



Question and Answer Resource
NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2026-27
Playing and Practice Seasons – Soccer – Length of Playing Season

In men's soccer, to specify that the playing-season structure would maintain the current 132-day playing season and 25-contest maximum, while permitting the championship segment to span two semesters or three quarters and shifting the national championship to the spring term.

The following questions and answers are designed to assist the NCAA membership in its understanding of this proposal.

Note: This resource is intended to address men's soccer only. For information on the women's soccer playing season model, please refer to recently adopted NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2024-62 (Playing and Practice Seasons -- Women's Soccer -- First Date of Competition and Transition Period) and the associated January 17, 2025, educational column.

2027-28 Season.

Question No. 1: If adopted, does this proposal apply to both men's and women's soccer?

Answer: No. If adopted, this proposal is specific to men's soccer and does not impact the women's soccer playing and practice season legislation (see Proposal No. 2024-62 for information on the women's soccer playing season model).

Question No. 2: If adopted, are any aspects of this proposal effective immediately?

Answer: No. If adopted, all aspects of this proposal become effective August 1, 2027, prior to the beginning of the 2027-28 playing season.

Question No. 3: If adopted, does this proposal include the same recommendations as the October 2025 US Soccer NextGen College Soccer Committee White Paper?

Answer: No. Although this proposal includes a redistributed playing season model and moves the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer College Cup to the spring segment, similar to the October 2025 US Soccer NextGen College Soccer Committee White Paper recommendation, this proposal is a distinct and independent proposal that was introduced by the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer Oversight Committee.

Unlike the NextGen College Soccer Committee White Paper, this proposal does not specifically include:

- An expansion of the current playing and practice season; or
- A national regionalized schedule that includes tiering of teams or promotion/relegation.

Question No. 4: If adopted, does this proposal change the number of days permitted in the playing season?

Answer: No. If adopted, this proposal would maintain the current 132-day playing season limit.

Question No. 5: If adopted, does this proposal change when the Division I Men's College Cup occurs?

Answer: Yes. If adopted, this proposal would move the Division I Men's Soccer College Cup to the spring segment.

Question No. 6: If adopted, how would institutions be permitted to schedule contests across the fall and spring segments?

Answer: If adopted, this proposal would maintain the current 25-contest maximum limit (including regular-season competition and scrimmages/exhibitions); however, this proposal would allow institutions the autonomy to schedule their men's soccer contests across the academic year as follows:

Fall Segment.

- **Maximum:** 18 contests.
 - 15 regular-season contests.
 - 3 scrimmages/exhibitions.
- **Minimum:** 8 regular-season contests.

Spring Segment.

- **Maximum:** 10 contests.
 - 8 regular-season contests.
 - 2 scrimmages/exhibitions.
- **Minimum:** 3 regular-season contests.

Question No. 7: If adopted, would scrimmages or exhibitions count toward the institution's minimum number of contests?

Answer: No.

Question No. 8: If adopted, does this proposal change when conference championships occur?

Answer: No. If adopted, this proposal does not change when conference championships occur. Instead, it would allow conferences the autonomy to determine the timing of its conference championship (i.e., during the fall or spring segment) while also providing flexibility for institutions to schedule competitions across both segments.

Question No. 9: If adopted, would the competition in year of transfer rule apply to a men's soccer student-athlete who transfers to a new Division I institution at midyear after competing for their previous institution during the fall term?

Answer: Yes. If adopted, the competition in year of transfer rule would prohibit midyear transfers from competing immediately for the new Division I program during the winter/spring term(s) following transfer if the student-athlete competed for their previous institution during the fall term.

Question No. 10: If adopted, is an initial enrollee eligible to compete in the spring segment?

Answer: Yes. If adopted, a student-athlete who initially registers in a regular academic term (semester or quarter) for a minimum full-time program of studies, as determined by the institution, and attends the first day of classes for that term, is eligible to compete in the spring segment as an initial enrollee provided the student-athlete is otherwise academically and athletically eligible to compete.

Transition Period.

Question No. 11: If adopted, who does the 7-day transition period apply to?

Answer: If adopted, the 7-day transition period is available only to institutions that have not yet begun classes for the fall or spring term.

Question No. 12: If adopted, when may the 7-day transition period occur?

Answer:

Fall Term.

If adopted, the 7-day fall transition period may begin on the Thursday of the 14th weekend before Thanksgiving.

Spring Term.

If adopted, the 7-day spring transition period may begin on the Friday of the 12th weekend before the start of the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer College Cup.

Question No. 13: If adopted, what activities are permitted during the 7-day transition period?

Answer: If adopted, the activities permitted during the 7-day transition period are the same as those activities allowed for institutions that are engaged in out of season athletic activities (see [NCAA Division I Bylaw 17.1.7.2-\(a\)](#)).

Question No. 14: If adopted, is participation in the 7-day transition period mandatory?

Answer: No. If adopted, an institution's men's soccer team is not required to conduct a transition period prior to the start of the preseason practice period in the fall or spring segments. However, any countable athletically related activity prior to the preseason practice period in the fall or spring segment must be conducted consistently with the transition period legislation (e.g., day off and hour requirements).

Question No. 15: If adopted, does the 7-day transition period count toward an institution's 132-day playing season?

Answer: No. If adopted, the 7-day transition period does not count towards the 132-day playing season.

Question No. 16: If adopted, may an incoming student-athlete participate in the 7-day transition period prior to initial enrollment at the institution?

Answer: Yes, if adopted, provided the student-athlete has been accepted by the institution for enrollment in a regular, full-time program of studies at the time of the individual's initial participation, is no longer enrolled in the previous educational institution, and is eligible under all institutional and NCAA requirements.

Question No. 17: If adopted, does participation in athletics activities during the transition period begin the 45-day temporary certification period?

Answer: Yes, if adopted.

Question No. 18: If adopted, may an institution provide expenses for a student-athlete to participate in the 7-day transition period?

Answer: Yes. If adopted, an institution may provide actual and necessary expenses to a student-athlete eligible to represent the institution in required practice activities, including the 7-day transition period.

Question No. 19: If adopted, may a student-athlete participate in a competition as a member of an outside team during the 7-day transition period?

Answer: Yes. If adopted, the 7-day transition period is not included in the 132-day playing and practice season.

Question No. 20: If adopted, would participation in transition period activities trigger transfer status?

Answer: Yes, if adopted.

Additional Days Off.

Question No. 21: If adopted, do the two additional consecutive days off in the fall segment count toward the 132-day playing season?

Answer: No. If adopted, the two additional consecutive days off in the fall term do not count toward the 132-day playing season, and they are days during which countable athletically related activities are prohibited.

Question No. 22: If adopted, do the three additional consecutive days off in the spring segment count toward the 132-day playing season?

Answer: No. If adopted, the three additional consecutive days off in the spring term do not count toward the 132-day playing season, and they are days during which countable athletically related activities are prohibited.

Question No. 23: If adopted, may the two additional consecutive days off in the fall segment and the three additional consecutive days off in the spring segment be counted towards the 14 additional required days off for institutions following autonomy time demands legislation?

Answer: No. If adopted, days that are excluded from counting towards the playing season may not be used towards the 14 additional days off for institutions following autonomy time demands legislation.

Question No. 24: If adopted, may the two additional consecutive days off in the fall segment and the three additional consecutive days off in the spring segment be used to meet the one calendar day off per week requirement?

Answer: No. If adopted, the two additional consecutive days off in the fall segment and the three additional consecutive days off in the spring segment may not be used to meet the one calendar day off per week requirement.

Question No. 25: If adopted, may an institution that is applying autonomy legislation provide a student-athlete with any of the additional 14 required days off during vacation periods that occur during the playing season?

Answer: Yes. If adopted, the institution may use any of the additional 14 required days off during a vacation period (e.g., summer, winter, spring vacation periods) that occurs during the declared playing season, including a preseason practice period before classes begin for a regular academic term, provided the additional days off count toward the playing season.

Question No. 26: It is permissible to exclude days of vacation, holiday and final exam periods during which no practice or competition occurs from counting toward the 132-day playing season. If an institution that is applying autonomy legislation excludes such days from its playing season, may those days also be counted towards the 14 additional required days off?

Answer: No. If adopted, days that are excluded from counting towards the 132-day playing season may not be used towards the 14 additional required days off.

Question No. 27: If the institution takes its two additional consecutive days off in the fall segment or three additional consecutive days off in the spring segment during a vacation period (e.g., fall break, spring break), may those days be used towards the 14 additional required days off for institutions following autonomy time demands legislation?

Answer: No. If adopted, days that are excluded from counting towards the playing season may not be used towards the 14 additional days off for institutions following autonomy time demands legislation.

Question No. 28: If adopted, may an institution that is applying autonomy legislation provide student-athletes with any of the additional 14 required days off during a vacation period that occurs outside the playing season during a regular academic term or between regular academic terms (e.g., winter break)?

Answer: No. If adopted, outside the playing season, additional days off may only be provided during a regular academic term while classes are in session.

[References: NCAA Division I Bylaws 12.1.1.1.3.1 (Temporary Certification), 14.5.5.2 (Competition in Year of Transfer), 17.1.7.7 (Required Day Off -- Playing Season), 17.1.7.8 (Required Days Off - - Outside of the Playing Season), 17.1.7.9 (Additional Required Days Off), 17.7 (Time Limits for Athletically Related Activities), 17.22 (Soccer), 17.22.1 (Length of Playing Season), 17.22.2 (Preseason Practice), 17.22.3 (First Contest or Date of Competition), 17.22.3.1 (Exception – Scrimmages/Exhibition Games), 17.22.5 (Number of Contests and Dates of Competition), 17.22.6 (Out-of-Season Athletically Related Activities), 17.22.8.1 (Noncollegiate, Amateur Competition); and an Educational Column (July 13, 2017, Item No.3)].