In sports other than football and basketball, a volunteer coach is any coach who does not receive compensation or remuneration from the institution’s athletics department or any organization funded in whole or in part by the athletics department or that is involved primarily in the promotion of the institution’s athletics program (e.g., booster club, athletics foundation association). [11.01.5]

Each sport is limited to one volunteer coach per academic year. Please note the following exceptions:
- Women’s Rowing: 4 volunteer coaches
- Swimming & Diving: 2 volunteer coaches
- Cross country/Track & Field: Cross country, indoor track & field and outdoor track & field are separate sports and may use one volunteer coach for each of the programs. The volunteer coach may coach student-athletes in any of the three sports throughout the academic year.
- Track & Field – Pole Vault: It is permissible to use one volunteer coach to coach both men’s and women’s pole vaulters. [11.7.4.2.3]

An individual designated in a coaching category assumes that position for the duration of the academic year unless the coach was temporarily replaced due to extenuating circumstances or through normal attrition. [5/13/92 Staff Interp.]

Volunteer Coaches May:
- Dine on-campus with prospects on unofficial visits, provided the volunteer coach pays for his or her own meal(s).
- Receive complimentary meals (on- or off-campus) during a prospect’s official visit, provided the volunteer coach dines with the prospect. Meals must occur within a 30-mile radius of campus.
- Receive complimentary meals incidental to organized team activities (e.g., pre- or postgame meals, occasional meals). Volunteer coaches may not receive training table meals.
- Receive two complimentary tickets to home contests in the coach’s sport.
- Receive travel expenses associated with away games (transportation to and from the contest, meals, lodging).
- Receive parking expenses associated with practice and competition.
- Receive equipment that is incidental to coaching duties (e.g., shoes, shirts, jackets and shorts).
- Receive compensation for employment at an institutional sports camp or clinic.
- Receive compensation from the institution for duties actually performed outside the athletics department from a source outside the athletics department.
- Receive gifts given to the team for championships (e.g., Conference, NCAA gifts). [11.01.5, 13.1.2.3, 8/22/01 Official Interp., 9/16/88 Staff Interp., 11/23/88 Staff Interp.]
Volunteer Coaches May Not:
∅ Contact or evaluate prospective student-athletes off-campus.
∅ Scout opponents off-campus.
∅ Perform recruiting functions (i.e., telephone prospects, prepare general recruiting correspondence to prospects).
  • Exception: Volunteer coaches may prepare general correspondence to prospects on or after September 1 of the prospect’s junior year in high school.
  • Exception: Volunteer coaches may make telephone calls to and receive telephone calls from a prospect the calendar day after the prospect signs a National Letter of Intent with MSU. [New Legislation]
∅ Dine off-campus with a prospect on an unofficial visit, even if the volunteer coach pays for his or her own meal.
∅ Receive travel expenses not associated with team travel (e.g., coach’s clinics).
∅ Receive a cash payment in recognition of an extraordinary achievement from the institution or an outside group.
∅ Receive complimentary tickets to home or away contest in sports other than the coach’s sport.
∅ Receive free housing, transportation or meals from the athletics department. [11.01.5, 7/19/89 Staff Interp.]

Employment of High School or Two-Year College Coaches
• MSU may not employ (either on a paid or volunteer basis) a high school, preparatory school or two-year college coach who remains a coach in the same sport at the high school, preparatory school or two-year college. This prohibition does not apply to junior high school coaches.
• It is permissible to employ a high school, preparatory school or two-year college coach (as a volunteer) who remains a coach in a different sport at the high school, preparatory school or two-year college.
• Men’s and women’s teams in the same sport are considered different sports for the purposes of this legislation. [13.8.3.2, 13.8.3.3, 11.4.1, 10/23/87 Staff Interp.]

Involvement with Local Sports Clubs
• A volunteer coach may be involved in any capacity (e.g., as a participant, administrator or instructional or coaching activities) in the same sport with a local sports club or organization located in MSU’s community, provided all participating prospects are legal residents of the area (within a 50-mile radius of MSU’s campus) and there is no institutional sponsorship of the club.
• A prospect who resides outside the 50-mile radius of MSU’s campus may be a member of the local sports club without impacting the involvement of the volunteer coach, provided MSU documents that the local sports club is the closest opportunity for the prospect to participate in the sport.
• A prospect who relocates to within a 50-mile radius of campus on a temporary basis (e.g., to participate on a club team or attend an institution while maintaining a permanent residence outside of the 50-mile radius) would not be considered a legal resident of the area for purposes of the local sports club legislation. [13.11.2.3, 13.11.2.3.1, 3/23/07 Ed. Column]

Private Lessons
• It is not permissible for a volunteer coach to conduct any physical activity at which one or more prospects reveal, demonstrate or display their athletics ability except as provided for in the sports club legislation. Therefore, a volunteer coach is prohibited from teaching private lessons to any prospect in the coach’s sport, except women’s golf and equestrian.
• A volunteer coach in women’s golf or equestrian may teach private lessons to a prospect in the respective sports, provided the following conditions are met:
  o The prospect resides within a 50-mile radius of the MSU’s campus;
  o The coach makes lessons available to the general public;
  o In women's golf, lessons are only provided to female prospect and the coach is a teaching professional certified pursuant to the Ladies Professional Golf Association and/or Professional Golf Association certification program;
  o Fees charged to the prospect are at a rate commensurate with fees charged to all individuals;
  o Fees charged to the prospect are not paid by individuals or entities other than the prospect or his or her parent or legal guardian; and
  o MSU keeps on file in the office of the director of athletics documentation of the fee charged for the lessons and the name of any individual receiving any portion of the fee. [13.11.3.7, 3/23/07 Ed. Column]