

Ohio, six other states sue to overturn NCAA limits on athletes transferring schools multiple times

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced that he and attorneys general in six other states filed a federal lawsuit Thursday challenging the NCAA's limits on college athletes transferring schools multiple times.

The [lawsuit](#), filed in U.S. District Court in West Virginia, claims that the NCAA's transfer eligibility restrictions violate federal anti-trust law by serving as an illegal restraint on college athletes' ability to market their labor and control their education, according to a Yost release.

In 2021, the NCAA began allowing athletes to transfer schools once; however, athletes can only transfer again if they sit out a year or obtain a waiver from the NCAA on "medical or safety" grounds.

The lawsuit claims that college athletes and their schools have a financial relationship, with the colleges earning money from its sports teams and the athletes getting scholarships and room and board. Keeping repeat-transfer athletes off the field for a year, the suit states, costs them not only 20% of their college playing time, but it affects their ability to gain fame and profit from "name, image and likeness" agreements.

The suit also claims the NCAA's transfer rules are arbitrary, as the organization allows athletes to transfer once. Coaches and administrators, as well as college students with academic or music scholarships, can transfer schools as often as they like, the suit notes.

"The rule is riddled with so many exceptions that the NCAA cannot plausibly substantiate its prior justifications," Yost said in a statement. "We're challenging it in order to restore fairness, competition and the autonomy of college athletes in their educational pursuits."

The lawsuit notes that the NCAA has defended its transfer policies by claiming they help ensure athletes avoid falling behind academically because of the logistics and

changes that come with changing schools. [Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer](https://www.cleveland.com/sports/2019/09/ncaa-transfer-portal-2019-2020/) has reached out to the NCAA for comment on the suit.

According to [an NCAA release](#) in September, 21,685 student-athletes entered the transfer portal this year. Of those, 3% were seeking to change schools for at least a second time and would require a waiver to immediately play, the release stated.

The suit points specifically to two college basketball players who are sitting out the current season because the NCAA denied them waivers to transfer schools twice without penalty. One is Jarrett Hensley, a basketball player for Southern Illinois University who previously played for the University of Cincinnati and the University of North Carolina Greensboro. The other is RaeQuan Battle of West Virginia University, who formerly attended the University of Washington and Montana State University. Both suffered mental-health effects from not being able to play, according to the suit.

Yost previously sent the NCAA a letter expressing concerns about the its decision last month not to allow Aziz Bandaogo, who previously played basketball for the University of Akron and Utah Valley University, to transfer a second time to the University of Cincinnati, though the NCAA reversed its decision when Bandaogo threatened litigation.

The other states joining the suit are Colorado, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia.