

NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2025-34 -- NCAA Division I Membership and Institutional Control and Playing and Practice Seasons -- Emerging Sports for Women -- Women's Flag Football Question and Answer Document

Question No. 1: What is the NCAA Emerging Sports Program?

Answer: The NCAA Emerging Sports Program is intended to help grow meaningful participation for female student-athletes in intercollegiate athletics. The goal of the program is to help women's sports in the program reach the minimum number of varsity teams required to achieve NCAA championship status. Additional information about the NCAA Emerging Sports for Program, including the policies and procedures, can be found at ncaa.org/emerging-sports-for-women.

Question No. 2: How long may a sport be identified as an emerging sport?

Answer: An emerging sport must gain championship status within 10 years or demonstrate steady growth toward that goal to remain on the list (see NCAA Division I Bylaw 20.02.7.1).

Question No. 3: What is the proposed championship segment for women's flag football?

Answer: The championship segment would occur in the spring.

Question No. 4: If adopted, when would women's flag football be considered an emerging sport?

Answer: Immediately, with the 2026 spring championship season.

Question No. 5: What would be the minimum number of contests required for an institution to use women's flag football for sport sponsorship?

Answer: An institution must complete at least 12 contests against varsity programs from four-year, degree-granting collegiate institutions. However, an institution may count up to three contests per year against collegiate club teams of four-year institutions toward meeting minimum contest requirements.

Question No. 6: What is the maximum number of contests for the team and individual student-athletes?

Answer: A member institution and a student-athlete must limit its playing schedule with outside competition in women's flag football to 24 contests each academic year.

Question No. 7: How will contests played during the 2025 fall term count toward the maximum limitation and sport sponsorship requirements for women's flag football?

Answer: The maximum limitation will not apply until this proposal is adopted. For example, if an institution participates in 10 contests during the 2025 fall term, they may still participate in 24 contests during the 2026 spring championship season. Additionally, the contests played during the 2025 fall term may not count toward the minimum for sport-sponsorship requirements.

Question No. 8: Have the playing rules for women's flag football been developed?

Answer: RCX Sports Foundation and USA Football as the sport leaders submitted playing rules in the original application. The leaders continue to review and update the playing rules that are appropriate to use for collegiate women's flag football. The NCAA does not create or administer playing rules for emerging sports until there is an established National Collegiate Championship.

Question No. 9: If adopted, will Division I institutions be required to sponsor women's flag football?

Answer: No. Institutions maintain autonomy regarding the sports they sponsor at the varsity level.

Question No. 10: If an institution has a varsity women's flag football team, will that team need to apply NCAA Division I legislation?

Answer: Yes. If women's flag football becomes an emerging sport and the institution identifies its team as a varsity team, the institution must apply the constitution, bylaws and interpretations of the Association to the institution's varsity women's flag football team.

Question No. 11: If an institution has a women's flag football club team, will that team need to apply Division I legislation?

Answer: No. A club team is not required to adhere to Division I legislation until the institution evidences an intent or commitment to sponsor a sport on a varsity level (e.g., official announcement that competition will be conducted on a varsity basis, employment of individuals to coach the varsity team).

Question No. 12: If an institution sponsors both a club team and a varsity team, can a student-athlete transition from the club team to the varsity team?

Answer: Yes, but the student-athlete would have to be certified in the same manner as any other student-athlete. In addition, an individual is charged with a season of competition for participation in intercollegiate competition (see Bylaw [12.02.3](#)) as a member of an institution's club team if the institution

sponsored the sport as a varsity intercollegiate sport and as a club sport at the time of participation.

Question No. 13: Will women's flag football prospective student-athletes be required to receive athletics eligibility certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center consistent with all other sports?

Answer: Yes.

Question No. 14: If adopted, when will women's flag football student-athletes be able to request their athletics eligibility certification from the Eligibility Center?

Answer: January 2026.

Question No. 15: Will a student-athlete need to have earned six credit hours during their last full-time term of enrollment to be certified as eligible for the 2026 spring term?

Answer: Yes. (See Bylaw 14.4.3.1 Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements).

Question No. 16: What would be the length of the playing and practice season for women's flag football?

Answer: The length of the playing and practice season would be 132 days and may consist of two segments.

Question No. 17: May an emerging sport be used to satisfy sport-sponsorship requirements?

Answer: Yes. A Division I institution may use up to two emerging sports to meet the NCAA minimum sports-sponsorship requirements per Division I Bylaw 20.9.6 (Sports Sponsorship), provided minimum contests and participants requirements for the sports are met.

Question No. 18: What are the requirements to establish women's flag football as a National Collegiate Championship sport?

Answer: Per Division I Bylaw 18.2.4.2 (Women's Sports) a National Collegiate Championship may be established in a women's sport if at least 40 institutions across all three divisions sponsor the sport.

Question No. 19: If an institution sponsors women's flag football during the 2026 spring championship season, will that count toward the requirement of 40 institutions to establish a National Collegiate Championship in a women's sport?

Answer: Yes, provided that school's program meets the minimum contest and participant requirements.

Question No. 20: Are all three divisions considering proposals to add women's flag football to the emerging sports lists for women?

Answer: Yes.

Question No. 21: Do all three divisions need to adopt a proposal to add women's flag football to the emerging sports list for women?

Answer: No.

Question No. 22: How many NCAA institutions are projected to sponsor women's flag football during the 2025-26 academic year?

Answer: According to sports sponsorship numbers reported to the NCAA by member institutions, there are 40 projected programs across all three divisions in 2025-26. Two in Division I, 15 in Division II and 23 in Division III.

Per information provided by RCX Sports Foundation, there are 50 projected varsity programs across all three divisions in 2025-26. Four in Division I, 18 in Division II and 28 in Division III. This exceeds the reported number from NCAA member institutions in the 2025-26 projected Sports Sponsorship Data. In some cases, member institutions may choose not to report sports sponsorship if the sport is not an emerging sport.