



MEMORANDUM

September 16, 2016

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1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

TO: Selected Newspapers and Radio and Television Stations  
Selected Advertising, Marketing and Promotion Agencies  
Selected Other Businesses/Corporations.

FROM: Scott A. Bearby  
Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel

SUBJECT: The Use of NCAA® Championship Brackets and Limitations on  
Advertising.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships will get underway in March 2017. We know that it has been common practice for news entities (including television, Internet, and print) to publish the tournament fields in bracket form, often with the NCAA's official logo for the Men's Final Four or the Women's Final Four.

Although the NCAA welcomes news coverage of our events, we have been concerned about the placement of advertising within the brackets and implied or explicit corporate sponsorship of the bracket(s). Our concern extends to advertising-sponsored contests featuring the bracket(s). Such advertising and contests may create a false impression by the public that the advertiser has an official relationship with the NCAA or its championships. As you undoubtedly know, the NCAA has official relationships with a number of companies that are granted exclusive rights to use NCAA marks and to promote their affiliation with the NCAA. The NCAA believes that the law supports its view that the unauthorized placement of advertising within an NCAA bracket or corporate sponsorship of the bracket is misleading and constitutes an infringement of the NCAA's property rights.

The NCAA is not suggesting that a media entity cannot sell advertising that sponsors the entity's coverage of the NCAA championships. However, that advertising should be outside of the bracket space and should clearly indicate that the company or its product/service is connected only to the media entity's coverage and not with the NCAA or its championships. The only exception is if the corporate entity is approved by the NCAA. You are welcome to contact the NCAA for confirmation about whether approval has been granted. Please contact David Clendenin at 317/917-6496 ([dclendenin@ncaa.org](mailto:dclendenin@ncaa.org)). This restriction in no way should curtail legitimate news coverage and commentary.

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Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

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If you have any questions or if you would like the NCAA to review your advertising sales deck regarding placement, please contact me anytime at 317/917-6922 or [sbearby@ncaa.org](mailto:sbearby@ncaa.org).

The NCAA appreciates your cooperation in protecting the NCAA's property interests and in eliminating confusion to your readers/viewers in connection with your news coverage.

SAB:DKC

cc: Selected NCAA Staff Members

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**The NCAA opposes all sports wagering. This bracket should not be used for sweepstakes, contests, office pools or other gambling activities.**