

## **NCAA BYLAW 14.7 - OUTSIDE COMPETITION, EFFECTS ON ELIGIBILITY**

Spring break is a time when many student-athletes may be heading home and may want to practice or compete with their local club teams. Outside competition rules are found in Bylaw 14.7 and govern when and how a student-athlete may participate in outside competition during the academic year, and in some cases during the summer. The limitations in these rules were designed to provide a reasonable balance between the amount of time a student-athlete spends on athletically related activities and the time necessary to concentrate on academics to reap the normal benefit of student life.

In the sport of basketball, the general rule precludes a student-athlete from participating in any organized basketball competition except while representing the institution. What is meant organized basketball competition? Well, any competition that includes any of these components.

Teams are regularly formed, or competition is scheduled in advance, official scoring is kept, individual or team standings are maintained, an official timer or game officials are used, team uniforms are used admission is charged, a team is privately or commercially sponsored or the competition is directly or indirectly sponsored, promoted or administered by an entity. So that would include your local home town league, a church league or even a pick-up game if one of those components is met. Who does this rule affect?

This rule affects enrolled student-athletes who were recruited in part for basketball ability as well as non-recruited student-athletes who report for squad practice. And, this rule continues to apply until the student-athlete's basketball eligibility has been exhausted.

Additionally, specifically in the sport of basketball, a student-athlete may compete in a certified summer league, superior basketball league of Puerto Rico, provided the team is amateur, United States vs. US National Teams, outside team summer foreign basketball tours and predraft camps sponsored by a professional sports organization.

In sports other than basketball, the rule is slightly different. The limitation on outside competition applies only during the academic year so during the summer months a student-athlete in a sport other than basketball would be permitted to participate on an outside amateur team. Additionally, during official vacation periods that occur during the academic year like spring or winter break, these student-athletes may compete on an outside team provided the competition does not occur during the institution's declared playing season. So if the playing season extends over spring or winter break then outside competition would not be permissible. In two of our sports, soccer and volleyball, there is an additional exception that allows such competition to occur as early as May 1 provided the following conditions are met.

How does this rule apply to individual sports like golf and tennis? A student-athlete may participate in outside competition as an individual during the academic year as long as the student-athlete represents only himself or herself and does not engage in the competition as a member of an outside team or receive expenses from an outside team. For example, in the sport of tennis, a student-athlete is permitted to compete in a local tennis tournament as an individual provided he or she is not representing an outside team, scoring points for that team or receiving expenses from the team. Similarly a golfer could participate in individual outside golf competition again provided he or she is not representing an outside team. It is important to note that a pro-am golf team, a doubles tennis team and a track and field relay team are not considered to be teams for the purposes of this rule.

Finally, there are some generally exceptions to the outside competition rule. For all sports, the following exceptions exist:

- A high school alumni game
- Olympic Games
- Official Pan American Games tryouts and competition
- U.S. National teams
- Official World championships, world university games and world cup tryouts and competition
- And multisport events.

In summary, remember the outside competition rules generally apply during the academic year only except that in the sport of basketball the rules apply year round until basketball eligibility is exhausted. Secondly, a participant in an individual sport may compete in outside competition during the academic year if representing himself or herself and not receiving expenses or scoring points for an outside team. Finally, the general exceptions listed in Bylaw 14.7.3 are specific and do constitute an all-inclusive list.