



February 13, 2013

Dr. Mark A. Emmert
President
National Collegiate Athletic Association
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, IN 46206
Email: memmert@ncaa.org

Dear Dr. Emmert,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our profound disappointment with the NCAA's recent actions affecting journalists' ability to cover your member institutions' activities. We hope to prevent further diminishment of our ability to report collegiate sports news in cities and towns across the United States. The public's interest deserves that we work together to ensure that such coverage is thorough, timely and benefits schools, students, student-athletes, fans, citizens and news organizations representing the public.

Recognizing that our mutual interests are best served when we act cooperatively, the nation's largest media organizations have repeatedly attempted to explore common ground on a variety of coverage issues. Our requests over the past three months for a meeting with you and senior communications officials have been met with delay. During that time, the NCAA has made significant changes to coverage of the upcoming NCAA men's basketball tournament without seeking our input. Additionally, our members are reporting unduly restrictive credentialing conditions on their use of social media that inhibit their publishing rights and detrimentally affect the public's interest in access to timely information.

In short, our concerns and frustrations are mounting, with a long period of unproductive interaction leading to this follow up letter. After several relatively minor issues were resolved on temporary basis, there is a distinct need for a larger discussion.

Tim Franklin, managing editor at Bloomberg News in Washington, who serves as the American Society of News Editors' Freedom of Information Co-Chairman, contacted your office in October on behalf of 10 media groups in order to foster a frank and positive discussion. We sincerely wanted to create an understanding of each side's needs and concerns to avoid further conflict and ensure we are both serving the public interest. We were excited when your office responded with what appeared to be a similar desire.

Unfortunately, our attempts to schedule a meeting – for which representatives of all the undersigned groups are willing to travel to your offices in Indianapolis – have been met with vague promises to schedule something in the future. In fact, we have pursued this meeting on many fronts. Gerry Ahern, the Director of News Content for the USA Today Sports Media Group and president of the Associated Sports Editors, spoke or corresponded with your office on at least three occasions during the same time frame without success.

We hope you share our interest in working together, and that you'll set a firm time to do so in the next few weeks, not months. We recognize the demands on your time are considerable. But, this is an urgent priority for publishers, editors and journalists, and we believe that it should be for you, too.

We recently learned that the media seating arrangements for the upcoming NCAA Tournament have been revised, with as many as 30 percent of the seats previously available to our members moved away from the court and into locations which make our coverage of these games more difficult and ultimately less informative to the public.

In addition, conflicts that arose during football season regarding access, credentialing, and social media are recurring in the basketball season. Rather than providing a substantive response to these issues, the NCAA has attempted to shift responsibility to individual schools; while the individual universities, in turn, cite NCAA guidelines as the rationale for their actions. The result: There is no accountability for policies that infringe on our work and our publication rights.

While we remain hopeful that these issues can be resolved, our patience is not without limits, and our members' frustrations are rising.

We respectfully request that you contact Susan Goldberg at 202-654-7344 or sgoldberg31@bloomberg.net or Gerry Ahern at 651- 357-5268 or gahern@usatoday.com to schedule a meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Goldberg
President
American Society of News Editors

Tiffany Shackelford
Executive Director
Association of Alternative Newsmedia

Mike Borland
President
National Press Photographers Association

James Brady
President
Online News Association

Sonny Albarado
President
Society of Professional Journalists

Gerry Ahern
President
Associated Press Sports Editors

Brad Dennison
President
Associated Press Media Editors

Caroline Little
President/CEO
Newspaper Association of America

Bruce Brown
Executive Director
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Frank LoMonte
Executive Director
Student Press Law Center

Cc:

John Swofford
Commissioner
Atlantic Coast Conference

Bob Bowsby
Commissioner
Big 12 Conference

Mike Aresco
Commissioner
Big East Conference

James E. Delany
Commissioner
Big Ten Conference

Larry Scott
Commissioner
Pac-12 Conference

Mike Slive
Commissioner
Southeastern Conference