

Bison Bulletin



Bucknell University Athletics Compliance Department

New NCAA Legislation Adopted

Following the most recent meeting by the Division I Council, several changes will be made to the recruiting, eligibility, and playing and practice season rules for NCAA Division I athletics.

RECRUITING

Many recruiting rule changes took effect immediately. One such rule now permits coaches to conduct pre-approved campus tours during institutional camps or clinics. Before the change, only tours of facilities used during the camp or clinic were permitted.

Other rules will go into effect on August 1, 2017. One rule allows former student-athletes to now have on-campus contact with a prospective student-athlete (PSA) and that individual's relatives or legal guardians. Previously, former student-athletes were included in the prohibition between boosters and PSAs having contact. Another change will allow in-person, off-campus contact between an institutional staff member or an enrolled student-athlete and a PSA within a one-mile radius of campus boundaries without the visit triggering an off-campus contact, a welcome change to the rule that all aspects of an unofficial visit previously had to occur on-campus. The rationale behind the change is that a one mile radius is considered as much a part of campus as the campus itself.

With regards to phone calls, it will now be permissible for any athletics staff member to make unlimited phone calls to a PSA during the five days immediately preceding the PSA's official visit. For unofficial visits, a separate rule will allow an athletics department staff member to call or send electronic correspondence to a PSA, or individuals accompanying the PSA, beginning the day before the visit until the visit concludes. These changes lift the burden off of countable coaches who were the only ones that could communicate with PSAs before.

For *men's and women's lacrosse*, coaches are no longer permitted to recruit a PSA until September 1 of that PSA's junior year in high school. This change was effective as of April 14, 2017. Previously, unofficial visits made by the PSA before that date were permissible but coaches will now have to wait until the September 1 date to have any contact with a PSA on-campus (with exception for camps and clinics). However, the date for off-campus, in-person contacts with PSAs was changed to September 1 of the PSA's junior

year rather than waiting until July 1 following the completion of the PSA's junior year. Additionally, coaches may no longer accept phone calls from a PSA until September 1 of the PSA's junior year. *Wrestling* adopted a similar approach, effective August 1, 2017, moving the off-campus contact date at a PSA's educational institution or residence up to September 1 of the PSA's junior year and also prohibiting on-campus, unofficial visits with PSAs before that date.

ELIGIBILITY

With regard to academic and athletic eligibility rules, there was one change made that goes into effect immediately. A student-athlete who is beyond his or her first year of enrollment may now participate in preseason exhibition contests or preseason scrimmages without that activity counting as a season of competition. Previously, this was only applicable to first-year student-athletes.

As of August 1, 2017, *male practice players* for all women's teams will no longer be required to be certified as eligible for practice in accordance with all applicable NCAA eligibility regulations as formerly enforced. Although these administrative burdens have been removed (such as not requiring a signed drug-testing consent form),



New NCAA Legislation Updates cont'd...



the male practice players will still need to be verified as enrolled full-time and have remaining eligibility under the five-year rule.

PLAYING AND PRACTICE SEASONS

Several playing and practice season rules also took immediate effect. Athletics department staffs, in particular strength and conditioning coaching staffs, have grown and become specialized to the point that it is no longer realistic to require them to have "department-wide" responsibilities in order to conduct voluntary summer and vacation period workouts. Therefore, the new rule eliminates that requirement, and strength and conditioning coaches are now allowed to conduct those workouts regardless of department-wide responsibilities. Further, a noncoaching athletics staff member who does not have sport-specific responsibilities may now present an educational session at a non-institutional, privately owned camp/clinic provided the staff member does not make a recruiting presentation.

Two other rules that were also modified involve summer athletic activities. Effective on August 1, 2017, in **basketball and football**, a student-athlete who did not receive athletically related financial aid during the previous academic year may now participate in required summer athletic activities for up to eight weeks without being enrolled in summer school (a blanket waiver was put into place for the summer of 2017 to allow this before the rule takes effect).

Some other playing and practice season rules were sport-specific and took effect immediately. In **football**, conducting walk-throughs during the off-season was previously prohibited. However, it is now permissible for an institution to conduct walk-throughs as part of their 8-hour weeks outside of the playing season during the academic year. Walk-throughs were found to be a valuable way for student-athletes who have varying learning styles to understand plays and schemes to improve their overall comprehension of the sport beyond watching game film. The rule specifies that the time spent on walk-throughs, combined with viewing film, may not exceed two hours per week.

As for additional restrictions in **football**, an institution may not hold multiple on-field practice sessions on the same day, a change designed to help decrease the risk of exertional heat illness and overuse injuries as well as exertion after repetitive head impact exposure or possible concussion.

Several other sport-specific rules will go into effect on August 1, 2017. In **baseball**, it will be permissible for an institution to replace a varsity squad member who sustains a season-ending injury prior to the team's first scheduled competition in the championship segment with a student-athlete who has not received athletically related financial aid and who participated with the team during the fall academic term. Prior to this rule, that change was impermissible.

Women's lacrosse will not be allowed to conduct practice sessions in the championship segment before the 3rd Saturday in January, and will not be allowed to compete before the Friday that is 15 weeks before the Friday immediately preceding the NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship. This change regulates the start of the championship season similar to how it is done in basketball and football. In addition, women's lacrosse will be limited to 17 actual contests, rather than dates of competition. Previously, dates of competitions allowed teams to have multiple games on a single day but, with the change, permitting only one competition per day will be better for the student-athletes.

Finally, in **women's volleyball**, it will now be mandatory for the nonchampionship segment of the playing and practice season to be conducted within a period of 60 consecutive calendar days (excluding official vacation periods during which no practice or competition occurs) during the months of January through May. This change holds their nonchampionship segment to a pattern like softball and baseball have. In addition, women's volleyball may now play one scrimmage or exhibition contest prior to the first scheduled regular-season date of competition, provided the contest is counted against the maximum number of dates of competition. Further, a scrimmage or exhibition contest that would otherwise be exempted from the maximum number of dates of competition shall count against the maximum if it is played during the preseason practice period prior to the date specified for the first permissible regular-season date of competition.

Lastly, a few changes with regard to **foreign tours** take immediate effect. Any travel to a U.S. commonwealth (e.g. Puerto Rico) or U.S. territory (e.g. Virgin Islands) may now be considered a foreign tour, and eligible incoming freshman or transfer student-athletes can participate in practice for and represent an institution on a foreign tour that takes place during the summer prior to initial full-time enrollment at that institution.

New Oklahoma law allows schools to sue athletic boosters who invite NCAA sanctions

Sports Illustrated, April 25, 2017

A new law signed recently by Oklahoma's governor could be used by universities to sue athletic boosters whose actions lead to NCAA sanctions, according to The Oklahoman.

The law does not refer specifically to the NCAA or athletics but does allow schools to sue donors for damages if the donor's actions result in penalties from a governing body that cause economic losses. The law could be applied in cases where a booster provides improper benefits to a student-athlete, resulting in sanctions from the NCAA.

Oklahoma Sooners boosters contacted by The Oklahoman were split in their opinion of the law. One told the paper "it had a chilling effect on me," while a second said

it "doesn't scare me at all" because boosters who break NCAA rules are "a black eye" for the whole program.

The bill was signed into law by Governor Mary Fallin on Thursday and will go into effect on Nov. 1.



Compliance Conundrum

Q: The Ocean State University (OSU) baseball coaches are hosting their annual junior day event during this weekend's home series against their cross-town rival. Although many of the prospects are invited, OSU does not provide expenses for them to attend (e.g., unofficial visit). The coaches would like to meet with the prospects after the game and serve refreshments. If the prospects pay for this meal, is it permissible for the coaches to provide food during an unofficial

A: Yes.

NCAA Staff Interpretation- 4/12/17- Food and Beverage During Unofficial Visits (I) - states that during an unofficial visit, an institution may provide food and beverages to a prospective student-athlete and individuals accompanying the prospective student-athlete (even if the meal is not open to the public), provided the prospective student-athlete pays the actual cost.

By Jennifer M. Condaras, Associate Commissioner, BIG EAST Conference. April 26, 2017.



**ASK BEFORE YOU ACT!
WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.**

Compliance is the responsibility of everyone;
please don't hesitate to contact us

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Bucknell University, by virtue of its membership with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), is responsible for ensuring complete compliance of all constituencies with all NCAA Rules and Regulations.

This newsletter serves as a way for the Compliance Department to educate and inform our coaches, athletics administrators, and student-athletes about relevant rules and tips, hot topics in college athletics, and upcoming dates to remember.

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DEAD PERIODS TO REMEMBER:

Men's Basketball: July 6-12 (5pm); July 16 (5pm)—19 (5pm); July 23 (5pm)—26 (5pm); July 30 (5pm)—31

Men's Lacrosse: July 2—6

Women's Lacrosse: July 3—5

Softball: May 30—June 8 (noon)

M&W Cross Country/Track & Field: June 7—10

Football: June 26—July 9

Women's Basketball: July 13—22; and 30—31

