



**2020-21 Academic Year  
NCAA Division III COVID-19  
Question and Answer Guide  
(Last update: September 9, 2020)<sup>1</sup>**

*Please note this edition of the 2020-21 Academic Year NCAA Division III COVID-19 Question and Answer Guide is the most current edition. Updates will be made to this document on a continuous basis as necessary. On release of subsequent editions of this guide, newly approved questions and answers will be highlighted in yellow.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Previously released date(s): August 17.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	4
<b>PROCESS</b> .....	4
<b>BYLAW 13 - RECRUITING</b> .....	5
<b>General</b> .....	5
<b>Virtual Recruiting</b> .....	5
<b>BYLAW 14 - ELIGIBILITY: ACADEMIC AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	7
<b>Waivers</b> .....	7
<b>Proactive waivers for 2020-21 Academic Year</b> .....	8
<b>Enrollment</b> .....	12
<b>Opt Out Waiver</b> .....	14
<b>Transfer Student-Athlete Eligibility</b> .....	15
<b>BYLAW 16 - AWARDS, BENEFITS AND EXPENSES FOR ENROLLED STUDENT-ATHLETES</b> .....	16
<b>BYLAW 17 - PLAYING AND PRACTICE SEASONS</b> .....	17
<b>Alternative Playing and Practice Season Model</b> .....	17
<b>Structure of the Alternative Playing and Practice Seasons Model</b> .....	18
<b>Athletically Related Activities and "Days"</b> .....	21
<b>Contests and Dates of Competition</b> .....	22
<b>Impact on Eligibility</b> .....	23
<b>Designation of the Playing Season</b> .....	24
<b>Additional Questions</b> .....	24
<b>BYLAW 20.11 - MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	27
<b>CHAMPIONSHIPS</b> .....	28
<b>DIVISION III ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE AND NCAA BOARD OF GOVERNORS AUGUST ACTIONS</b> .....	28

<b>Health and Safety</b> .....	28
<b>Student-Athlete Well-Being</b> .....	29
<b>RESOURCES</b> .....	31

## INTRODUCTION

The following question and answer document is intended to assist member institutions in navigating NCAA compliance issues. Additionally, this document will be updated as new questions arise or additional compliance-related actions are taken by the governance structure.

## PROCESS

**Question No. 1:** What is a blanket waiver?

**Answer:** A blanket waiver is a decision by an appropriate governance body to temporarily provide relief from NCAA legislation for specific extenuating circumstances that have a reasonably demonstrated widespread impact.

**Question No. 2:** Does an institution have to file anything to receive the benefits of a blanket waiver?

**Answer:** No. An institution does not have to submit a separate waiver request to receive the benefits/exceptions granted in the blanket waiver. The waiver applies to all institutions and/or student-athletes that are addressed/described in the blanket waiver.

**Question No. 3:** What is an extension waiver and when is it necessary?

**Answer:** An extension waiver provides relief from the 10-semester limitation. A student-athlete would need an extension waiver if they had seasons remaining, wanted to use those seasons, but not enough semesters in which to complete those seasons. The waivers are processed through the Division III Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement and are submitted online via RSRO. The guidelines for these waivers are found here.

There is also a previously approved waiver list found here. If an institution's waiver request is the same as the one on the list, then the institution may self-apply without the necessity of requesting the waiver through RSRO.

**Question No. 4:** What is a season-of-participation waiver, when is it necessary and how to apply?

**Answer:** A season-of-participation waiver grants a student-athlete an additional season of participation. The waivers are processed through the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement and are submitted online via RSRO. The guidelines for these waivers are found here.

## BYLAW 13 - RECRUITING

### General.

**Question No. 1:** Have there been any changes to the recruiting bylaws for the 2020-21 academic year?

**Answer:** The only changes from existing bylaws are in the area of virtual recruiting, as explained in the following section.

**Question No. 2:** May a coach have public communication on social media with a prospective student-athlete who submitted a financial deposit for the 2020 fall term but chose not to enroll during the 2020-21 academic year?

**Answer:** Yes. Provided the institution still recognizes the prospective student-athlete's financial deposit (or if no financial deposit is required, then a commitment that is required of all students at the institution) public communication on social media may take place, per Bylaw 13.02.11.4.

### Virtual Recruiting.

There have been two blanket waivers issued by the Division III Management Council Subcommittee for Legislative Relief allowing greater flexibility with virtual recruiting. The first waiver was issued April 2, 2020. The second waiver, issued July 23, 2020, replaced the original waiver and expanded its scope. This waiver is effective while the governance structure explores potential legislative change (extending possibly through 2022 NCAA Convention should a legislative proposal be sponsored or terminated as early as September 1, 2021, should a legislative proposal not be sponsored).

**Question No. 1** What does the July 23, 2020, blanket waiver for virtual recruiting allow?

**Answer:** The July 23, 2020, blanket waiver allows:

- Virtual athletics-recruitment-specific presentations to groups of multiple prospective student-athletes and their families, including outside groups, regardless of their age or grade level or who initiates the event;
- Virtual recruiting activities to occur any time of year. However, student-athlete involvement is restricted to the academic year and must be voluntary and may not result in missed class time;

- Participation by institutional athletics and coaching staff, other members of the campus community (e.g., admissions, financial aid), alumni and other permissible recruiters; and
- Institutions (and conferences) to publicize the informational details about the virtual recruiting event and prohibits promoting or publicizing the participation of individual or a group of prospective student-athletes.

**Question No. 2:** Does the blanket waiver issued by the Management Council Subcommittee for Legislative Relief on July 23, 2020, allow the institution to provide a meal to the prospective student-athlete (e.g., order a meal to be delivered to the prospective student-athlete while the virtual visit is occurring)?

**Answer:** No. The blanket waiver provides additional flexibility with respect to communicating with prospective student-athletes virtually and does not allow benefits, such as meals, to be provided to prospective student-athletes in their homes.

**Question No. 3:** Does the blanket waiver issued by the Management Council Subcommittee for Legislative Relief on July 23, 2020, allow coaches to attend a prospective student-athlete's virtual celebratory signing ceremony?

**Answer:** No. Because, [Bylaw 13.9.1.1.1](#) prohibits a coach from being present for the signing, coaches would be prohibited from attending these events virtually.

**Question No. 4:** May a prospective student-athlete join a virtual team meeting?

**Answer:** Yes. Since a prospective student-athlete may attend a team meeting when visiting a member's campus, it is permissible for the prospective student-athlete to join a virtual team meeting conducted by the coach. However, a prospective student-athlete may not attend multiple team meetings beyond this singular event as they are not yet enrolled student-athletes.

**Question No. 5:** When does the blanket waiver allowing committed prospective student-athlete to join virtual team meetings (blanket waiver issued by the Management Council Subcommittee for Legislative Relief on 6/26/2020) expire?

**Answer:** The waiver expires on the institution's first day of classes for the 2020 fall term (whether conducted in person or virtually) or the team's first day of practice, whichever is earlier.

**Question No. 6:** May a student-athlete who is not enrolled during the 2020-21 academic year participate in virtual recruiting events?

**Answer:** No. The blanket relief allows for student-athletes who are enrolled full-time and are members of the team to voluntarily participate in virtual recruiting activities.

**Question No. 7:** May a prospective student-athlete who submitted a financial deposit to matriculate during the 2020 fall term but chose not to enroll during the 2020-21 academic year attend the virtual recruiting event?

**Answer:** Yes. A prospective student-athlete who deposited to matriculate during the 2020 fall term but elects not to enroll may attend a virtual recruiting event in the same matter as prospective student-athletes, generally.

#### **BYLAW 14 - ELIGIBILITY: ACADEMIC AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Waivers.**

On March 13, 2020, the Division III Administrative Committee issued a blanket waiver providing relief for spring sports student-athletes regarding their use of a season and semester. Additionally, the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement extended this relief for an additional semester. Details on these waivers can be found on the original question and answer document found [here](#).

**Question No. 1:** What is the impact on student-athlete eligibility of the blanket waiver issued March 13, 2020, by the Administrative Committee?

**Answer:** The blanket waiver provides relief for spring sports student-athletes regarding their use of a season and semester. For spring sport student-athletes it effectively views the 2020 spring semester as if it did not happen (from an eligibility perspective). Therefore, spring sport student-athletes would not be charged with a season of participation for the 2019-20 academic year nor the use of a semester for the 2020 spring semester.

**Question No. 2:** What is the impact of extension provided by the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement?

**Answer:** The Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement approved an extension request for a spring sport student-athlete who was in their 10th semester during 2020 spring term to allow that student-athlete to enroll in both semesters and participate. The committee added this type of request to their previously approved list ([DIII SAR Previously Approved Request List](#)).

Therefore, the institution may self-apply the relief without filing a formal student-athlete reinstatement application provided the following are satisfied:

- The student-athlete was unable to participate in a spring sport during the 2020 spring semester/quarter, due to COVID-19 or the student-athlete received a self-applied season of participation waiver – participation while eligible during the 2020 spring semester/quarter, due to COVID-19; and the student-athlete was not charged with the use of a semester/quarter during 2020 spring semester/quarter.

And

- The student-athlete was otherwise eligible for competition during the 2020 spring semester/quarter.

The extension must be used in the term immediately following the expiration of the student-athlete's 10-semester/15-quarter period of eligibility. This means that a student-athlete who was not charged with use of a semester for spring 2020 could participate in the fall 2020 as their 10th semester and then participate in the spring 2021 due to the relief provided through the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement's previously approved waiver.

### **Proactive waivers for 2020-21 Academic Year.**

The Administrative Committee approved a blanket waiver, on [\[July 8, 2020\]](#) clarifying the eligibility impact for student-athletes if the season was reduced due to COVID-19 related issues so that student-athletes could make informed enrollment decisions. Specifically, student-athletes would not be charged the use of a season and would receive up to a two semester/three quarter extension if the team did not exceed 50% of the maximum contests. The waiver is based on [Bylaw 14.2.7](#) and is further clarified in the questions below.

**Question No. 1:** What is an example of the application of this waiver?

**Answer:** A soccer student-athlete practices and competes during the 2020-21 academic year. If that team does not compete in more than 10 contests against outside competition during the 2020-21 academic year that student-athlete is not charged with a season of participation for the 2020-21 academic year and will receive an extension of two semesters.



**Question No. 2:** Are exempted contests (e.g. **alumni contest**, scrimmage, conference and NCAA championships) counted for purposes of calculating 50% of the maximum contest limits?

**Answer:** Yes. All competition against outside participants should be used when determining the number of contests or dates of competition in which a team participated. The waiver is based on [Bylaw 14.2.7](#) which indicates that any participation against an outside team (however that may be characterized, scrimmage, joint practice, etc.), counts in determining the number of countable contests.

**Question No. 3:** Are contests/dates of competition from the fall and spring terms used to determine if the team has competed in more than 50% of the maximum contests/dates of competition?

**Answer:** Yes. Given the alternative playing and practice season model adopted by the Division III Management Council which eliminated the distinction between traditional and non-traditional segments for the 2020-21 academic year, all contests/dates of competition from the 2020-21 academic will be used to determine if a team competed in more than 50% of its maximum limits.

**Question No. 4:** Does this proactive waiver preclude institutions from seeking individual season of participation waivers and extension requests for its student-athletes?

**Answer:** No. Institutions may still apply for individual waivers in these cases.

**Question No. 5:** For sports with date of competition maximums, does an institution calculate the dates of competitions or the number of contests on each date to determine whether the 50% threshold has been met?

**Answer:** An institution would count the dates of competition as opposed to the actual contests. **Additionally, based on [Bylaw 17.02.6.1](#) for individual sports, a date of competition is only triggered for the team if the minimum number of student-athletes participating on one or more teams, at one or more sites, on behalf of the institution on that date equals or exceeds the minimum number established for that sport (See [Bylaw 20.11.3.8](#) for listings of minimum numbers of student-athletes per sport.). Therefore, if the number of student-athletes competing for the institution does not meet the minimum threshold, it would not count as an institutional date of competition; however, it would count as a date of competition for the individual student-athletes competing.**

**Question No. 6:** If a student-athlete participates on a subvarsity and varsity team, how is the maximum number of team contest/dates of competition determined?

**Answer:** The proactive waivers for the season of participation and extension of the 10-semester/15-quarters or eligibility is based on the varsity team's completed contests/date of competition.

**Question No. 7:** How many contests/dates of competition can a team conduct and still have its student-athletes qualify for the proactive waiver?

**Answer:** The following chart reflects the contest/dates of competition limits as well as the reduced minimum contests/dates of competition necessary for sports sponsorship purposes:

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>Revised Min. Contests/DOC</b>	<b>Maximum Contests/DOC plus one [Bylaw 14.2.7(b)]</b>	<b>Number of contests/DOC a team may complete and still qualify for season of participation wavier and semesters extension (50% threshold)</b>
<b>Team Sports</b>			
Acrobatics and Tumbling	4	13	6
Beach Volleyball	5	17	8
Baseball	17	41	20
Basketball	12	26	13
Field Hockey	8	21	10
Football	5	11	5
Ice Hockey	12	26	13
Lacrosse	7	18	9
Women's Rowing	5	21	10
Women's Rugby	5	16	8
Soccer	9	21	10
Softball	16	41	20
Volleyball	11	23	11
<b>Individual Sports</b>			
Bowling	5	33	16

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>Revised Min. Contests/DOC</b>	<b>Maximum Contests/DOC plus one [Bylaw 14.2.7(b)]</b>	<b>Number of contests/DOC a team may complete and still qualify for season of participation waiver and semesters extension (50% threshold)</b>
<b>Team Sports</b>			
Cross Country	3	10	5
Fencing	5	12	6
Golf	4	21	10
Men's Gymnastics	4	14	7
Women's Gymnastics	4	14	7
Rifle	4	14	7
Skiing	3	17	8
Swimming and Diving	5	17	8
Tennis	7	21	10
Track and Field, Indoor	3	19	9*
Track and Field, Outdoor	4	19	9*
Wrestling (M & W)	5	17	8

\* If an institution sponsors both indoor and outdoor track and field, the combined maximum DOC a team may complete and still qualify for the season of participation waiver and semesters extension (50% threshold) is 9.

**Question No. 8:** Can an individual student-athlete compete in more than 50% of the maximum contests/DOC and still qualify for the proactive waiver?

**Answer:** No, to qualify for the proactive waiver, both the team and the individual student-athlete must not have participated in more than 50% of the maximum number of contests for that sport. For example, a football student-athlete that participates in 5 varsity contests and 5 subvarsity contests would not qualify for the proactive waiver since the individual student-athlete participated in more than 50% of the maximum contests. Other student-athletes on the team who only participated in 5 contests (either varsity, subvarsity or a combination of both) would qualify since the team and student-athletes did not participate in more than 50% of the maximum contests.

This is also true for student-athletes who participate in sports with dates of competition limits. For those student-athletes, their individual dates of competition and the team's dates of competition must not exceed 50% of the maximum contests.

**Question No. 9:** Does a multi-sport student-athlete receive the benefit of the proactive waivers for each sport?

**Answer:** The student-athlete would receive the benefit of not being charged with a season of participation for each sport. However, the student-athlete would only receive an extension of two semesters/3 quarters.

**Question No. 10:** Is a student-athlete who is not enrolled for the fall term and rejoins the team for the spring term eligible for the proactive waiver?

**Answer:** Yes, the student-athlete is eligible for the proactive waiver provided the team does not exceed 50% of the maximum contests. The student-athlete would not be charged with a season of participation and would receive a one semester extension since the student-athlete was only enrolled for one full-time term during the 2020-21 academic year.

### **Enrollment.**

**Question No. 1:** Have the enrollment or eligibility requirements for the 2020-21 academic year changed?

**Answer:** No. A student-athlete wishing to participate during the 2020-21 academic year will be subject to all NCAA enrollment and eligibility requirements. Specifically, they would have to be enrolled in a full-time program of studies leading to baccalaureate degree (or graduate program) and be in good academic standing as defined by the institution.

**Question No. 2:** If an institution alters its fall academic calendar, (e.g. divides their fall term into multiple segments), does this change the requirement that a student-athlete must be enrolled full-time?

**Answer:** No. A student-athlete must be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies leading to a degree in order to practice. A student-athlete must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours in order to compete. Altering the institution's academic calendar does not change the requirement that a student-athlete must be enrolled full-time for the entire fall term in order to be eligible to practice and compete. For example, if an institution determines its entire fall term will be between October 1-January 28, but

divides the fall term into two segments (segment one occurring between October 1-November 20 and segment two occurring November 30-January 28), this would not change the enrollment requirement that the student-athlete would need to be enrolled full-time for the entire fall term. It does not matter in which segment the student-athlete takes the courses (e.g., 6 credits in the first segment and 6 credits in the second segment or 12 credits in the first or second segment), so long as the student-athlete is enrolled full-time for the entire fall term (October 1-January 28).

**Question No. 3:** Is there a waiver opportunity to allow a student-athlete to participate while enrolled less than full time?

**Answer:** Yes. An institution may request a waiver through the Management Council Subcommittee for Legislative Relief for a student-athlete to participate while enrolled less than full time. The guidelines/directives for those waivers are found here. These waivers are submitted through RSRO.

At its meeting on April 23, 2020, the subcommittee discussed how to review waivers of full-time enrollment for the 2020-21 academic year submitted on behalf of spring sport student-athletes that would have completed their final season of participation in spring 2020. The subcommittee acknowledged the unfortunate and unique position these students are in. The subcommittee also stressed the importance of reviewing these waivers on a case-by-case basis as each student-athlete's situation is unique as their academic paths and institutional options vary. While this makes specific parameters difficult to establish, the subcommittee stressed the importance that Division III athletics involves and must remain students participating against students. Therefore, these waivers must be reviewed through that lens and the institution should show how attending less than full time still qualifies the individual as a student that should be eligible for athletics participation. To help with that analysis, the subcommittee advised that institutions show the enrollment status of the student for the entire year and how the courses proposed to be taken, while less than full time, are in furtherance of an academic or career goal. Finally, the proposed academic path should be certified as acceptable by an academic authority (outside of athletics) at the institution.

**Question No. 4:** Can a student-athlete that used the less than full-time enrollment exception per [Bylaw 14.1.8.1.6.1](#) (final semester/quarter -- practice or competition) during the 2020 spring semester, use the exception again?

**Answer:** Yes. While typically a student-athlete could only use the exception once, the blanket waiver issued by the Administrative Committee effectively

nullified the semester for purposes of eligibility and, therefore, the exception could be used again.

**Question No. 5:** Does a student-athlete need to be enrolled full time to participate in virtual practices conducted by the institution?

**Answer:** Yes, for the 2020-21 academic year all existing eligibility requirements apply.

### **Opt Out Waiver.**

The Administrative Committee, in response to the Board of Governors directive of August 5, 2020, clarified that for the 2020-21 academic year, all full-time enrolled student-athletes that opt out of participating in intercollegiate athletics due to COVID-19 would get up to a two semester/three quarter extension provided the student-athlete was otherwise eligible for competition. For purposes of this waiver, a student-athlete has opted out if, due to concerns regarding COVID-19, the student-athlete decided not to participate in athletically related activities on or after the first opportunity to compete.

**Question No. 1:** Does the student-athlete have to be enrolled full-time for the entire 2020-21 academic year to qualify for the extension?

**Answer:** No. To qualify for the extension, the student-athlete must be enrolled in at least one full-time term and elect not to participate due to concerns regarding COVID-19. The student-athlete would then receive an extension for each full-time term they were enrolled at the certifying institution during the 2020-21 academic year. If the student-athlete was not enrolled full-time during any term of the 2020-21 academic year, the student-athlete would not receive an extension.

**Question No.2:** Would the student-athlete receive the extension if the student-athlete was enrolled full-time at a non-Division III collegiate institution during the 2020-21 academic year?

**Answer:** No. The waiver only applies to enrollment at Division III institution. Those situations would require individual review and would not be covered by the blanket extension waiver.

**Question No 3:** Would a student-athlete be eligible for the extension if the student-athlete, who is otherwise eligible, is not permitted to participate because they refuse to comply with a health and safety protocol established by the institution (e.g., refuses to be tested for COVID based on religious grounds)?

**Answer:** Yes, provided the student-athlete is enrolled full-time, the student-athlete would qualify for the extension because the student-athlete is not participating in intercollegiate athletics due to COVID.

**Question No. 4:** Does the student-athlete qualify for the extension if the student-athlete does not participate in the fall term and then participates with the team in the spring term?

**Answer:** The student-athlete would not qualify for the extension based on the student-athlete opting out, if the student-athlete rejoins the team in the spring and participates on or after the team's first opportunity to compete.

Any relief for this student-athlete would depend on whether the team satisfies the proactive waiver (see page 7) or relief is provided through a request submitted by the institution on behalf of the individual student-athlete.

#### **Transfer Student-Athlete Eligibility.**

**Question No. 1:** Will a transfer student-athlete who is serving an academic year-in-residence during the 2020-21 academic year be eligible for the proactive waivers?

**Answer:** No. The waivers are applicable for a student-athlete who was otherwise eligible for competition. Since a transfer student-athlete is not eligible for competition while serving a year-in-residence the self-applied proactive waivers do not apply. However, an institution may submit waiver for an individual student-athlete that will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**Question No. 2:** Will a transfer student-athlete be able to use a term(s) during the 2020-21 academic year to serve their academic year-in-residence if they are only enrolled in virtual classes?

**Answer:** A student-athlete may satisfy the transfer year-in-residence (see [Bylaw 14.02.10](#)) while enrolled in only virtual classes provided the institution considers the student-athlete to be enrolled in a full-time course load for a term(s) during the regular academic year.

**BYLAW 16 - AWARDS, BENEFITS AND EXPENSES FOR ENROLLED STUDENT-ATHLETES**

**Question No. 1:** May the institution pay the cost for COVID-19 testing, masks and other expenses to comply with health and safety requirements established by the institution, applicable governmental entities and the NCAA?

**Answer:** Yes. [Bylaw 16.4](#) permits an institution to provide medical expenses incidental to a student-athletes participation in intercollegiate athletics.

**Question No. 2:** May an institution provide their incoming prospective student-athletes and continuing student-athletes transportation to enroll for the 2020-21 academic year, if it is based on health and safety considerations?

**Answer:** Yes, provided the institution is complying with applicable health and safety legislation and/or policy. Such transportation should be limited to transportation to campus from a bus or train station or airport or from their home that is in the locale of the institution.

**Question No. 3:** How is locale of the institution defined?

**Answer:** [Bylaw 16.9.1.6](#) (local transportation) does not define "local" nor does it prescribed an associated mileage limitation; as such, the institution may use its discretion to determine what it would consider as local.

**Question No. 4:** May an institution provide lodging and meal expenses for a student-athlete that must engage in institutional, state, municipal or NCAA health and safety protocols (e.g., mandated testing activities, required quarantine period)?

**Answer:** Yes. [Bylaw 16.4](#) permits an institution to provide student-athletes with expenses incidental to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. This would include expenses associated with applicable COVID-19 health and safety legislation and policies.

**Question No. 5:** May institutions provide the relatives of student-athletes with expenses associated with a student-athlete who has contracted or is impacted by COVID-19?

**Answer:** Yes. [Bylaw 16.6.1.1](#) would allow an institution to pay transportation, housing and meal expenses for the relatives or individuals of a comparable relationship of a student-athlete in situations in which the student-athlete suffers an illness (e.g., COVID-19).



**Question No. 6:** May institutions fundraise for their student-athletes who are impacted by COVID-19?

**Answer:** Yes, provided the fundraiser satisfies the requirements of [Bylaw 16.11.1.13](#). Specifically, the proceeds must be designated for a specific purpose and any excess proceeds must be given to a not-for-profit organization, with all receipts kept on file by the institution.

Further, institutional staff members and representatives of the institution's athletics interests would be permitted to donate to such fundraisers.

**Question No. 7:** Is it permissible for an institution's athletics facilities to remain open for use by its student-athletes when other campus facilities are closed?

**Answer:** It would be an institutional decision as to whether to open the athletics facilities for its student-athletes. Institutions are encouraged to follow all applicable governmental and institutional health and safety considerations/protocols

## BYLAW 17 - PLAYING AND PRACTICE SEASONS

### Alternative Playing and Practice Season Model.

On July 21, 2020, the NCAA Division III Management Council, upon recommendation of the Division III Playing and Practice Seasons Subcommittee, approved an alternative playing and practice seasons model for the 2020-21 academic year due to the impact of COVID-19. Click [here](#) for the approved model.

The alternative playing and practice seasons model is optional. Institutions could adhere to existing playing seasons legislation or apply the alternative model for the 2020-21 academic year.

Whether applying the existing parameters or the alternative model, institutions should consult health and safety personnel as well as risk management personnel to ensure appropriate safety protocols.

**Question:** How does the alternative playing and practice seasons option differ from the current bylaws concerning the playing and practice seasons?

**Answer:** The alternative model, which applies to all Division III sports, primarily differs from the existing regulations as follows: (a) The playing and practice seasons are defined by days; (b) Those days do not have to occur

consecutively or in consecutive weeks; (c) There is not a distinction between the traditional and nontraditional segments.

**Structure of the Alternative Playing and Practice Seasons Model.**

**Question No. 1:** What is the structure of the alternative playing seasons model?

**Answer:**

	<b>Fall Championship Sports</b>	<b>Winter Championship Sports</b>	<b>Spring Championship Sports</b>
Length	114 days	114 days*	114 days*
First permissible practice date.	The earlier of Aug. 10 or the first day of class.	Oct. 1 for basketball, bowling, ice hockey and wrestling. For all other sports, the earlier of Sept. 7 or the first day of class.	The earlier of Aug. 10 or the first day of class for golf, tennis and rowing. For all other sports: the earlier of Sept. 7 or the first day of class.
First permissible contest date	Existing legislation	Existing legislation	Existing legislation
End of season.	The later of five weekdays before the 1st day of the institution's final exam period for the regular academic year or May 15, 2021.**	Five weekdays before the 1st day of the institution's final exam period for the regular academic year.	Conclusion of NCAA championships.

\*For an institution that sponsors both indoor and outdoor track and field that season is 144 days.

\*\*See question 1a

**Question No. 1a:** Have there been any amendments to the alternative playing seasons model?

**Answer:** Yes. On August 28, 2020, the NCAA Division III Subcommittee for Legislative Relief approved an amendment to the model. Specifically, fall championship sports may choose to conduct athletically related activities through May 15, 2021, provided they do not conduct athletically related activities five weekdays before the first day of the institution's exam period for the fall term through the end of that examination period.

**Question No. 2:** Is an institution still limited to one administrative day before the beginning of the preseason practice for the 2020-21 academic year?

**Answer:** No. In addition to approving August 10 or the first date of classes as the first permissible practice date for fall sports, the Administrative Committee also approved that institutions shall have unlimited administrative days to conduct non-athletically related activities (i.e., those days in which the institution may provide housing and meals expenses to student-athletes prior to the start of practice) for 2020-21 academic year.

**Question No. 3:** Must the days of the playing season be used consecutively?

**Answer:** No.

**Question No. 4:** Must the days of the playing season be used in consecutive weeks?

**Answer:** No. The institution may determine when it is best to use the days for the particular sport. Institutions should consult medical and risk management personnel in determining and applying appropriate return to play protocols including those found in the [Interassociation Recommendations: Prevention Catastrophic Injury and Death in Collegiate Athletes](#).

**Question No. 5:** Between the first practice date and the end of the playing season for each sport, is there any period in which days may not be used?

**Answer:** Yes. Spring championship sports may not conduct athletically related activities five weekdays before the first day of the institution's exam period for the fall term through the end of that examination period.

Fall championship sports may not conduct athletically related activities five weekdays before the first day of the institution's exam period for the fall term through the end of that examination period, if the sport will conduct athletically related activities through May 15, 2021 (see Question 1a).

**Question No. 6:** Is an institution required to provide a day off each week?

**Answer:** Yes. For purposes of providing a day off, under the alternative playing season model, the week is defined by the institution as any consecutive seven-day period [[Bylaw 17.1.2-\(a\)](#)].

**Question No. 7:** Are fall sport student-athletes required to have a day off during the preseason?

**Answer:** For fall sports other than football, and for the sports of golf, rowing and tennis, a calendar day off from athletically related activity is not required for preseason practice that occurs before the first day of classes. Once classes begin, student-athletes are required to have one calendar day off from all athletically related activities per defined week ([Bylaw 17.1.4.1](#)).

For football, student-athletes still must have one calendar day off from physical athletically related activities after the week including the acclimatization period ([Bylaw 17.11.2.3](#)). Once classes begin, student-athletes are required to have one calendar day off from all athletically related activities per defined week ([Bylaw 17.1.4.1](#)).

**Question No. 8:** Must the required day off be the same for all student-athletes in the sports of track and field (indoor/outdoor) and swimming and diving?

**Answer:** No. The current exception in [Bylaw 17.1.4.1.1](#) that permits the required day off to apply individually to each student-athlete in the sports of track and field (indoor/outdoor) and swimming and diving still applies.

**Question No. 9:** Are the exceptions to providing a required day off in [Bylaw 17.1.4.1](#) still applicable?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question No. 10:** Must a multisport student-athlete be given the same day off?

**Answer:** Yes. For a multisport student-athlete, an institution will still be required to provide one day off per week of all athletically related activity.

**Question No. 11:** Are student-athletes prohibited from missing class to engage in practice activities under the alternative model?

**Answer:** Yes. Student-athletes are still prohibited from missing class time for practice activities.

**Question No. 12:** May the length of the playing season, pursuant to the alternative playing and practice season model, be extended for participation in the NCAA championship?

**Answer:** Yes, consistent with current legislation.

**Question No. 13:** How long is the season for a tri-sport student-athlete in the sports of cross-country, indoor and outdoor track and field?

**Answer:** The cross-country season would be 114 days which would be in addition to the 144 days for indoor/outdoor track and field. However, per [Bylaw 17.7.1.1](#), track and field student-athletes listed as participants for cross country must participate fully in cross country practices. Otherwise, those practices must count in the 144 days for indoor/outdoor track and field.

### **Athletically Related Activities and "Days".**

**Question No. 1:** When can an institution conduct athletically related activities pursuant to the alternative playing and practice seasons model?

**Answer:** The institution may only conduct athletically related activities on the defined 114 days of the season.

**Question No.2:** How is a "day" defined for purposes of the alternative playing and practice seasons model?

**Answer:** For purposes of the alternative playing and practice seasons model, a "day" is defined as any day in which athletically related activity ([Bylaw 17.02.1.1](#)) occurs. The definition of athletically related activity has not changed under the alternative model. Some examples of activities that may only occur on defined days of the playing season are:

- In person or virtual team meetings;
- Required workouts or conditioning sessions;
- Practice;
- Competition.

**Question No. 3:** Does the limit on days apply to the team or to student-athletes individually?

**Answer:** Days are team specific. Therefore, any day in which any student-athlete engages in athletically related activities would count towards the maximum days for that team. This is also applicable for the sports of swimming and diving and track and field (indoor/outdoor), which do not require every student-athlete to have the same day off ([Bylaw 17.1.4.1.1](#)).

**Question No. 4:** Does the days limit apply to varsity and subvarsity teams separately?

**Answer:** No. There are a 114 days per sport which includes varsity and all subvarsity teams.

**Question No. 5:** Do small group practices or one-on-one sessions count as a day?

**Answer:** Yes. Any time a small group practices on a day or a one-on-one session is conducted, one of the permissible days is used. However, teams may conduct multiple small group practices on the same day or conduct multiple one-on-one sessions on the same day.

**Question No. 6:** Will activities that are exceptions to athletically related activities per [Bylaw 17.02.1.1.1](#) count as a "day"?

**Answer:** No. The exceptions to athletically related activities (e.g., academic and compliance meetings, voluntary strength and conditioning, fundraising activities) that are permissible outside the season per current legislation would not constitute a day.

### **Contests and Dates of Competition.**

**Question No. 1:** Does this alternative model change the definitions of a contest, intercollegiate competition, date of competition (team or individual) or countable contest (team or individual)?

**Answer:** No.

**Question No. 2:** What are the maximum contests/dates of competition under this alternate model?

**Answer:** The maximum contest/dates of competition are those set forth as the traditional segment maximum contests and dates of competition limitations.

**Question No. 3:** Are the contest limits separate for varsity and subvarsity teams.

**Answer:** Yes, this would apply the same as it currently does for traditional segment limitations. However, a day used for either a varsity or subvarsity competition would count against the 114-day overall limit.

**Question No. 4:** Does the standard contest or date of competition exemptions still apply?

**Answer:** Yes, the standard contest or date of competition exemptions in [Bylaw 17.1.4.5](#) still apply.

**Question No. 5:** Would participation in a virtual contest or virtual date of competition count against the maximum contests/dates of competition limits?

**Answer:** No, participation in a virtual contest or virtual date of competition would not count against the maximum contests/dates of competition limitations. However, a virtual contest or date of competition would count against the 114-day overall limit.

Additionally, a virtual contest or virtual date of competition may not be used to satisfy minimum sports-sponsorship requirements. (See February 2, 2015 staff interpretation).

### **Impact on Eligibility.**

**Question No. 1:** Does this alternative playing and practice seasons model change any student-athlete eligibility requirements?

**Answer:** No.

**Question No. 2:** Does the alternative playing and practice season model change the current definition for the use of a season of participation or use of semester/quarter?

**Answer:** No.

**Question No. 3:** How is a hardship waiver analyzed under the alternative playing and practice seasons model?

**Answer:** A hardship waiver would be analyzed the same as it is under the existing legislative model. The injury would have to be season ending. The end of the season would be the last day of athletically related activity for that particular team. The first half of the playing season as well as the one-third contest standard as set forth in [Bylaw 14.2.5](#) and [Figure 14-1](#) are still applicable.

### **Designation of the Playing Season.**

**Question No. 1:** Under the alternative playing and practice seasons model, is an institution still required to declare its playing and practice season before the beginning of the playing season (per [Bylaw 17.1.1.1](#))?

**Answer:** No. Under this alternate playing season model an institution is not required to declare its playing season before each sport season begins. However, an institution is required to keep a record of the days each team uses and to file that record in writing in the office of the institution's director of athletics at the end of the playing season for that sport.

**Question No. 2:** Will the NCAA create a tracking chart for institutions?

**Answer:** No. Each institution is responsible to keep its record in the format it deems appropriate.

### **Additional Questions.**

**Question No. 1:** Does the alternative playing and practice seasons model change the permissible awards, benefits and expenses an institution may provide under Bylaw 16?

**Answer:** No. Bylaw 16 legislation still applies.

**Question No. 2:** Are the current acclimatization periods in the sports of football and ice hockey still applicable?

**Answer:** Yes. Those periods would not change, and institutions would be expected to follow the legislative parameters of those acclimatization periods. For example, the football acclimatization period is a five-consecutive day period conducted in accordance with [Bylaw 17.11.2.2](#). Similarly, ice hockey is a five-day period conducted in accordance with [Bylaw 17.14.3.1](#) that must be completed before any student-athletes engage in competition.

**Question No. 3:** How does the elimination of the distinction between segments in the alternative playing and practice season model impact the use of male practice players?

**Answer:** The traditional segment restriction in [Bylaw 14.1.11.1](#)-(a) will no longer apply under the blanket waiver; however, the restrictions in [Bylaw 14.1.11.1](#)-(b) and (c) are still applicable. Specifically, the involvement of male practice players is still limited to one practice per week (as defined the



same for purposes of the day-off requirement), and the number of male practice players involved during any particular practice shall not exceed half the number of student-athletes of a typical starting unit for that sport.

**Question No. 4:** If an institution applies the alternative playing season model, when is a student-athlete permitted and prohibited from engaging in outside competition (i.e. competition while not representing the institution)?

**Answer:** Each institution determines whether it will permit its student-athletes to practice or compete as members of an outside team in any noncollegiate, amateur competition. It remains impermissible for coaching staff members to direct student-athletes to engage in outside competition or otherwise arrange opportunities for outside competition that is not counted as part of the 114 days season. Further, it remains impermissible for student-athletes to compete on a professional team without losing their eligibility in that sport.

In the sport of wrestling a student-athlete still may not engage in outside competition prior to November 1 ([Bylaw 14.7.2.5.1](#)).

**Question No. 5:** Are all teams on campus required to use the same playing and practice seasons model (i.e., traditional weeks model vs. alternate days model)?

**Answer:** No. However, once a team chooses which playing season model it will use (i.e., weeks vs. days), it must use that model for the duration of the season.

**Question No. 6:** How would an institution administer out-of-season leadership programming involving athletics related information and content under the alternative playing and practice seasons model?

**Answer:** Voluntary leadership programming involving athletics information that meets the exception in [Bylaw 17.02.1.1.1.5](#) would not count against a team's 114 days.

Such leadership programming is limited to 10 leadership programming sessions outside the playing and practice season per team and no more than one, 90-minute session per week.

**Question No. 7:** May institutions conduct physical athletically related activities virtually during the declared playing and practice season?

**Answer:** NCAA Division III bylaws do not specifically address the manner and scope of in-season practices. However, in-season activities should adhere to

applicable legislative, policy and institutional requirements (for example, [Interassociation Recommendations Preventing Catastrophic Injury and Death in Collegiate Athletes](#)). Consequently, institutions should consult with institutional medical personnel, legal counsel and risk management regarding the scope of any virtual in-season activities.

**Question No. 8:** If a student-athlete engages in athletically related activity within the declared playing season in which no outside competition will be conducted, will the student-athlete be charged with a season of participation?

**Answer:** No. A student-athlete is only charged with a season of participation when the student-athlete participates (practices or competes) during or after the first contest in the traditional segment. If the student-athlete's engagement in athletically related activity does not include outside competition, the student-athlete may practice without being charged with a season of participation.

**Question No. 9:** May a student-athlete participate in voluntary workouts while at home?

**Answer:** A coach may provide a student-athlete with self-directed workouts to use while residing at home or away from campus; provided the workouts are approved by applicable institutional and/or medical personnel and otherwise adhere to applicable legislative, policy and institutional requirements (e.g. [Interassociation Recommendations Preventing Catastrophic Injury and Death in Collegiate Athletics](#)) and the workouts are voluntary.

**Question No. 10:** If a student-athlete is not enrolled (i.e., takes a gap semester or gap year), may that student-athlete engage in activities that are exceptions to athletically related activities per [Bylaw 17.02.1.1.1](#)?

**Answer:** Yes, provided the institution would permit non-enrolled students in the general student body to participate in similar activities. These activities are not considered athletically related activities. As a result, a student-athlete does not need to be enrolled full-time or meet other eligibility requirements in order to participate in these exceptions. However, a student-athlete taking a gap year must not receive a benefit that is not generally available to similarly situated students.

## BYLAW 20.11 - MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

**Question No. 1:** Have any of the membership or sport sponsorship requirements for 2020-21 academic year changed?

**Answer:** On May 28, 2020, the Administrative Committee approved a waiver to reduce the minimum number of contests required for sports sponsorship and championship selections by 33 % for the 2020-21 academic year. The reduction applies to all sports; however, the minimum number of participants required for sports sponsorship remains unchanged.

Additionally, on August 27, 2020, the Administrative Committee approved a waiver to eliminate the minimum number of contests and participants required for sports sponsorship for fall championship sports and winter championship sports for the 2020-21 academic year.

**Question No. 2:** Which sports are impacted by the August 27th waiver?

**Answer:** The list of impacted sports is as follows:

Fall sports: men's and women's cross country, field hockey, football, men's and women's soccer, women's volleyball and men's water polo.

Winter sports: men's and women's basketball, women's bowling, men's and women's fencing, men's and women's gymnastics, men's and women's ice hockey, men's and women's rifle, men's and women's skiing, men's and women's swimming and diving, men's and women's indoor track and field and men's and women's wrestling.

**Question No. 3:** How does the August 27th waiver impact the overall sports-sponsorship requirements outlined in [Bylaw 20.11.3](#) (i.e., at least one sport per season, five or six sports per gender based on student enrollment and at least three team sports)?

**Answer:** The Administrative Committee recognizes that the overall sports sponsorship requirements will not be feasible for the Division III membership. These requirements, along with minimum contest and participant requirements for spring championship sports, will be reviewed at a later date.

**Question No. 4:** Is the deadline for submission of the Institutional Self-Study Guide extended this year?

**Answer:** No. Institutions scheduled to submit the 2020-21 Institutional Self-Study Guide (ISSG) must do so by the June 1, 2021, deadline.

The Division III Membership Committee had previously extended the submission deadline of the 2019-20 ISSG to May 31, 2021. Applicable institutions may submit the 2019-20 ISSG at any point up until that date.

An institution may check the due date of its next ISSG, at any time, by accessing the NCAA Directory.

**Question No. 5:** What is the Division III membership requirement related to the NCAA Regional Rules Seminar attendance and has that requirement been waived for institutions required to attend this year?

**Answer:** Division III legislation requires an active member institution to send at least one institutional staff member to the NCAA Regional Rules Seminar at least once every three years. This requirement remains unchanged for the 2021 Regional Rules Seminars. NCAA staff will contact institutions that must attend in 2021 with further information on how to fulfill this requirement.

## CHAMPIONSHIPS

For information concerning Spring 2020 championship, please see the [2019-20 Q & A document](#).

## DIVISION III ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE AND NCAA BOARD OF GOVERNORS AUGUST ACTIONS

On August 5, 2020, the NCAA Board of Governors ("BOG") directed schools and conferences to meet specific requirements and requested each division to determine its ability to meet those requirements. On August 20, 2020 the Division III Administrative Committee met and took appropriate action in response to those directives. Below is a summary of the directives from the BOG grouped as Health and Safety and Student-Athlete Well-Being along with actions taken by the Division III Administrative Committee in response to these directives.

### Health and Safety.

1. **BOG:** All member schools conducting fall sports programs must employ the *Resocialization of Collegiate Sport: [Developing Standards for Practice and Competition document and subsequent updates](#).*

The Executive Committee of the BOG clarified that this mandate only applies if a team is competing in the fall 2020 term. See the following Q and A for additional application of this directive.

Administrative Committee: No further action by the Administrative Committee was necessary.

2. BOG: *The NCAA will establish a phone number and email to allow college athletes, parents or others to report alleged failures. The Association will notify school and conference administrators, who will be expected to take immediate action.*

For additional information, please visit <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/covid-19-concern-hotline>

Administrative Committee: No further action by the Administrative Committee was necessary.

**Question:** Are institutions required to report back to the NCAA as a follow-up to a call on the COVID-19 Concern Hotline?

**Answer:** Yes, within 14 days. The requirements to follow-up will be included in an email an institution receives following a submission to the COVID-19 Concern Hotline.

### **Student-Athlete Well-Being.**

1. BOG: *All student-athletes must be allowed to opt out of participation due to concerns about contracting COVID-19.*

### **AND**

2. BOG: *Each division must determine no later than Aug. 14 the eligibility accommodations that must be made for student-athletes who opt out of participating this fall or for those whose seasons are canceled or cut short due to COVID-19. College athletes and their families must know what their eligibility status will be before beginning the fall season.*

Administrative Committee: Previously, the Administrative Committee clarified the eligibility ramifications via its blanket waiver issued on July 8, 2020 as further detailed on page \_\_ of this document in the section titled "Proactive Waivers." This waiver, however, did not specifically address a student-athlete's ability to "Opt Out" of participation. Consequently, the Administrative Committee addressed this via blanket waiver on August

20, 2020 as further detailed on page \_ of this document in the section titled "Opt Out Waiver."

3. *BOG: Member schools may not require student-athletes to waive their legal rights regarding COVID-19 as a condition of athletics participation.*

Administrative Committee: In response to this directive the Administrative Committee adopted legislation to amend NCAA Constitution 3.3.4 (conditions and obligations of membership) to prohibit an institution from requiring student-athletes to waive their legal rights regarding COVID-19 as a condition of athletics participation.

This legislation applies to all student-athletes regardless of sport season.

This legislation does not prohibit an institution from requiring student-athletes to sign a document pledging to abide by virus mitigation measures.

4. *BOG: Member schools, in conjunction with existing insurance standards, must cover COVID-19 related medical expenses for student-athletes to prevent out-of-pocket expenses for college athletes and their families.*

Administrative Committee: In response to this directive the Administrative Committee, along with Divisions I and II, adopted the following legislation, effective immediately:

Prior to a student-athlete participating in fall 2020 term competition (e.g., outside competition; scrimmages combining teams from two different institutions; and practices combining teams from two different institutions), the institution shall: (1) Review the institution's institutional insurance coverage with student-athletes who plan to compete in the fall 2020 term and advise student-athletes to review their own existing coverage; (2) Inform student-athletes of the risk classification of their sports according to the NCAA Resocialization of Sport: Developing Standards for Practice and Competition; and (3) Provide information about how the institution is complying with the [NCAA Resocialization of Sport: Developing Standards for Practice and Competition](#).

This requirement applies to all student-athletes that compete in the fall regardless of the sport season.

This legislation DOES NOT require institutions to cover COVID-19 related health costs. Rather, institutions are encouraged to help student-athletes understand what medical coverage might be available to them in the event that they contract COVID-19. However, an institution may provide for these expenses per [Bylaw 16.4](#) (Medical Expenses).

There is no prescribed manner in which student-athletes must be educated. That is left to the discretion of the institution.

## RESOURCES

For more information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the following resources on the [NCAA's COVID-19 webpage](#):

1. Resources on the resocialization of collegiate sport: [Core Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Sport](#), [Action Plan Considerations](#) and [FAQ](#).
2. Resources on actions taken on Division III regulations and policies: [Division III Administrative Committee Actions since March 13](#) and [Approved Blanket Waivers for NCAA Bylaws impacted by COVID-19](#).