PLAYING RULES & DIVISION III
April 2024

What is a playing rule?
Playing rules are what happens on the field, court, pool, pitch, mat, rink, lane, track or slope when an opponent and officials are present. Playing rules are not what happens during recruiting or practicing, or while working on compliance issues or NCAA championship policies.

What is the difference between a common rule and a federated rule?
A common rule is consistent across all three divisions, while a federated rule allows for differences by division.

What is the common rule making process and who is involved?
Every two years, each sport undergoes a Playing Rules Cycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Info Gathering</td>
<td>Rules Committee members solicit feedback from stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules Committee Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Rules Committee meets to discuss feedback and vote on which rule proposals to move through the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>A two-week period where head coaches, commissioners &amp; ADs can offer feedback on the proposals moving through the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules Committee Reviews Comments</td>
<td>Rules Committee reviews comment period feedback and decides which proposals to elevate to PROP for final consideration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROP Reviews &amp; Adopts</td>
<td>PROP reviews all proposals for financial implications, safety concerns and harm to image of the game.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Year Rule Book Published</td>
<td>Proposals approved by PROP are published in the next rule book and sent to head coaches and commissioners.</td>
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**Stakeholders.**
Members of Division III, including coaches, commissioners and athletic administrators.

**Rules Committee.**
An Association-wide committee that meets to determine which rule changes are elevated to PROP and if proposals are common or federated. DIII is represented on each committee by 2 to 4 members, depending on the sport. For sports using non-NCAA playing rules*, a subcommittee of the DIII Sport Championship Committee serves in this role.

**Sport Championship Committee.**
A DIII sport-specific committee comprised of coaches and administrators who are experts in their sport, govern each sport and are responsible for administering their respective championships, including establishing brackets and selecting teams to fill them.

**PROP.**
The Playing Rules Oversight Panel. An Association-wide committee that reviews playing rules proposals and playing rules issues, including implementation of playing rules proposed by rules committees. DIII representation is 3 members.

*sports using non-NCAA playing rules: fencing, field hockey, golf, gymnastics, rifle, rowing, skiing, tennis and men's volleyball.
**How does the Division III federated rules process fit in the existing playing rules process?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Info Gathering</th>
<th>Division III members of the Rules Committee meet with the Division III Sport-Specific Championship Committee to discuss potential rule changes. Division III-specific proposals can be submitted to the Rules Committee during the “Call for Proposals” period.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rules Committee Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Division III members of the Rules Committee may send a Division III-specific rule for comment and members may identify proposals of interest for Division III.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>• There may be Division III-specific rules where only Division III head coaches, commissioners and ADs provide comments. • The membership will be notified when potential rules carry a financial and/or philosophical impact to encourage participation during the comment period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules Committee Reviews Comments</td>
<td>• Division III members of the Rules Committee meet with the Division III Sport-Specific Championship Committee in an advisory capacity to review the Division III-specific feedback. • During the Association-wide meeting, Division III members may: • Approve/alter/reject/delay a rule only for Division III. • Reject/alter/delay an adopted common rule as it applies for Division III.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROP Reviews &amp; Adopts</td>
<td>Division III members of PROP vote on DIII-specific issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year Rule Book Published</td>
<td>Proposals approved by PROP are published in the next rule book and sent to head coaches and commissioners.</td>
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**Can any playing rule be federated?**

While PROP has suggested that some rules areas are integral to competition and should remain common for all divisions, it has also acknowledged that there could be exceptions based on compelling reasons to federate a particular rule. Only the DIII members of PROP determine if a proposed rule that addresses one of the areas, below, has compelling reasons to be federated.

PROP has suggested that the following rules areas should be common:

- Rules with a health and safety impact
- Field dimensions, court markings, permissible logos on the field/court
- Scoring and timing rules, including rules surrounding overtime
- Conduct/unsporting rules
- Rules addressing penalty enforcement
- Uniform rules
- Equipment rules (ball/stick specifications, player equipment)
- Technical rules (individual team sports)

PROP has suggested that the following rules areas could be federated or permissive:

- Halftime/intermission length
- Allowable substitutions
- Technology rules (instant replay, challenge review, technology on bench/sideline, etc.)
- Rules identified as administrative that can be altered by mutual consent of the institutions involved in the contest

**Have questions about the playing rules processes?**
For questions about playing rules contact: Rachel Seewald, rseewald@ncaa.org.