

New York Court Restrains NCAA, Clears Student Athlete Vincent Iwuchukwu to Compete in NCAA Basketball for a Fifth Year

Queens County Supreme Court blocks enforcement of the Five-Year Eligibility Rule, shields St. John's and Iwuchukwu's from NCAA penalties for the 2026-27 season

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Supreme Court of the

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The court recognized what was truly at stake — a season lost can never be given back. Today the court reopened that door — and Vincent can take the floor again.”

Ivan Parron

State of New York, Queens County, has granted an emergency temporary restraining order against the National Collegiate Athletic Association and its President, Charles D. Baker, barring the NCAA from declaring Vincent C. Iwuchukwu ineligible to practice or compete in Division I men's basketball during the 2026-27 academic year.

The order, signed by Hon. Denise N. Johnson, J.S.C., temporarily restrains the NCAA from enforcing Bylaw 12.6, the so-called Five-Year Eligibility Rule, and from excluding the 2022 recruiting cohort from the eligibility model the

NCAA revised in June 2026, against Iwuchukwu. The court found that immediate and irreparable injury would result before the motion could be heard, as the 2026-27 Division I men's basketball season is beginning, rosters are closing, and a season of competition once lost cannot be restored.

The temporary restraining order for now bars the NCAA and anyone acting in concert with it from declaring Iwuchukwu ineligible to practice or compete during the 2026-27 academic year, or directing any member institution or conference to do so. It also issues several other temporary restraints related to his ability to compete this upcoming season.

The NCAA must now appear before the court in September 1st, 2026 and show cause why a preliminary injunction should not issue for the full 2026-27 academic year.

A Comeback the NCAA's Clock Ignored

Iwuchukwu, a 7-foot-1 center, arrived at the University of Southern California in 2022 as one of the highest-ranked recruits in the country. In July 2022, before he had played a single college

game, he suffered sudden cardiac arrest during a summer workout. Team staff revived him on the practice floor with CPR and a defibrillator. He spent the heart of what should have been his freshman season recovering instead of playing, and returned to game action in January 2023, roughly six months after his heart stopped.

The NCAA's eligibility clock ran the entire time. Under Bylaw 12.6 and the Five-Year Eligibility Rule, the season consumed by his cardiac arrest and recovery counts against him the same as any other. In June 2026, the NCAA revised its eligibility model to extend competition eligibility for certain athletes who entered their university in 2022, then excluded the 2022 cohort, the class Iwuchukwu entered college with. The lawsuit challenges that exclusion. Iwuchukwu, formerly of Georgetown and is likely to join St. John's University where he played previously, and the lawsuit seeks to keep him on the floor for 2026-27.



Vincent Iwuchukwu

Iwuchukwu is represented by Ivan Parron of [PARRON LAW | Entertainment + Sports](#), Brandon Leopoldus of [Leopoldus Law, APC](#) and Oscar Michelen of [Michelen Law, P.C.](#)

"This order protects more than one athlete," said Brandon Leopoldus of Leopoldus Law, APC. "It shields St. John's, its coaches, its compliance staff, and Vincent's teammates from any NCAA retaliation for following the court order. No school should have to choose between a lawful order and its athletes."

"The NCAA cannot rewrite its rules midstream and strand the athletes caught in between," said Oscar Michelen of Michelen Law, P.C. "We look forward to the preliminary injunction hearing and to a full airing of these claims on the merits."

"The court recognized what was truly at stake — a season lost can never be given back," said Ivan Parron of PARRON LAW | Entertainment + Sports. "Vincent did everything right. When the NCAA changed its eligibility model in June 2026, it shut the door on the athletes of the 2022 cohort. Today the court reopened that door — and Vincent can take the floor again."

The case is Vincent C. Iwuchukwu v. National Collegiate Athletic Association and Charles D. Baker, as President of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, Index No. 724294/2026, Supreme Court of the State of New York, Queens County.

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