



CAFFEINE AND GUARANA Celsius and Other Energy Drinks Not Banned by the NCAA

Celsius is not banned by the NCAA as has been [mistakenly reported](#) in several [articles](#) and in social media. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of misinformation shared suggesting that ingredients like ginseng, guarana, L-carnitine and taurine are illegal stimulants or that guarana is subject to total ban under NCAA regulations. They are not. The information provided here aims to provide accurate information that NCAA student athletes can rely on when considering Celsius or other energy drinks that may contain caffeine, guarana, or the other ingredients highlighted.

- Caffeine is not banned by the NCAA, rather it is limited. A student athlete must violate the 15 micrograms per milliliter (ug/ml, parts per million) NCAA caffeine limit in urine to test positive according to the [2021-2022 NCAA Drug Testing Program](#).
- Around 500 ng/ml is needed to exceed the 15 ug/ml NCAA caffeine threshold according to [CPSDA, SCAN, NCAA Sport Science Institute](#), the [U.S. Olympic Committee](#) and [ISSN](#). Metabolism can vary and lower amounts may be a concern for some student athletes.
- The ISSN states 10 mg/kg body weight is needed to violate the 12 ug/ml threshold used in Olympic drug testing, this corresponds to 500-1,362 mg for athletes in the 110-300 pound range.
- Celsius contains 200 mg of caffeine per serving, including the amount from guarana, and suggests a limit of 2 servings per day. When used as directed the caffeine provided by Celsius is below the suggested NCAA risk level and in line with the [400 mg amount the FDA suggests](#) is not associated with negative side effects.
- Guarana is included on the [NCAA Banned Substances](#) list as an example of caffeine, guarana itself is not banned. Guarana is simply once source of caffeine along with coffee, tea, cocoa, kola nut and many other plants.
- NCAA drug testing does not differentiate between sources of caffeine and does not test for guarana, coffee, tea, or other sources of caffeine. The NCAA tests for caffeine itself in excessive amounts higher than 15 ug/ml.
- An [NCAA statement in 2009](#) confirmed that guarana and caffeine are not banned and said, “they can be purchased and consumed by student-athletes on their own without any risk to their NCAA eligibility.”
- Other ingredients like ginseng, L-carnitine, and taurine are legal dietary supplement ingredients. They are not illegal stimulants nor are they banned by the NCAA or any other sport drug testing program.
- Energy drinks containing caffeine or guarana are impermissible for NCAA to provide to student athletes under [NCAA Division I Bylaw 16.5.2.7 Nutritional Supplements](#) but they are not banned substances when used in moderation. Excessive use of any product that contains caffeine puts a student athlete at risk of a positive.
- Caffeine and guarana are in popular energy drinks like Celsius, Monster, RedBull, Rockstar and others that are not banned by the NCAA. Energy drink brands can’t be NCAA sponsors but can be NIL sponsors of individual athletes.