



**2020-21 Academic Year
NCAA Division III COVID-19
Question and Answer Guide
(Last update: January 11, 2021)¹**

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.

¹ Previously released dates: Aug. 17, Sep. 9 and 28, Oct. 12, Nov. 6, and Dec. 14, 2020.

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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.

Question No. 3: If a student-athlete is taking a leave of absence (e.g., not enrolled full-time) from their institution during the 2020-21 academic year, does a coach from another institution need permission to contact that student-athlete?

Answer: Yes. If the student-athlete is taking a leave of absence and has not officially withdrawn from their institution, a coach from another institution must first secure permission to contact before speaking with the student-athlete, per Bylaw 13.1.1.2.

Question No. 4: If a prospective student-athlete chose not to enroll at an institution during the 2020-21 academic year, does a coach from another institution need permission to contact them?

Answer: No. If the prospective student-athlete elects not to enroll during the 2020 fall term, a coach from another institution is not required to secure permission to contact. The coach must, however, abide by all Bylaw 13 recruiting legislation when interacting with the prospective student-athlete.

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

Eligibility.

On October 28, 2020, the Division III Presidents Council issued two blanket waivers providing eligibility relief for student-athletes during the 2020-21 academic year. These actions apply more broadly than all previous blanket eligibility waivers for the 20-21 academic year rendering those previous blanket waivers moot. Consequently, the previous Bylaw 14 question and answer section is archived and no longer applicable and is replaced by the questions and answers below. Additionally, a summary users application document can be accessed [here](#).

On October 28, 2020, Presidents Council approved the following two blanket waivers:

1. Season of participation waiver: All student-athletes (Fall, Winter, Spring) would not be charged the use of a season of participation for any participation that occurs during the 2020-21 academic year; and
2. Extension waiver: Student-athletes eligible for competition would receive an extension of their 10 semester/15quarter enrollment limit for each semester/quarter used during the 2020-21 academic year.

[Note: With a blanket waiver an institution may self-apply on campus and does not require a submission through RSRO]

Question No. 1: What previous eligibility waivers for the 2020-21 academic year were rendered moot?

Answer: Both the 50% and Opt-out waivers are superseded by the October 28, 2020, President Council's actions and are therefore moot. The Presidents Council October 28, 2020, season of participation and semester/quarter extension waivers are the only valid eligibility blanket waivers effective for the 2020-21 academic year.

Question No. 2: How do the 2020-21 academic year blanket waivers issued by Presidents Council impact the season of participation and extension blanket waivers issued for the 2020 spring sports student-athletes?

Answer: There is no impact on the 2020 spring sports student-athletes, and they should be treated separately. A student-athlete that was a spring sport student-athlete in spring 2020 and was not charged a season of participation or semester, could also be eligible for the 2020-21 blanket waivers and as a result, could potentially have their semesters extended by up to four semesters/six quarters. (See, section below "2020 spring sport student-athletes.")

Question No. 3: Do the 2020-21 academic year blanket waivers apply to student-athletes regardless of season?

Answer: Yes. The blanket waivers apply to all fall, winter, and spring sport student-athletes during the 2020-21 academic year, subject to conditions further clarified herein.

Question No. 4: How does an institution determine if a student-athlete meets the requirements for the 2020-21 season of participation waiver?

Answer: If the student-athlete would have been charged a season of participation per Bylaw 14.2.4.1 (minimum amount of participation) then the waiver is necessary. [Pursuant to the Alternative Playing Season model, a student-athlete would be charged with the use of a season once they practice or compete on or after the first contest.] The only circumstance that would keep the student-athlete from benefiting from the waiver is if the student-athlete participated while ineligible.

Question No. 5: What is an example of the application of the season of participation waiver?

Answer: A soccer student-athlete practices and competes during the 2020-21 academic year. The student-athlete will not be charged a season of participation for the 2020-21 academic year. The number of contests is not relevant to meeting the waiver criteria.

Please remember, if a student-athlete is not charged with the use of a season (e.g., does not participate during or after the first contest or the team does not participate in any competition) the season of participation blanket waiver is not needed.

Question No. 6: How does an institution determine if a student-athlete meets the requirements for the 2020-21 semester/quarter extension waiver?

Answer: The student-athlete would have been charged with a semester/quarter per Bylaw 14.2.2.1 (use of semester or quarter) and was otherwise eligible for competition at some point during the 2020-21 academic year.

Question No. 7: If a student-athlete meets the requirements for the 2020-21 semester/quarter extension waiver, are there limitations in the use of those terms?

Answer: If a student-athlete receives a two semester/three quarter extension, the student-athlete must use those extra terms consecutively. For example, a soccer student-athlete could not use the 11th semester during the fall 2021, not enroll during the spring 2022 and then use the 12th semester during the fall 2022. This waiver is not intended to provide two additional seasons of participation.

Question No. 8: What are examples of the application of the 2020-21 semester/quarter extension waiver?

Answer: A golf student-athlete is enrolled full-time fall 2020 and spring 2021. The student-athlete will receive a two-semester extension.

A baseball student-athlete is enrolled full-time fall 2020 and part-time spring 2021. The student-athlete will receive a one-semester extension.

Question No. 9: What is an example of a student-athlete who qualifies for both blanket waivers?

Answer: A tennis student-athlete practices and competes while enrolled full-time fall 2020 and spring 2021. The student-athlete will not be charged a season of participation for the 2020-21 academic year and will receive a two-semester extension.

Question No. 10: Does a student-athlete have to be eligible to qualify for both waivers?

Answer: Yes, the student-athlete must have otherwise been eligible for competition during the 2020-21 academic year. *The student does not however need to be eligible the entire academic year to qualify for the waivers.* If the student-athlete is ineligible (e.g. academically) for one term and eligible for another term that student-athlete would qualify for both waivers. The student-athlete would not be charged a season of participation in their sport and they would receive a semester/quarter extension for each semester used per Bylaw 14.2.2.1 regardless if they were eligible during that particular semester.

Question No. 11: Does the season of participation waiver and the semester/quarter extension waiver apply to a Division III student-athlete who chooses to transfer to another Division III institution for the 2021-22 academic year?

Answer: Yes.

Question No. 12: Does the season of participation waiver and the semester/quarter extension waiver apply to a student-athlete who was enrolled at an institution in another division or athletics association (e.g., NAIA, NJCAA) during 2020-21 and transfers to a Division III institution for the 2021-22 academic year?

Answer: The waivers only apply to student-athletes that were DIII student-athletes during the 2020-21 academic year. However, blanket waivers provided by other divisions or organizations regarding the use of a season or 10 semester/15 quarter period of eligibility during the 2020-21 academic year would follow the student-athlete upon transfer to a Division III institution. (Note: this is only applicable for undergraduate transfers. Graduate eligibility would be reviewed through the waiver process on a case-by-case basis.)

Question No. 13: Does a multi-sport student-athlete receive the benefit of both 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 up to two semesters/three quarters. The student-athlete could not receive more than a two semesters/three quarters extension based on the 2020-21 academic year regardless of the number of sports played.

Question No. 14: Does a student-athlete that participates in a conference tournament and/or NCAA championship still qualify for the 2020-21 season of participation and extension waivers?

Answer: Yes.

Question No. 14: Does a student-athlete serving a year in residence during the 2020-21 academic year qualify for both blanket waivers?

Answer: The student-athlete could practice with the team (beyond the first contest) and qualify for the season of participation blanket waiver even though they are not eligible to compete. However, the student-athlete would not be eligible for the extension waiver. For the year in residence to be satisfied, the semesters/quarters would count, and the student-athlete would not receive the benefit of the extension waiver.

2020 Spring Sport Student-Athletes.

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 practical impact of the above referenced actions on 2020 spring sport student-athletes?

Answer: The blanket waiver provides relief for spring sports student-athletes regarding their use of a season and semester, as follows:

1. Spring sport student-athletes would not be charged with a season of participation for the 2019-20 academic year.

2. Student-athletes would not be charged a semester for the 2020 spring semester; if they were otherwise eligible during that semester, they would also have their 10-semester clock extended by one semester (that one semester must occur immediately after expiration of the 10th semester). Effectively, a spring sport student-athlete that was eligible for the spring 2020 semester would have an additional year to complete their eligibility.

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 Is there a waiver opportunity to allow a student-athlete to participate while enrolled less than full time during the 2020-21 academic year? Thereafter?

Answer: **Generally:** The Presidents Council and Management Council agreed that while there is additional flexibility provided for use of a season and semesters during the 2020-21 academic year, the expectation that student-athletes be enrolled full-time remains- for this year as well as future years. Consequently, students are expected to follow existing eligibility standards and should only be permitted to participate while enrolled less than full-time if they meet an existing legislative exception or satisfy existing waiver standards. (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.)

Additional Flexibility ONLY for 2020 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. 3: 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. 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.

Question No 6: Could a student-athlete use the early graduation exception to full-time enrollment set forth in Bylaw [14.1.8.1.6.7\(b\)](#) if the student-athlete was not charged the use of a season of participation due to the cancellation of contests?

Answer: No, but the institution could apply for a waiver. Existing waiver precedent supports the application of the early graduation exception for a winter sport student-athlete even though the student-athlete was not charged with the use a season of participation provided: (1) The student-athlete planned to graduate early and use the exception (and the student-athlete did graduate early); (2) There was a competition scheduled prior to the conclusion of the final term in which the student-athlete would have been charged with the use of a season; and (3) The institution cancelled said contest due to COVID. Note this precedent does not apply to fall sports being played in the spring or spring sports (other than golf, rowing and tennis) where the student-athlete would not have otherwise been charged with the use of a season before graduating.

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 prescribe 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:

	Fall Championship Sports	Winter Championship Sports	Spring Championship Sports
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 No. 1a.

***See Question No. 12.

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.

Question No. 14: If an institution sponsors both indoor and outdoor track and field, but a student-athlete only has eligibility remaining in outdoor track and field, when can the student-athlete begin practicing?

Answer: The student-athlete may not participate in more than 114 days of athletically related activity. Since the combined season for indoor and outdoor track and field is 144 days the SA should not begin practice until after the first 30 days of practice. This is consistent with the intent of the June 17, 2004 official interpretation regarding use of a season of participation for indoor and 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: The blanket waivers approved by Presidents Council on October 28, 2020 render this question moot as there would be no need for a hardship waiver because a student-athlete per the Presidents Council waivers would not be charged with the use of a season.

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: Must a team that practiced after a full acclimatization period during the fall term conduct another acclimation period prior to practicing during the spring term?

Answer: Any time there is material break of greater than or equal to a week, consideration should be given to repeating a transition period and acclimatization protocols. There are many relevant factors an institution should consider, including local environmental conditions and the level of student-athlete activity during the break period. Institutions should consult appropriate medical and institutional personnel when making decision regarding repeating transition periods and acclimatization protocols.

Question No. 4: 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. 5: 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. 6: 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. 7: 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. 8: 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. 9: 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. 10: 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. 11: 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.

Question No. 12: Does a medical examination need to be repeated for a student-athlete who is beginning their initial season of eligibility but does not begin participation

in athletically related activity within 6 months of receiving their physical (e.g., physical occurred in June but institution delayed practice and competition until January)?

Answer: A new physical may not always be medically necessary; however, there would usually be some health benefit in securing an updated health history prior to participation in this scenario, similar to what is required for returning or continuing student-athletes, and it emphasized that schools should be encouraged to act in their discretion to repeat medical examination if they determine it is appropriate to do so.

Question No. 13: Is a medical examination necessary if a student-athlete is participating in only virtual, non-physical countable athletically related activities (e.g., team meetings, film review)?

Answer: A medical examination would not be essential prior to virtual participation in non-physical athletically related activities. However, this is specific to the unique nature of the 2020-21 academic year, whereas some teams will have a term of "practice" without conducting physical activity.

BYLAW 18 – CHAMPIONSHIPS

Question No. 1: What is the minimum sponsorship threshold to merit conducting winter and spring championships?

Answer: The Division III Championships Committee affirmed its position that for sports with 50 or fewer sponsoring institutions 90 percent of sponsoring member institutions must sponsor the sport to merit a championship. For sports with sponsorship between 51 and 200 institutions, 70 percent; and sports with 201 or more sponsoring institutions, 60 percent. Note that in order for any championship to be cancelled it would still require being moved through the governance process.

Question No. 2: What are the requirements for a conference to maintain its automatic berth to the winter sport championships?

Answer: In order for a conference to maintain its automatic qualifier for the 2020-21 championships it must affirm its intent to conduct winter sports with at least four core members and demonstrate a schedule that allows the AQ to meet the minimum contest requirement. If the minimums are not met due to COVID-19 related issues no waiver will be necessary if either the conference falls below four core members or the designated AQ does not

meet the minimum contest requirements. [Please refer to the Championships Committee's November 17 report.](#)

Question No. 3: Does an institution have to meet the minimum contest requirements to be considered for an at-large winter sport championship berth?

Answer: For an institution to be considered for an at-large berth it must meet the new minimum contest requirements. If an institution is unable to meet the new requirement for circumstances beyond its control, they would need to apply for a [waiver](#) in order to be considered for at-large selection.

Question No. 4: What are the minimum contest requirements for winter championships consideration?

Answer: Contests minimums to be eligible for consideration to winter championships have been reduced by 50 percent and are as follows:

- Basketball: 9
- Ice hockey: 9
- Swimming and diving: 4
- Indoor track and field: 2
- Wrestling: 3

Question No. 5: What are the minimum contest requirements for spring championships consideration?

Answer: Contests minimums to be eligible for consideration to spring championships have been reduced by 33 percent and are as follows:

- Baseball: 17
- Golf: 4
- Lacrosse: 7
- Rowing: 5
- Softball: 16

- Tennis: 7
- Outdoor track and field: 4
- Men's volleyball: 11

Question No. 6: When will selections for winter championships occur?

Answer: Selections and subsequent rounds for winter championships are as follows:

Sport	Round	Date
Men's and Women's Basketball (48)	Selections	Sunday, March 7
	First Round	Thursday, March 11
	Second Round	Friday, March 12
	Third Round	Saturday, March 13
	Quarterfinals	Wednesday, March 17
	Semi-finals	Thursday, March 18
	Championship	Saturday, March 20
Women's Ice Hockey (8)	Selections	Sunday, March 14
	Quarterfinals	Friday, March 19
	Semi-finals	Saturday, March 20
	Championship	Monday, March 22
Women's Swimming & Diving (239: 218 swimmers, 21 divers)	Selections	Wednesday, March 10
	Finals	Thursday, March 18
Men's Swimming & Diving (195: 177 swimmers, 18 divers)	Selections	Wednesday, March 10
	Finals	Monday, March 22
Indoor Track & Field (297 per gender: 15 SAs per event; 9 teams per relay)	Selections	Sunday, March 7
	Finals	Friday, March 12
Wrestling (135 individuals)	Selections	Monday, March 8
	Finals	Friday, March 12

Note: The men's ice hockey format is still under review.

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. 2a: What are the minimum sports sponsorship requirements for spring sports for the 2020-21 academic year?

Answer: The following chart reflects the reduced minimum contests/dates of competition necessary for sports sponsorship purposes:

SPORT	Revised Min. Contests/DOC
Team Sports	
Acrobatics and Tumbling	4
Beach Volleyball	5
Baseball	17
Lacrosse	7
Women's Rowing	5

SPORT	Revised Min. Contests/DOC
Team Sports	
Women's Rugby	5
Softball	16
Volleyball (M)	11
Water Polo (W)	9
Individual Sports	
Golf	4
Tennis	7
Track and Field, Outdoor	4

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-10 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 in 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 in this document in the section titled "Opt Out Waiver."

Presidents Council: On October 28, 2020, the Division III Presidents Council issued two blanket waivers providing relief for student-athletes during the 2020-21 academic year regarding their use of a season of participation and semesters, as further detailed in this document in the section titled "2020-21 Academic Year Eligibility Waivers." These waivers have replaced the previous blanket waivers that were issued by the Administrative Committee on July 8, 2020, and August 20, 2020.

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](#).