has provided a complete request and the reinstatement staff has all the necessary information. In contrast an enforcement investigation, which also varies in length depending on the complexity, must look at the totality of issues and takes an average of 11 months. For this reason, student-athlete reinstatement decisions do not signal that an enforcement investigation is complete.

The university can appeal any student-athlete reinstatement decision to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement, an independent panel comprised of representatives from NCAA member colleges, university and athletic conferences who are not directly affiliated with the university. This committee can reduce or remove the condition, but it cannot increase the staff-imposed conditions. If appealed, the student-athlete remains ineligible until the conclusion of the appeals process.

Read more about the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement process at [ncaa.org](https://www.ncaa.org).