

Practice and Playing Seasons

Institutional Limitations

A member institution shall limit its organized practice activities, the length of its playing seasons, and the number of its regular-season contest and/or dates of competition in all sports, as well as the extent of its participation in non-collegiate sponsored athletics activities, to minimize interference with the academic programs of its student-athletes (Bylaw 17.01.1).

Definitions and Applications (Bylaw 17.02)

Countable Athletically Related Activities (Bylaw 17.02.1)

The following are considered countable athletically related activities and must be counted in the weekly or daily time limitations specified under Bylaw 17.1.5.1 for Divisions I and II:

- a. Practice, which is defined as any meeting, activity or instruction involving sports-related information and having an athletics purpose, held for one or more student-athletes at the direction of, or supervised by, any member or members of an institution's coaching staff. Practice is considered to have occurred if one or more coaches and one or more student-athletes engage in any of the following activities:
 - (1) Field, floor or on-court activity;
 - (2) Setting up offensive or defensive alignment;
 - (3) Chalk talk;
 - (4) Lecture on or discussion of strategy related to the sport;
 - (5) Activities using equipment related to the sport;
 - (6) Discussions or review of game films, motion pictures or videotapes related to the sport, except for the observation of an officiating clinic related to playing rules that is conducted by video conference and does not require student-athletes to miss any class time to observe the clinic; or
 - (7) Activities conducted under the guise of physical education class work (e.g., any class composed of or including primarily members of an intercollegiate team on a required attendance basis or where the class utilizes equipment for the sport);
- b. Competition;
- c. **Required weight-training and conditioning activities held at the direction of or supervised by an institutional staff member;**
- d. Participation in a physical-fitness class (including a summer class) conducted by a member of the athletics staff, unless such a class is a regular physical education class listed in the institution's catalog and open to all students. Such class may not include practice activities conducted under the guise of physical education class work;

- e. In Divisions I and II sports other than football, participation outside the institution's declared playing season in individual skill-related instructional activities with a member of the coaching staff and that occur at the request of the student-athlete;
- f. In Divisions I and II individual sports, participation outside the institution's declared playing season in individual skill-related instructional activities with a member of the coaching staff, except for individual workout sessions during the summer that occur at the request of the student-athlete;
- g. Required participation in camps, clinics or workshops;
- h. Individual workouts required or supervised by a member of the coaching staff, except for those sports subject to the safety exception. A coach may design a voluntary general individual workout program for a student-athlete (as opposed to a specific workout program for specific days) but cannot conduct the individual's workout;
- i. On-court or on-field activities called by any member or members of a team and confined primarily to members of that team that are considered as a requisite for participation in that sport (e.g., captain's practices);
- j. Visiting the competition site in the sports of cross-country, golf and skiing;
- k. Use of an institution's athletics facilities when such activities are supervised by or held at the direction of any member of an institution's coaching staff. Facilities may be reserved for such use during the academic year. It is not permissible to reserve facilities during the summer, except in Divisions I and II, to participate in permissible individual workouts in individual sports at the request of the student-athlete(s). In the event the use of an institution's facilities is requested by a team composed partly of enrolled student-athletes and partly of individuals not otherwise affiliated with the institution, use of the facilities shall be consistent with the policies established for outside groups generally.
- l. Involvement of an institution's strength and conditioning staff with enrolled student-athletes in required conditioning programs. Strength and conditioning personnel may monitor voluntary individual workouts for safety purposes. If the strength and conditioning coach also is a countable coach, such assistance may be provided only if that strength and conditioning staff member performs such duties on a department-wide basis.

Declaration of Playing Season

According to Bylaw 17.1.3, the declaration of the institution's playing season in each sport shall be on file in writing in the department of athletics prior to the beginning of the institution's playing season for that sport. **Changes in the declaration for a particular sport are permissible and also shall be filed in writing in the office of the institution's athletics director.**

Review Bylaw 17, both the general information and your sport specific information when completing the form. **Include your schedule with the form.** Please complete the form accurately and completely **using the codes listed.** You may change your playing season during the year, but the change must be on file in the Compliance Office. You will do this by submitting another of these forms and checking 'revision' at the top of the corner, or by writing (e-mailing) a description of the change and receiving confirmation from the Compliance Office that the change meets Bylaw 17 regulations.

Some helpful reminders for determining playing season:

1. Check your sports specific information for the permissible first date of practice. Then start with the last date of your Big Ten Championships and count backwards (for sports other than football and basketball).
2. For counting purposes, once school begins you are only permitted one required day off per week - you may give more but they count (for sports other than football and basketball).
3. If you hold **a tryout**, it **must be conducted during the playing season** (132-, 144-, 156-day season) and may not be held during out-of-season activities.
4. You must have a required day off during weeks that contain official university vacation days such as Labor Day, Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
5. You are not required to give a day off during the vacation periods for Semester Break, Spring Break, and Summer Break, but you must count the days that you do practice (sports of swimming and diving, track and field, wrestling).
6. There is no day off required in the week of the conference championship.
7. If you conduct required practice during final exam week, those dates must count. If you do not conduct required practice or conduct required practice only a couple of days, i.e. Monday and Thursday, it will not constitute a segment break. However, you may not revert to out-of-season skill training during this time or it becomes a segment break. You are either in-season or out-of-season activities and may not mix the two.
8. Preseason Practice Opportunities for football, volleyball, soccer, and cross country are referenced in 17.02.11 and the specific sport. There are no required days off during preseason prior to the first day of class. However, if the sports of volleyball, soccer, or cross-country do take a day off during this time and there are **no required athletically related activities**, that day does not count as one of the 132 or 144 days.

General Playing Season Regulations

Declaration of Playing Season (Bylaw 17.1.3)

Each member institution shall determine the playing season for each of the sports referenced under Bylaw 17.02.12. Declaration of the institution's playing season in each such sport shall be on file in writing in the department of athletics prior to the beginning of the institution's playing season for that sport. Changes in the declaration for a particular sport are permissible and also shall be filed in writing in the office of the institution's athletics director.

Daily and Weekly Hour Limitations—Playing Season (Bylaw 17.1.5.1)

A student-athlete's participation in countable athletically related activities (see Bylaw 17.02.1.1) shall be limited to a maximum of four hours per day and 20 hours per week.

Weekly Hour Limitations—Outside of Playing Season (Bylaw 17.1.5.2)

Outside of the playing season during the academic year, only a student-athlete's participation in the countable athletically related activities specified in Bylaws 17.02.1.1-(c), 17.02.1.1-(d), 17.02.1.1-(e) 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 set forth in Bylaws 17.02.1.1-(e) and 17.1.6.2.1. A student-athlete may not participate in any countable athletically related activities outside the playing season during any institutional vacation period (e.g., summer, academic year).

Skill Instruction—Sports other than Baseball and Football (Bylaw 17.1.6.2.2)

Participation by student-athletes in individual skill-related instruction in sports other than baseball and football is permitted outside the institution's declared playing season, from the institution's first day of classes of the academic year or September 15, whichever occurs earlier, to one week prior to the beginning of the institution's final examination period at the conclusion of the academic year [see Bylaw 17.1.6.2-(a)]. More than four student-athletes from the team may be involved in skill-related instruction with their coaches from September 15 through April 15. Prior to September 15 and after April 15, no more than four studentathletes from the same team may be involved in skill-related instruction with their coach(es) at any one time in any facility. (*Adopted: 1/10/95 effective 8/1/95; Revised: 1/9/96, 1/14/97 effective 8/1/97, 10/27/98, 10/31/02 effective 8/1/03, 4/29/04 effective 8/1/04, 4/28/05, 4/27/06 effective 8/1/06, 4/26/07 effective 8/1/07*)

Skill Instruction—Baseball (Bylaw 17.1.6.2.3)

In baseball, participation by student-athletes in skill-related instruction is permitted outside the institution's declared playing season, from the institution's first day of classes of the academic year or September 15, whichever occurs earlier, to one week prior to the beginning of the final examination period at the conclusion of the academic year [see Bylaw 17.1.6.2-(a)]. More than four student-athletes may be involved in skill-related instruction with their coaches from September 15 to one week prior to the final examination period for the fall term and from January 15 through April 15. No more than four student-athletes may be involved in skill-related instruction with their coaches at any one time in any facility prior to September 15, from the opening day of classes of the institution's second academic term to January 15 (for those institutions that begin classes prior to January 15) and after April 15. (*Adopted: 4/26/07 effective 8/1/07*)

Definition of Week (Bylaw 17.1.5.3.3)

A "week" shall be defined as any seven consecutive days to be determined at the institution's discretion. Once the institution determines the seven-day period that shall constitute its week, it shall not change that designation for the remainder of the segment.

Hour-Limitation Record (Bylaw 17.1.5.3.4)

Countable hours must be recorded on a daily basis for each student-athlete regardless of whether the student-athlete is participating in an individual or team sport. Any countable individual or group athletically related activity must count against the time limitation for each student-athlete who participates in the activity but does not count against time limitations for other team members who do not participate in the activity.

Diving Practice Sessions (Bylaw 17.23.1)

Permits a SA who is a diver to engage in diving practice sessions beyond the conclusion of the institution's swimming and diving playing season. Provided any SA does not engage in more than 144-day playing and practice seasons. (Effective - August 1,1998)

Spring Football Practice (17.11.6(b))

Specifies that 12 of the 15 spring practice sessions may involve contact, provided contact does not occur prior to the third practice session; to specify that full contact 11-on-11 sessions are limited to three (3) of the 12 practice sessions; further, to reduce the number of spring football contact sessions that may involve tackling to eight (8).