



NCAA Division III Federated Rules Process

The following sets forth the process for establishing Division III specific playing rules. This process was guided and established in accordance with the following principles:

1. There needs to be appropriate Division III input into the establishment of playing rules;
2. Playing rules that are related to student-athlete health and safety are common and the process for all other playing rules should encourage common rules and allow for flexibility when deemed necessary by the division; and
3. The divisional playing rules process needs to be incorporated into the existing framework of the rules making process to support efficiency, understanding and application of the rules.

Authority for federating.

1. Proposal BOG-2022-1, the establishment of a new NCAA constitution included a provision (Constitution Article 2-A-2-d) that allows for flexibility at the divisional level in establishing rules for sports competitions.
2. NC-2024-7 (common provision voting separately) clarified that playing rules do not have to be common and charged the divisions with establishing their divisional processes for playing rules.
3. July 17-18, 2023, The Division III Management Council ratified actions by the NCAA Division III Administrative Committee approving a process for establishing Division III specific playing rules (i.e., federated rules process).
4. October 21-22, 2024, NCAA Division III Management Council amended the Division III federated rules process by creating a Federated Rules Subcommittee of Management Council.

Core tenets of the process.

Only Division III members of playing rules bodies and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) will vote on Division III specific playing rules.

The Division III sport committee(s) will provide guidance to the Division III members of the playing rules committee(s) on potential federated playing rules.

The Federated Rules Subcommittee of Management Council (see below), when appropriate, will provide guidance to the Division III members of the playing rule committee(s) and PROP on potential federated playing rules.

NCAA national office staff will provide notice to the membership when proposed playing rules have a significant financial or philosophical impact.

Process.

The following link provides an overview of the process for establishing common playing rules:
[Rules: What Is A Playing Rule.pdf](#).

The following sets forth the process for Division III federation of playing rules:

Before the annual playing rule committee meeting.

The Division III members of the rules committee will meet with the members of the relevant Division III sports championship committee to provide additional Division III perspectives on the proposals being considered.

The Federated Rules Subcommittee of the Management Council may also attend this meeting to provide its perspective.

Annual Playing Rules committee meeting.

During the annual meeting, the Division III members of the playing rules committee may recommend and vote on rules proposals that are specific to Division III.

A simple majority vote of the Division III members is required to approve a proposal for the division.

If the playing rules committee adopts a common rule that is not supported by the Division III members at the annual meeting, it shall still go forward as a common rule for purposes of soliciting Division III comments. The Division III members will consider whether or not the common rule should apply to Division III after the comment period.

To raise awareness of the opportunity to provide feedback, the NCAA Division III staff will notify the membership through NADIII AA and D3CA of any proposed rules that are going out for comment, that:

1. Have a significant financial impact whether that is a direct financial impact, impacts personnel or requires additional resources; or
2. Could be construed to impact a fundamental Division III principle (e.g., student-athlete participation opportunities).

Comment Period.

Proposals that are approved for Division III by the Division III members of the rules committee are sent to Division III for feedback and may be, at the discretion of the full rules committee, sent to other divisions for feedback, noting that the proposal would apply to Division III.

Playing Rules committee review of comment period results.

Prior to the meeting, the Division III members of the playing rules committee will meet again with the relevant Division III sports championship committee to review the comments.

The Federated Rules Subcommittee of the Management Council may also attend this meeting to provide its perspective.

After the joint meeting, the Division III members of the playing rules committee at their playing rules committee meeting may do the following:

1. Reconsider, delay implementation or alter a Division III specific proposal.
2. Reconsider, delay implementation or alter a common rule as it applies to Division III.
3. For Division III, reconsider, delay implementation or alter proposed common rules that were not ultimately approved by the playing rules committee.

The vote for any of these actions would be a simple majority of the Division III members of the playing rules committee.

After the rules committee meeting.

The Federated Rules Subcommittee of Management Council may meet before PROP's review of proposals to discuss any proposals of concern. Any position of this subcommittee will be forwarded to the Division III members of PROP.

Playing Rules Oversight Panel review of proposals.

1. Division III members of the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) vote on Division III specific proposals.
2. If a common rules proposal is not supported by the full PROP, the Division III members of the panel may vote to determine whether the proposal is approved for Division III.
3. The Division III members may also vote to remand a common rule back to the playing rules committee for Division III only.

Conclusion of the federated playing rules process.

The Division III PROP members' vote is the final step in the federated process. There is no appellate opportunity. However, after the playing rules process has been completed, the division does have the opportunity to exempt Division III from a common playing rule that has been adopted but is not effective per the process outlined below.

NCAA Division III Federated Playing Rules Exemption Process

At the 2025 NCAA Convention the membership passed proposal 2025-4 which allows Management Council to exempt Division III from a common playing rule approved by PROP that is not yet effective. The process permits either the membership or the Division III Management Council to initiate that review under limited circumstances. The process for initiating and conducting such a review is as follows:

Management Council:

1. After PROP approves any playing rules changes, the staff will forward the newly adopted rules identified during the playing rules process by the membership or governance structure to the Management Council Playing Rules Subcommittee for review that has a significant financial impact and/or are detrimental to a Division III philosophy.
2. The subcommittee will provide the Management Council with a summary of its review and any recommendations at the council's next regular meeting or during a videoconference, if needed.
3. If PROP meets after the July Management Council meeting, the staff will arrange a videoconference with the council to review any report and recommendations from the subcommittee.

Membership:

1. After PROP approves any playing rules changes, the membership may request the Management Council to review a common playing rule. To initiate this review, the membership (either two multi-sport conferences or 20 institutions) must submit a letter to the Division III Management Council chair with a copy to the council's NCAA staff liaison.
2. The letter must be executed by either the conference commissioners, athletics directors, athletics direct reports or president/chancellors, identify the playing rule(s), and state the reason why the rule(s) will place an unreasonable financial burden on member institutions or is detrimental to a Division III philosophical principle. Supporting documentation is recommended.

3. The request should also indicate the preferred outcome if the Management Council would exempt the division from the playing rule (i.e., making the rule permissible or reverting to the previous rule).
4. The request should be submitted as early as possible once the membership has been notified of the rules change(s) that have been approved by PROP. No request will be considered after the competitive season for a sport has started. The council will consider the timing of the request and the impact that changing a playing rule will have on officials, coaches, student-athletes, athletics departments and their staff when making a decision.

Possible Management Council Decisions:

1. Maintain the playing rule that was approved by PROP.
2. Make the playing rule permissive.
3. Revert the mandatory playing rule to the previous rule.

Decision Process:

1. The council will review the written request without an in-person presentation.
2. The council may request participation from a Division III member of PROP, relevant sport playing rules committee/subcommittee and/or staff liaisons to either group.
3. The council will provide its response in writing, copying PROP and the sport playing rules committee/subcommittee.
4. Council decisions are effective immediately, unless otherwise noted.
5. There is no opportunity for an appeal or reconsideration of the council's decision.

Decision Ratification:

If the council exempts the division from a common playing rule or makes the rule permissive, the council's action will be included in the next Convention's Official Notice for possible ratification by the Division III delegates during the Business Session at the NCAA Convention.