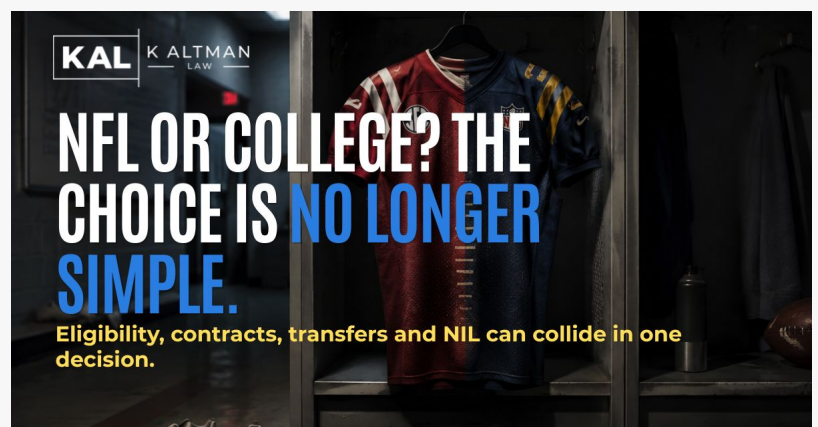


From NFL Training Camp Back to College: Eligibility Fight Creates Unprecedented Choices for Student-Athletes

K Altman Law says NFL-to-college pathways underscore why eligibility, transfer, NIL and professional-contract decisions require coordinated analysis.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- College football has entered territory that would have been almost unimaginable only a few years ago: players who signed professional contracts and participated in NFL training camps are now exploring a return to college football for another season.



Student-athletes returning from NFL opportunities are confronting a complicated legal crossroads where eligibility, contracts, NIL and transfer rules can collide.

According to ESPN's August 24 report on NFL training-camp players seeking to return to college football, former Ole Miss tight end Dae'Quan Wright was waived by the Cleveland Browns as he

“

A decision that looks attractive today can affect the athlete's eligibility, compensation and professional opportunities tomorrow.”

Candice Lapham

pursues a return to college at LSU. Wright and other athletes who began college in 2022 are seeking fifth-year eligibility through litigation challenging how the NCAA implemented its new age-based eligibility framework.

The development is more than an unusual football transaction. It illustrates how rapidly the boundaries between college and professional athletics are changing. An athlete can now face overlapping decisions involving NCAA eligibility, transfer rules, enrollment, an NFL contract,

repayment obligations, NIL compensation, revenue sharing, roster limits and future professional draft opportunities — all on an extremely compressed timeline.

“For the student-athlete, this is not simply a choice between the NFL and college football,” said

[Candice Lapham](#), Senior Attorney, K Altman Law. "There may be multiple contracts, eligibility rules, court orders, transfer restrictions and significant financial consequences operating at the same time. A decision that looks attractive today can affect the athlete's eligibility, compensation and professional opportunities tomorrow."

ESPN reports that Wright is not alone. Other former FBS players who participated in NFL camps or signed professional contracts have entered the transfer portal or obtained temporary court relief allowing them to pursue another college season. Some players remain on NFL rosters while evaluating their options.

The legal foundation remains unsettled. The NCAA adopted a new Division I eligibility model in June allowing qualifying athletes to compete for as many as five seasons within a five-year period tied to age and enrollment. The change did not automatically extend that opportunity to outgoing athletes who began their college careers in 2022 and had already played four seasons, prompting a growing number of lawsuits.

The resulting court orders do not necessarily create a uniform national rule. Temporary restraining orders can apply to particular plaintiffs or circumstances, appellate courts can stay lower-court rulings, and conference transfer rules and institutional admissions requirements may create additional barriers even when NCAA eligibility is available.

"The biggest mistake an athlete or family can make right now is assuming that because another player was permitted to return, the same result automatically applies to them," Lapham said. "Eligibility can turn on the athlete's individual history, the jurisdiction, the language of a court order, the timing of a transfer, and any professional contract already signed."

The financial considerations are equally significant. ESPN reports that a returning athlete could potentially earn more during a college season than on an NFL practice squad. At the same time, the Louisiana temporary restraining order discussed by ESPN requires players returning from professional football to terminate their professional contracts and repay money received before competing in a college game.



Candice Lapham, NIL/Litigation Attorney at K Altman Law

For athletes considering this path, K Altman Law recommends preserving the complete record — NCAA eligibility determinations, college enrollment and competition histories, transfer-portal documentation, scholarship and revenue-sharing agreements, NIL contracts, professional contracts, agent communications and communications with university compliance personnel. Timing can be critical when roster deadlines, enrollment requirements and the start of competition are only days away.

The larger lesson is that the traditional line separating “college athlete” from “professional athlete” is being rewritten in real time. As eligibility litigation, NIL compensation, revenue sharing and professional opportunities increasingly overlap, student-athletes need to evaluate these decisions as interconnected legal and business matters rather than isolated compliance questions.

Student-athletes and families facing NCAA eligibility, NIL, transfer, scholarship, disciplinary or other college-athletics disputes can learn more about K Altman Law's student-focused representation at www.kaltmanlaw.com.

About K Altman Law

K Altman Law is a national student-focused law firm representing students and families in matters involving student defense, special education, Title IX, civil rights, NIL and related education and college-athletics disputes. The firm advocates for students navigating high-stakes institutional and regulatory processes.

Candice K. Lapham

K Altman Law

+1 888-984-1341

kalonline@kaltmanlaw.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/936772532>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.