



Use of Practice Players during the 2025 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship Question and Answer Document

Consistent with the adoption of legislation in June 2024, the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee has approved the use of male practice players during the championship and the school must either include them in their travel party, the school must pay for their travel expenses, or the individual pays their own travel expenses. This policy applies to all participating institutions, regardless of whether the team is traveling for an away-from-home contest or playing at its host institution's facility. The championship travel party and credential policies remain unchanged. To access the championship facility, teams must include male practice players on the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List and/or Team Personnel Credential Form.

In addition, pursuant to a September 26, 2024, Legislative Relief Blanket Waiver, student managers may serve as practice players for the 2025 championship only in accordance with the guidance found in the participant manual. The NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee approved the extension of the application of this blanket waiver to the 2025 championship. The following information is intended to assist the membership in its understanding of the policy changes for the upcoming championship.

Question and Answer for Male Students Serving as Practice Players.

Question No. 1: Is there a limit on the number of male practice players during the championship?

Answer: No, there is no limit. However, the championship travel party and credential policies remain unchanged. Therefore, teams must include male practice players within the current limitations on the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List and the Team Personnel Credential Form.

Question No. 2: May male practice players engage in coaching activities?

Answer: No.

Question No. 3: May a team switch out male practice players during the championship?

Answer: Yes, provided the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List and/or the Team Personnel Credential Form are updated in Teamworks to reflect the change.

Question No. 4: May male practice players with a Team Personnel Credential participate in gameday activities and where should they sit during games?

Answer: Individuals with Team Personnel Credentials are granted access to the court and team bench area pregame (until starting line-ups are announced), halftime and postgame. If not assigned to one of the designated courtside seating locations (media seating, photo box or upper video) during the game, these individuals must have a ticket to have a seat during the game. An institution may purchase the ticket or use their allotment.

Question No. 5: What access may male practice players have to facilities, etc. when their team is playing its contest at its host institution's facility?

Answer: Access regulations start to apply 9 a.m. on the day before the first practice day through the end of the championship at the site. During this time, male practice players must

have a Team Personnel Credential to access restricted areas. Credentials are required for access to all restricted areas beginning when the building opens at 9 a.m. on the first practice day until 9 a.m. the day following competition at the site.

Question No. 6: Can male practice players be included in the team's official travel party? May an institution pay for the travel expenses of male practice players if there is not room in the official travel party for them to be included?

Answer: Yes, the school must either include them in their travel party, the school must pay for their travel expenses, or the individual pays their own travel expenses. The NCAA will not assist with any travel arrangements outside of the official team travel party. This policy applies to all participating institutions, regardless of whether the team is traveling for an away-from-home contest or playing at its host institution's facility. The championship travel party and credential policies remain unchanged. To access the championship facility, teams must include male practice players on the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List or Team Personnel Credential Form.

Question No. 7: May male practice players be included in the team's hotel room block?

Answer: Yes.

Question No. 8: May male practice players purchase seats on the team's bus/charter plane to travel to the tournament game?

Answer: Yes. Per the NCAA travel policies identified in the participant manual, if there is room for extra passengers on a charter flight, the one-way cost for a ticket is a standard \$500. If there is room, male practice players may ride on team busses to/from the championship site at no additional cost. Currently, there is no cost per person policy in place for ground transportation. Teams are encouraged to review the NCAA travel policies in the participant manual.

Question No.9: Will a team's travel squad size and allotment of credentials be increased to account for this policy change?

Answer: No. To access the championship facility, teams must include male practice players on the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List or Team Personnel Credential Form.

Question No.10: Is an institution permitted to designate the male practice players as student managers?

Answer: Yes.

Question and Answer for Student Managers Serving as Practice Players.

Question No. 1: Is an attestation form required this year for student managers who meet the policy application to practice players?

Answer: Yes, the attestation form will be assigned to the primary administrator to complete via Teamworks.

Question No. 2: May student managers appointed after September 26, 2024, be permitted to be practice players during the 2025 championship?

- Answer: Yes, provided the student manager position existed as of September 26, 2024. Any student manager position created after September 26, 2024, may not engage as practice players during the championship. However, they may engage in traditional managerial duties.
- Question No. 3: If a student manager meets the policy, what activities may they engage in during the championship?
- Answer: Such individuals must engage in traditional managerial duties and may also serve as practice players.
- Question No. 4: What are traditional managerial duties?
- Answer: Some examples of traditional managerial duties include, but are not limited to shagging balls, tracking statistics, running the clock, set up of equipment, hydration, laundry, and assisting with pregame warm-up activities.
- Question No. 5: Is there a limit on the number of student managers that may serve as practice players?
- Answer: No, there is no limit. However, there are limitations on the travel squad and who may appear on the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List and the Team Personnel Credential Form.
- Question No. 6: May student managers engage in coaching activities?
- Answer: No.
- Question No. 7: May a team switch out student managers during the championship?
- Answer: Yes, provided the Participating Institution Bench Pass Gate List and/or the Team Personnel Credential Form are updated in Teamworks to reflect the change.

Associated Bylaws and Blanker Waivers

12.7.5 Eligibility Requirements for Male Students to Practice with Women's Teams. A male student may engage in practice sessions with women's teams subject to the following conditions:

- (a) A male student who practices with an institution's women's team must be verified as eligible for practice in accordance with Bylaw [14.2.1](#) and must have eligibility remaining under the five-year rule (see Bylaw [12.8.1](#));
- (b) It is not permissible for an institution to provide a male student financial assistance in return for practicing with a women's team. A male student who is receiving financial aid or any compensation for serving in any position in the athletics department may not practice with a women's team. A male student-athlete who is a counter in a men's sport may not engage in practice sessions with an institution's women's team in any sport;
- (c) It is not permissible for an institution to provide a male student housing and food to remain on campus during a vacation period to participate in practice sessions with a women's team;
- (d) It is not permissible for a recruited male student-athlete who is serving an academic year of residence as a nonqualifier to participate in practice sessions with a women's team. A nonrecruited male student who is serving an academic year of residence as a nonqualifier may participate in practice sessions with a women's team;
- (e) It is permissible for an institution to provide practice apparel to a male student for the purpose of practicing with a women's team; and
- (f) A male student who practices with an institution's women's basketball team may participate in required summer athletic activities, provided the student was enrolled full time at the conclusion of the regular academic term (e.g., spring semester or quarter) immediately preceding the institution's summer term.

12.7.5.1 Travel Expenses In Conjunction With Away-From-Home Competition -- Women's Basketball. A male student who regularly engages in practice sessions with an institution's women's basketball team may receive travel expenses to participate in practice sessions in conjunction with the institution's away-from-home competition.

Blanket Waiver -- Women's Basketball -- Student Managers Serving as Practice Players

At the request of the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee, the NCAA staff issued a blanket waiver to permit women's basketball student managers to also serve as practice players during the 2024-25 playing season.

In granting this request, the NCAA academic and membership affairs staff noted:

1. This waiver is effective immediately, and is an extension of previous blanket waivers which provided flexibility for women's basketball student managers to serve as practice players during the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 playing seasons;
2. The student manager position(s) existed as of September 26, 2024;
3. This waiver does not permit women's basketball student managers not counted within the institution's coaching limitations that are performing practice player duties to engage in on-court coaching activities;
4. This waiver provides flexibility for institutions to conduct on-court countable athletically related activities and practice activities with the typical number of staff and practice players to assist in on-court activities and will provide continuity for teams to operate with the numbers of staff and practice players they have used in recent years;
5. This waiver is in effect until the conclusion of the institution's 2024-25 regular season schedule and is only applicable for the 2024-25 women's basketball regular season. Any future adjustments need to be discussed through the governance and legislative process;
6. This waiver does not apply to the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship as it is under the purview of the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee, who will take up that discussion separately at a future meeting; and
7. This waiver does apply to other events (e.g., conference championships, WBIT, WNIT) unless these events have a rule that precludes this waiver from applying to the events.

This blanket waiver is effective beginning September 26, 2024, and will conclude at the end of the 2024-25 regular season. Please reference Case No. 1229005 in Requests/Self-Reports Online via the search tab for additional information.

[Reference: NCAA Division I Bylaw 11.02.5]