

Lawyer for N.C. man who arranged H.S. star's recruiting trip hopes NCAA clears player

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A lawyer representing the North Carolina-based financial adviser who arranged Shabazz Muhammad's unofficial recruiting visits to Duke and North Carolina said on Wednesday that he hopes the NCAA does "the right thing" and clears Muhammad, a freshman guard at UCLA.

Bill Trosch, a Charlotte lawyer, represents Ben Lincoln, a North Carolina-based financial adviser who has ties to Muhammad's family. Last week, before UCLA's first game, the NCAA suspended Muhammad, who arrived in college as one of the most prized recruits in the nation.

In a report that CBSSports.com published in February, Lincoln acknowledged that he provided Muhammad with transportation and lodging during his unofficial recruiting visits to Duke and North Carolina when he was a high school junior.

Muhammad became one of the top recruits in the nation during his time at Bishop Gorman High in Las Vegas.

"As Shabazz began the process of looking at colleges, I offered to help (his father) and the family take unofficial visits to two colleges," Lincoln told CBSSports.com. "I simply was trying to help the family I care so much about. It is important that this be resolved quickly and not negatively affect Shabazz in any way."

Trosch, Lincoln's lawyer, said on Wednesday that his client is standing by the comments he made in February to CBSSports.com.

CBSSports.com reported in February that the NCAA warned several schools that were recruiting Muhammad that his eligibility could be in jeopardy. North Carolina eventually pulled out of Muhammad's recruitment, while Duke remained involved before he chose UCLA last spring.

In a statement it released earlier this week to the Los Angeles Times, Muhammad's family expressed its frustration with the NCAA. In the statement, the family said the NCAA – through its member institutions – had approved of Lincoln paying for Muhammad's unofficial visits to Duke and UNC.

"Shabazz's family is now faced with the situation where they are concerned that any attempt to tell more of their side of the story will result in further punitive action, as Shabazz is still under the mercy of the NCAA," the statement said. "Shabazz and his family will continue to honestly cooperate with the NCAA in the hopes that Shabazz soon will be allowed to play basketball at UCLA."

The NCAA, which rarely comments on investigations, is continuing to examine whether Muhammad received impermissible benefits. **Trosch** said on Wednesday that he didn't know when the NCAA might reach a final decision on Muhammad's eligibility.

"We're still working with the NCAA in hopes that they do the right thing," **Trosch** said.