

Division III Football Updates

2022 changes to contact and equipment use timelines

PRESEASON

First Practice → **First Contest**

Acclimatization period	6 days.
Number of full equipment practices	Limit to 8 days of full equipment practices in the preseason (including during the acclimatization period).
Full contact practices	Only on days with full equipment; no more than two consecutive days.
Time of contact (full & thud)	No more than 75 minutes (per player) for any practice.

REGULAR SEASON

First Contest → **NCAA Championship**

Number of practices with full equipment	No more than two full equipment practices per week of the regular season. No more than three full equipment practices during a bye week of the regular season.
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SPRING SEASON

16 days over 5 weeks

Use of helmets	May be used every day.
Use of shoulder pads	May be used on 4 of the days, but not before the 5th day.
Use of practice equipment (e.g., tackling dummies, sleds, etc.)	May use equipment to teach blocking and tackling on the 4 shoulder pad days. Remaining 12 days - no equipment.
Contact	On the four helmet and shoulder pad days: May have 1-on-1 limited contact for instructional purposes, but no blocking/tackling to the ground. Remaining 12 days - no contact.

Defining: Contact

Full contact is any contact that involves tackling to the ground. *Thud contact* is contact that occurs at competitive speed but remains above the waist, and players stay on their feet. Teams may only engage in *full contact* during full padded practices.



COUNTING: Preseason Scrimmages, Exhibitions or Joint Practices

Each preseason, a team is permitted up to two scrimmages, exhibitions or joint practices. A scrimmage, exhibition or joint practice counts as one of the eight allowable full padded practices during the preseason. Also, while these activities would count when considering no more than two consecutive days of full contact, they are not subject to the 75-minute contact limitations.

Defining: Limited Skill Instruction

Limited skill instruction does not involve student-athletes having contact with one another. While the hand shield legislation allows student-athletes to have contact with the shield to learn proper blocking techniques, it does not permit person-to-person contact. Contact beyond this limited exception is not consistent with the legislation.

BREAKING DOWN: The Spring Season

Helmet-Only Days

May engage in conditioning and strength training sessions and limited skill instruction but contact is not permitted, except with a hand shield.

Examples of impermissible activities:

- A defensive player attempts to re-route the receiver by putting hands on the receiver.
- Offensive players attempt to “pick” defensive players to get open, resulting in defensive players running into each other. This would be considered a likely result of the drill as it is an intended consequence.
- A defensive lineman puts his hands on the chest or shoulder of an offensive lineman in an attempt to rush the passer.
- An offensive lineman puts his hands on a defensive player in an attempt to block the defensive player.
- Striking a student-athlete with a hand shield.

Helmet and Shoulder Pad Days

On the four days in which student-athletes may wear helmets and shoulder pads, limited contact is allowed provided it is instructionally focused as opposed to competitively focused.

Permissible activities:

- Limited contact is allowed when teaching individual blocking techniques.
- May use tackling bags, tackling sled, blocking sled, hand shields, tackling rings and other similar type instructional equipment.
- Student-athletes may participate in 1 v. 1 instructional blocking drills.
- Student-athletes may ‘walk-through’ combination blocking drills, inside run drills, blitz pick-up and other similar type drills that involve multiple participants. These drills should not result in contact if conducted above a walk-through speed.

Impermissible activities:

- May not tackle to the ground.
- Limited contact is not allowed in the context of 11 v. 11 or other similar type contest simulations.
- Limited contact is not allowed as part of combination blocking drills, inside run drills, blitz pick-up and other similar type drills that involve multiple participants.
- A “Spring Game” is not permitted.

