



## 2020-21 Championships Eligibility in Sports Other than Basketball or Football

### Overview.

The NCAA Division I Council approved a blanket waiver on October 14, 2020, which stated, for the 2020-21 academic year, institutions are not required to meet sports sponsorship minimums, provided the institution intended to sponsor the requisite number of sports (and so indicated on the Sports Sponsorship and Demographic Survey) and is unable to do so due to COVID-19 scheduling challenges. This action includes a waiver of the requirements of NCAA Bylaw 20.9.6.3 (minimum contests and participants requirements for sports sponsorship) for sports sponsorship purposes.

On June 17, the Council approved a one-year waiver of Bylaw 31.3.4.1 (requirements to be eligible for automatic qualification in a championship); therefore, a conference has complete autonomy to determine its automatic qualifier for a division championship for the 2020-21 academic year. Additionally, the Council approved a one-year waiver of the six-institution requirement for automatic qualification consideration for multisport conferences (Bylaw 31.3.4.4.1) and single sport conferences (Bylaw 31.3.4.4.2) for fall and winter sports only.

Accordingly, in fall and winter sports, a minimum of three institutions must participate in conference competition together (e.g., regular season in-conference competition, conference tournament).

**The conference must forward notification of its automatic qualifier selection process to the applicable sport committee at least two weeks prior to the NCAA championship selection date in that sport.**

For the 2020-21 academic year, the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee waived the .500 rule for fall, winter and spring sports, which normally requires teams to have overall won-lost records of .500 or better for at-large selections.

For the 2020-21 academic year, to be eligible for an automatic qualification:

- Fall and winter sports: A conference must either conduct regular-season conference competition among ***three*** institutions or a conference tournament of at least ***three*** institutions.
- Spring sports: A conference must either conduct regular-season conference competition among ***six*** institutions or a conference tournament of at least ***six*** institutions.

- An institution that receives a conference's ***automatic qualification*** must participate in regular-season conference competition or a conference tournament as determined by the conference. Automatic qualifiers are not subject to the minimum competition requirements for at-large selections.
- To be eligible for an ***at-large selection***, an institution must participate in the minimum number of contests/dates of competition, against Division I opponents (except National Collegiate Championship Sports), for selections purposes (including all conference tournament competitions, if applicable) and meet all other selection criteria and qualifying marks and times as determined by the sport committee and approved by the oversight committee.

### **Frequently Asked Questions.**

**Question No. 1:** Does the minimum number of contests/dates of competition for championship eligibility apply to both automatic qualifiers and at-large selection?

**Answer:** **No**, the minimum requirements only apply to at-large selection. Institutions should contact their conference office for guidance on automatic qualification requirements.

**Question No. 2:** Can conference tournament games count toward the minimum number of contests/dates of competition for at-large selection?

**Answer:** **Yes**, institutions may count any and all conference tournament competition towards the minimum competition requirement. Institutions should contact their conference office for guidance regarding conference tournament participation.

**Question No. 3:** Do the minimum number of contests/dates of competition need to be against Division I opponents?

**Answer:** **Yes**, the minimum number of contests/dates of competition must be against Division I opponents (except in National Collegiate Championship sports). Institutions are permitted to compete against non-Division I opponents; however, those competition may not be used to meet the minimum competition requirement for selections.

### **Waiver Process for Minimum Competition Requirement for NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championship Eligibility.**

#### **Championship Policy.**

An institution must participate in a minimum amount of competition with a minimum number of participants to qualify for selection as an at-large in the NCAA Division I and National Collegiate

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Championships. Institutions may count all conference tournament competition in which the team participates towards their minimum number of required games.

Sport	2020-21 Minimums for At-Large Selection	2020-21 Minimum Participant Requirements
Cross Country	1	1 - Ind. 5 - Team
Field Hockey	6	-
Soccer	6	-
Women's Volleyball	10	-
Men's Water Polo	8	-
Bowling	4 (dates of competition)	5
Fencing	5 contests (at least 10 bouts)	1
Gymnastics (Men's)	5	1 - Ind. 5 - Team
Gymnastics (Women's)	4	1 - Ind. 5 - Team
Men's Ice Hockey	13	-
Women's Ice Hockey	10	-
Indoor Track and Field	1 (qualifying mark)	1
Rifle	4	1 - Ind. 4 - Team
Skiing	1 event start per discipline	1
Swimming and Diving (Men's)	1	1
Swimming and Diving (Women's)	(qualifying mark)	
Baseball	14	-
Beach Volleyball	4	-
Golf (Men's)	4 dates of competition, 8 stroke-play rounds	1 - Ind.
Golf (Women's)		4 - Team
Lacrosse	5	-
Women's Rowing	3	23
Softball	14	-
Tennis	6 singles 4 doubles	1 - Singles 2 - Doubles 4 - Team
Outdoor Track and Field	2	14
Men's Volleyball	10	-
Women's Water Polo	5	-

**Waiver Opportunity.**

The governing sport committee has the authority to waive the minimum competition and minimum participant requirements when an institution is unable to meet the championship eligibility minimum(s).

This waiver process is effective for the 2020-21 NCAA Division I and National Collegiate championships. The decision to approve any waivers will be based on objective evidence that the team's inability to meet the minimum requirement was outside the institution's control.

All such requests will be reviewed by the governing sport committee and the NCAA national office staffs.

### **Application Procedures.**

A member institution seeking a waiver of the minimum competition or participant requirement for championships eligibility shall submit a request in writing to the national office. The request shall include the following:

1. Documentation that its institution had scheduled for the 2020-21 academic year the appropriate minimum number of contests or dates of competition against the requisite number of opponents;
2. Documentation that competitions the institution had contracted to play in 2020-21 were canceled due to a documented COVID-19-related circumstances or were unable to be completed due to COVID-19-related circumstances (e.g. opponent's director of athletics providing rationale for cancelled game and inability to reschedule during the 2020-21 season); and
3. Documentation that despite a good-faith effort, the institution was unable to re-arrange its schedule to play the appropriate minimum amount of competition with the requisite number of participants.

All such institutional requests must provide written documentation and be signed by the requesting school's director of athletics and include a letter of support from the conference office.

### Review Procedures.

On receipt of the waiver request, the staff will review the information to ensure it is complete. The committee has the authority to hear, deliberate and decide these waivers. After reviewing all information, the committee, by a two-thirds majority of its members present and voting, will render for the current academic year one of the following decisions:

1. **Approval:** It is determined that the institution's request demonstrated the institution's inability to meet the minimum requirement was outside the institution's control.
2. **Denial:** It is determined that the institution's request did not demonstrate that the institution's inability to meet the minimum requirement was outside the institution's control.

The committee shall conduct its review by teleconference, email, or videoconference. Deliberations shall involve only committee members and staff.

#### Voting Procedures.

The committee shall meet via email, teleconference or videoconference as needed. A quorum of 50 percent of the committee members present and eligible to vote is needed for the meeting to proceed. The institution is not present during the meeting.

The committee chair is responsible for conducting the meeting. The staff will present the basic facts of the waiver. The staff will provide assistance to the committee but will not deliberate or determine any waiver that is before the committee. The committee chair leads the discussion and calls for a vote. The chair has the authority to determine any procedural issues that arise. Each waiver must be moved, seconded and a vote taken. The chair votes only in the event of a tie.

#### Appeals of Committee Decisions.

The decision of the committee shall be final and shall not be subject to further review.

#### Reconsideration.

After the committee has issued a decision, the institution may ask the committee to reconsider its decision only if the institution submits new or additional relevant information that was not available at the time of the original submission.

#### Confidentiality.

Committee members shall not communicate any information related to specific waiver cases to anyone other than the staff or other committee members.

#### Recusal.

A committee or staff member shall recuse himself or herself from participating in proceedings (e.g., deliberating as a committee member) of a waiver case when he or she is directly connected with the involved institution, including but not limited to, a member of the committee member's institution or institution's conference. A committee or staff member with a personal relationship or institutional affiliation that reasonably would result in the appearance of bias or prejudice should refrain from participating in any manner in the processing of a waiver request. It is the responsibility of the committee or staff member to remove himself or herself if a conflict exists.

Institutional objections to a committee or staff member participating in a review of a waiver should be raised with and resolved by the chair as soon as recognized but will not be considered unless the concern is raised prior to the scheduled meeting. Exceptions to the recusal policy may be granted by the chair due to time or quorum constraints.

**Deadline.**

Waivers will not be accepted until 30 days prior to selections and must be submitted to the staff contact listed below no later than seven days prior to selections.

**Staff Contact.**

Liz Suscha  
Managing Director, Championships & Alliances  
[lsuscha@ncaa.org](mailto:lsuscha@ncaa.org)