



**REPORT OF THE NCAA DIVISION III
STUDENT-ATHLETE REINSTATEMENT COMMITTEE
AUGUST 14, 2023, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

Mental Health Hardship Waiver

- a. Recommendation. Approve, for a two-year period (2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years), that the medical documentation standards for a hardship waiver based on mental health conditions are as follows:

- Contemporaneous *or* noncontemporaneous medical documentation from a licensed practitioner qualified to provide mental health services (see Interassociation Consensus: Mental Health Best Practices) must demonstrate that the student-athlete's mental health issue or condition occurred during the season in question, occurred before completion of the first half of the traditional playing season and prevented the student-athlete from competing in more than one-third of the traditional playing season in that sport for the season being waived.

The mental health hardship waiver otherwise shall adhere to the criteria and processes established for hardship waivers as set forth in NCAA Bylaw 14.2.5.

Information gathered during this two-year period shall be evaluated to determine the scope and appropriateness of potential legislative change.

- b. Effective date. August 1, 2023.
- c. Rationale. Based on current legislation, an institution can apply for a hardship waiver on behalf of a student-athlete who sustains an incapacitating injury or illness during athletics participation after competing in one-third or less of a season of participation and the injury or illness occurred during the first half of the season. Approval of these waivers requires that the institution provide contemporaneous medical documentation stating that the student-athlete was unable to participate because of an incapacitating injury or illness. Existing guidelines from the NCAA Division III Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement require objective documentation of treatment from a physician (or licensed physician extender on a case-by-case basis) to substantiate the incapacitating injury or illness. If the student-athlete cannot produce contemporaneous medical documentation, the waiver will likely be denied.

Mental health illnesses are not always documented the same way as physical injuries; thus, should require different documentation standards. As result of the

adoption of NCAA Division III Proposal No. R-2023-3 (resolution – mental health hardship waiver), the committee believes the criteria outlined in this recommendation, appropriately addresses the challenges institutions and student-athletes face, specific to meeting the documentation standard.

It is important to note that this recommendation would not change the process for administering the waivers (i.e., conference or the student-athlete reinstatement staff reviews for independent institutions) including appellate opportunities and other than the medical documentation standard all other conditions of a hardship waiver remain the same.

The two-year pilot and submission of data would only apply to those seeking a hardship waiver based on mental health issues that occurred during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years.

This blanket relief does not address all situations and, therefore, it does not preclude institutions from seeking individual relief for their student-athletes that does not satisfy the criteria in this recommendation. Staff encourages conference offices to submit a denied mental health hardship waiver as hardship waiver appeal through RSRO for staff to review on a case-by-case basis.

- d. Budget impact. None.
- e. Student-athlete impact. Will offer opportunity to receive season back if they were denied opportunity to participate due to mental health.

3. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

The committee believes a two-year pilot program, will allow for conference offices to work with the national office to collect and submit the following information to determine if legislative change is warranted. The committee requests the conference offices collect the following data, for review at the conclusion of the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years:

- Number of approved and denied mental health hardship waivers.
- Specific to approvals:
 - The documentation standards (i.e., contemporaneous or noncontemporaneous) relied on to approve the waiver.
 - The licensure of the practitioner who provided the documentation.
- Specific to denials:
 - The criteria that were not met (i.e., legislated limit, first-half requirement, documentation)

Committee Chair: Russell Rogers, Stevens Institute of Technology.

Staff Liaisons: Julie Zike, Academic and Membership Affairs.

NCAA Division III Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement August 14, 2023, Meeting	
Attendees:	
	Matt Hill, University of Northwestern.
	Kaitlin Leach, Vassar College.
	George Nazario, The College of New Jersey.
	Russell Rogers, Stevens Institute of Technology.
	Abby Van Vlerah, Manchester University.
Absentees:	
	Chris Krum, Albion University.
Guests in Attendance:	
	None.
NCAA Support Staff in Attendance:	
	James Bullock, Connor Bush, Maison Hubbard, Sarah L'Hommedieu, Liz Perry, Brad Rochman, Jerry Vaughn and Julie Zike.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
	Corey Berg.