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## Supreme Court rules for college athletes against NCAA over compensation

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The Supreme Court sided with college athletes in a unanimous decision Monday, ruling that the NCAA can't bar schools from giving athletes education-related benefits.

In the 9-0 ruling, the justices upheld a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that said college athletes could receive unlimited compensation for their endeavors as long as the benefits are "related to education" — such as internships, laptops or payments for tutoring.

In a 40-page ruling, Justice Neil M. Gorsuch noted that the president of the NCAA earns nearly \$4 million a year, top conference commissioners earn from \$2 million to \$5 million, and some coaches earn \$11 million.

"Those who run this enterprise profit in a different way than the student-athletes whose activities they oversee," wrote Justice Gorsuch.

Interest in Division I football and basketball has increased in recent decades, with the justices noting that CBS paid \$16 million a year to televise March Madness from 1982 through 1984. In 2016, television rights were closer to \$1.1 billion for March Madness.

Division 1 football and basketball students initially had brought a case aiming to strike down the NCAA's compensation limitations. They received a partial win in the lower courts, saying the NCAA can't bar pay when it comes to school-related expenses.

But the athletic association argued that its athletes are amateurs who don't deserve compensation for their skills.

According to the NCAA, the lower court ruling would allow student-athletes to obtain internships that pay them unlimited amounts, creating a loophole that would undermine the NCAA's control over its venture. The NCAA said this runs afoul of antitrust law, which protects consumers and promotes fair competition.

The athletic association claimed that student-athletes may be given "luxury cars" to go to class or "other unnecessary or inordinately valuable items" only 'nominally' related to education," according to the court's opinion.

But Justice Gorsuch said the NCAA can forbid certain benefits unrelated to a student's education.

"Nothing stops it from enforcing a 'no Lamborghini' rule," he wrote.

The ruling also noted that student-athletes have been receiving benefits since 1852, when Harvard and Yale universities held a boat race in which lavish prizes were distributed.

Over the years, certain rules and limits were put into place limiting student pay and prizes.

The high court recognized compensation unrelated to education would blur the line between college and professional athletes.

"The NCAA could develop its own definition of benefits that relate to education," the court ruled. "The NCAA may seek whatever limits on paid internships it thinks appropriate."

Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh agreed with the majority, but he wrote a separate opinion saying the ruling was "narrow" and the education-related benefits may not have gone far enough, noting students are restricted from endorsement deals, too.

"The NCAA's remaining compensation rules also raise serious questions under the antitrust laws," Justice Kavanaugh wrote.

The case was the National Collegiate Athletic Association v. Alston.

Ilya Shapiro, vice president of the Cato Institute, called the unanimous ruling "a revolution in college sports," helping to ring in compensation for the athletes.

He also noted that Justice Kavanaugh signaled he is willing to go even further to help the students in future legal battles.

"For too long sports grandees have profited off the labors of youngsters. There's more than enough money to go around, so why not give some to the kids who generate it?" Mr. Shapiro said.