

NCAA Division II Essential Rules Reference Guide

The NCAA Essential Rules Reference Guide has been developed as a tool for athletics administrative staff members when dealing with essential and frequent compliance related issues. This reference guide is not intended to be used as a replacement for the NCAA Division II Manual and should only be used as a supplement to assist the compliance coordinator in applying essential rules on a daily basis. For additional information, please refer to the Division II Manual or the NCAA Legislative Services Database for the *Internet* (LSDBi) at www.ncaa.org.

Bylaw 13: Recruiting

1. General.

- a. A prospective student-athlete is a student who has started classes for the ninth grade. In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a prospective student-athlete if the institution provides such an individual or their relatives any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students generally. An individual remains a prospective student-athlete until the individual enrolls in a minimum full-time program of studies and attends classes in any term at a four-year institution's regular academic year or participates in a practice or competition at a four-year institution (NCAA Bylaw 13.02.8).
- b. Recruiting is any solicitation of a prospective student-athlete or their relatives by an institutional staff member for the purpose of securing the prospect student-athlete's enrollment and ultimate participation in the institution's intercollegiate athletics program (Bylaw 13.02.9).
- c. Actions that cause a prospective student-athlete to become a recruited prospective student-athlete at an institution include the following (Bylaw 13.02.9.1):
 - (1) Providing an official visit to the prospective student-athlete;
 - (2) Having an arranged, in-person, off-campus contact;
 - (3) Initiating or arranging a telephone contact on more than one occasion; or

- (4) Issuing a National Letter of Intent (NLI) or written offer of athletically related financial aid.

2. Contacts.

- a. A contact is any face-to-face encounter with a prospective student-athlete or prospective student-athlete's relatives or legal guardian(s) during which any dialogue occurs in excess of an exchange of a greeting. Any prearranged face-to-face encounter shall also count as a contact regardless of the conversation (Bylaw 13.02.2).
- b. Telephone calls or in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts shall not be made with a prospective student-athlete or prospective student-athlete's relatives before June 15 immediately preceding the prospective student-athlete's senior year of high school (Bylaw 13.1.1.1).
- c. Each institution shall be limited to not more than three in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts during the academic year per prospective student-athlete at any site (Bylaw 13.1.6).
- d. All contacts made in one day count as one contact (Bylaw 13.1.6.1).
- e. An institution may make an unlimited number of contacts once the prospective student-athlete signs an NLI, provided the contacts occur during the appropriate recruiting period (Bylaw 13.1.6.3).
- f. An athletics staff member shall not make contact with the student-athlete of an NCAA or NAIA four-year collegiate institution without first obtaining the written permission of the institution's athletics director (or designee), regardless of who makes the initial contact (Bylaw 13.1.1.2).
- g. Recruiting contacts may not be made with a prospective student-athlete before any athletics competition in which the prospective student-athlete is a participant during the day or days of competition, even if the prospective student-athlete is on an official or unofficial visit (Bylaw 13.1.7.2).

- h. Visits to a prospective student-athlete's educational institution during the day when classes are being conducted must receive approval of the executive officer (or designee) of the prospective student-athlete's school (Bylaw 13.1.5).

3. Evaluations.

- a. An evaluation is any off-campus activity designed to assess the academic or athletics ability of a prospective student-athlete, including any visit to a prospective student-athlete's educational institution or the observation of any practice or competition at which the prospective student-athlete participates (Bylaw 13.02.5).
- b. An institution may evaluate a prospective student-athlete at any time during a prospective student-athlete's career, provided the evaluation occurs within the permissible evaluation period(s) (Bylaw 13.1.4).
- c. There are no limitations on the number of evaluations an institution is allowed per prospective student-athlete per academic year (Bylaw 13.1.8).

4. Telephone Calls.

- a. Telephone calls to a prospective student-athlete may not be made before June 15 immediately preceding the prospective student-athlete's senior year in high school; thereafter, staff members shall not make such telephone calls more than once per week (Bylaw 13.1.3.1).
- b. Institutional staff members may receive telephone calls placed by a prospective student-athlete at the prospective student-athlete's own expense at any time (Bylaw 13.1.3.2.2).
- c. Facsimiles and other electronically transmitted correspondence shall not be considered telephone calls (Bylaw 13.02.11).
- d. It is not permissible for an institution's staff members to telephone a prospective student-athlete or prospective student-athlete's parents during any of the institution's athletics contests in that sport (Bylaw 13.1.3.2.1).

- e. An institution may make unlimited telephone calls to a prospective student-athlete during the five days immediately before the prospective student-athlete's official visit (Bylaw 13.1.3.3.1).
 - f. Currently, enrolled students (including student-athletes) may not make telephone calls to prospective student-athletes for recruiting purposes at the direction of coaching staff members if those calls are paid for by the institution or member of the booster club (Bylaw 13.1.3.5.1).
5. Printed Recruiting Materials.
- a. An institution may not provide printed recruiting materials to a prospective student-athlete (including electronic mail and facsimiles) until September 1 at the beginning of the prospective student-athlete's junior year in high school (Bylaw 13.4.1).
 - b. An institution may respond to a prospective student-athlete's request for athletically related information before September 1 of the prospective student-athlete's junior year provided the response does not initiate recruitment and contains an explanation of the NCAA legislation that applies (Bylaw 13.4.1.2).
6. Official (Paid) and Unofficial (Unpaid) Visits.
- a. A prospective student-athlete may take a maximum of five expense-paid visits with no more than one permitted to any single institution. An expense-paid visit may not be provided earlier than the opening day of classes of the prospective student-athlete's senior year in high school (Bylaw 13.6.1).
 - b. A prospective student-athlete may make unlimited unofficial visits to campus and may be conducted at any time including before his or her senior year of high school (Bylaw 13.7.1).
 - c. An institution may not provide transportation to a prospective student-athlete other than on an official paid visit, or on an unofficial visit to view off-campus practice and competition site and other institutional facilities when accompanied by an institutional staff member (Bylaws 13.5.1).

- d. Each member institution shall be required to notify the prospective student-athlete of the five-visit limitation in writing at the time of its invitation but before the official visit (Bylaw 13.6.1.2.1).
 - e. An institution must be presented with an official PSAT/SAT/PLAN/ACT test score prior to the prospective student-athlete's arrival on campus for an official visit (Bylaw 13.6.1.2.3.1).
 - f. An official visit may not exceed 48 hours from the time of the prospective student-athlete's arrival on campus or from the time entertainment is provided, whichever occurs first (Bylaw 13.6.2.1).
 - g. A maximum of \$30 per day may be provided to the prospective student-athlete and a student host to cover all costs of entertaining the prospective student-athlete. Other student-athletes may assist with hosting the prospective student-athlete and the \$30 per day entertainment money may be used to cover entertainment expenses for the prospective student-athlete and all hosts. Only one student-athlete may be provided a free meal if restaurant facilities are used (Bylaw 13.6.5.5).
7. Complimentary Admissions.
- During an official or unofficial visit, a maximum of three complimentary admissions to a campus athletics event in which the institution's team practices or competes may be provided to a prospective student-athlete and those persons accompanying that individual on the visit (Bylaw 13.6.5.2).
8. Tryouts
- a. An institution may provide a tryout to a prospective student-athlete during an official or unofficial visit provided the prospective student-athlete has completed eligibility in that sport or is a senior and is not in the academic term of the traditional season of the sport in which the tryout is being conducted (Bylaw 13.11.2.1).

- b. An institution can conduct a permissible tryout of a two-year college student in a sport at any time, provided the student has exhausted his or her two-year college eligibility in that sport [Bylaw 13.11.2.1-(b)].
- c. The tryout may include competition against the member institution's team except in the sports of football, ice hockey, lacrosse and wrestling [Bylaw 13.11.2.1-(d)].

Bylaw 14: Eligibility

1. Initial Eligibility.

- a. Freshman academic requirements include the following (Bylaw 14.3.1.1):
 - (1) Graduate from high school;
 - (2) Complete a minimum of 14-core courses;
 - (3) Present a minimum grade-point average (GPA) in those 14 core courses; and
 - (4) Present a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT test.
- b. A prospective student-athlete should register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse after the completion of their junior year in high school.
- c. All prospective student-athletes must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse not later than 45-calendar days after the first practice or opening day of classes, whichever occurs first. If after that time certification has not been granted, the student-athlete is no longer eligible to participate in any countable athletically related activities until a final certification is granted (Bylaw 14.3.5.1).

2. Amateurism and Delayed Enrollment Regulations.

- a. Any prospective student-athlete who has delayed initial-collegiate enrollment and has participated in activities that meet the criteria in Bylaw 14.2.4.2.3 shall use a season of intercollegiate competition for each calendar year or sports season in which the individual has participated.
- b. An individual who uses a season(s) of competition in a specific sport per Bylaw 14.2.4.2 shall fulfill an academic year in residence at any member institution prior to

- being eligible to represent the certifying institution in that specific sport in intercollegiate competition (Bylaw 14.2.4.2.2).
- c. Subsequent to initial full-time collegiate enrollment, a student-athlete will lose amateur status and, thus, shall not be eligible for intercollegiate competition in a sport if the individual fails to comply with postenrollment regulations in Bylaw 12.1.1 and 12.1.2.
3. Continuing-Eligibility/Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements.
- a. A student-athlete must maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree and be in good academic standing as determined by the regulations of that institution (Bylaw 14.4.1).
- b. In order be eligible for competition each academic year, the student-athlete must:
- (1) Satisfactorily complete at least an average of 12-semester or quarter hours of academic credit during each of the terms enrolled or have earned 24-semester hours or 36-quarter hours the previous two semesters or three quarters (Bylaw 14.4.3.1);
 - (2) Earn at least 75 percent of the semester or quarter hours required for satisfactory progress during the regular academic term (Bylaw 14.4.3.1.3);
 - (3) Achieve NCAA minimum grade-point average requirements per Bylaw 14.4.3.2 and 14.4.3.2.1; and
 - (4) Declare a major that leads to a specific baccalaureate degree by the beginning of the third year (fifth semester or seventh quarter) of enrollment and, thereafter, shall make progress toward that specific degree (Bylaw 14.4.3.1.4).
- c. In order to be eligible for competition at the end of each academic term, the student-athlete must:
- Earn six-semester or six-quarter hours of academic credit the previous term [Bylaw 14.4.3.1-(a)].
4. Transfer Student Eligibility.

- a. A student who transfers to a member institution from any collegiate institution is required to complete one full academic year in residence at the certifying institution before being eligible to compete for or receive travel expenses, unless the student satisfies the applicable transfer requirements or receives a waiver as set forth in Bylaw 14.5.4.1 and 14.5.5.3.
 - b. A transfer student-athlete must earn six-semester or six-quarter hours of transferable degree credit the previous academic term (Bylaw 14.4.3.1.1).
5. Gambling Activities
- A student-athlete may not place a bet of any sort on any college or professional sports event in which the NCAA conducts championship competition or provide information to anyone who places bets on college or professional sports (Bylaw 10.3).

Bylaw 15: Financial Aid

1. A “counter” is an individual who is receiving financial aid based in any degree on athletics ability or who is receiving institutional financial aid, unless there is proper certification on file that such institutional aid granted without regard in any degree to athletics ability. Further, once a student becomes a counter, any countable aid received by that student-athlete is countable against the aid limitations in that sport [Bylaws 15.02.3 and 15.5.1-(b)].
2. An institution may not award a student-athlete financial aid in excess of a full grant-in-aid (includes tuition, fees, room and board, and required course-related books and supplies) and shall not be awarded in excess of one academic year (Bylaws 15.02.6 and 15.1).
3. To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be included on the institution’s squad-list form (Bylaw 15.5.5.1).
4. Institutional financial aid based in any degree on athletics ability may not be increased, decreased or canceled during the period of award for any athletics reason (Bylaw 15.3.4.3).

5. The renewal and nonrenewal notifications of institutional athletics aid shall be made on or before July 1 before the academic year in which it is or was to be effective (Bylaw 15.3.5.1).
6. Notification of financial aid renewals and nonrenewals must come from the institution's regular financial aid authority and not from the athletics department (Bylaw 15.3.5.1).
7. An institution may not provide athletically related financial aid during the first academic year to a transfer student-athlete for whom the institution did not receive permission to contact from the previous four-year institution's athletics director (Bylaw 13.1.1.2).

Bylaw 16: Awards and Benefits

1. An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or representative of the institution's athletics interests to provide a student-athlete or their relatives or friends a benefit generally not made available to the institution's student body or their relatives or friends (Bylaw 16.02.3).
2. An institution may provide actual and necessary travel expenses to a student-athlete for participation in athletics competition, provided the student-athlete is representing the institution and is eligible for collegiate competition (Bylaw 16.8.1.2).
3. It is permissible for an institution to pay the actual and necessary expenses for the cost of telephone, copying, faxing or using Internet services when the student-athlete is away from campus and the expense is for purposes related to the completion of required academic course work (Bylaw 16.3.1.1).
4. A student-athlete or the entire team in a sport may receive an occasional meal in the locale of the institution on infrequent and special occasions from an institutional staff member. An institutional staff member may provide reasonable local transportation [Bylaw 16.11.1.4-(a)].
5. A student-athlete or entire team in a sport may receive an occasional family home meal from a representative of athletics interests provided the meal is in the individual's home (as opposed to a restaurant) and may be catered [Bylaw 16.11.1.4-(b)].

6. A student-athlete may not accept free-of-charge, or purchase at a discounted or reduced price, athletics equipment, supplies or clothing that is not offered to the general student body. Such items may be provided to student-athletes on an issuance and retrieval basis only (Bylaw 16.11.2.5).
7. An institution may provide four complimentary admissions per home or away contest to a student-athlete in the sport in which the individual participates, regardless of whether the student-athlete competes in the contest (Bylaw 16.2.1.1).

Bylaw 17: Playing and Practice Seasons

1. Countable athletically related activities (CARA) include any required activity with an athletics purpose, involving student-athletes and at the direction of, or supervised by, any member of an institution's coaching staff and must be counted within the weekly and daily limitations (Bylaw 17.02.1).
2. A student-athlete's participation in countable athletically related activities shall be limited to a maximum of four hours per day and 20 hours per week during the playing season (Bylaw 17.1.5.1).
3. Outside of the playing season during the academic year, only a student-athlete's participation in weight-training, conditioning, individual skill instruction and, in football, review of game film shall be permitted. A student-athlete's participation in such activities shall be limited to a maximum of eight hours per week, of which not more than two hours per week may be spent on individual skill workouts and, in football, review of game film (Bylaw 17.1.5.2).
4. During individual skill instruction, no more than four student-athletes from the same team are permitted with their coach(es) at any one time in any facility (Bylaw 17.1.5.2.1).
5. During the playing season, all countable athletically related activities shall be prohibited during one calendar day per week, except during postseason play as defined by Bylaw 17.1.5.4.

6. Outside the playing season, during the academic year, all countable athletically related activities shall be prohibited during two calendar days per week (Bylaw 17.1.5.5).
7. No class time shall be missed for practice activities except when a team is traveling to an away contest and the practice is in conjunction with the contest (Bylaw 17.1.5.6.1).
8. In team sports, no class time shall be missed for competition conducted during the non-championship segment (Bylaw 17.1.5.6.2).

Bylaw 19: Enforcement

1. A secondary violation is a violation that is isolated or inadvertent in nature; provides or is intended to provide only a minimal recruiting, competitive or other advantage; and does not include any significant recruiting inducement or extra benefit (Bylaw 19.02.2.1).
2. Multiple secondary violations by a member institution may be collectively considered as a major violation (Bylaw 19.02.2.1).
3. All other violations other than secondary violations are major violations (Bylaw 19.02.2.2).