

Voluntary Activities and the Safety Exception

What is a “voluntary” activity?

To be considered a “voluntary” activity, all of the following conditions must be met:

- The student-athlete must not be required to report back to a coach or other athletics department staff member (e.g., strength coach, trainer, manager) any information related to the activity. In addition, noncoaching athletics department staff members who observe the activity (e.g., strength coach, trainer, manager) may not report back to the student-athlete’s coach any information related to the activity. [NOTE: Coaches may not observe voluntary activities. However, coaching staff members may be present during permissible skill-related instruction requested by the student-athlete pursuant to NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.2.2.]
- The activity must be initiated and requested solely by the student-athlete. Neither the institution nor any athletics department staff member may require the student-athlete to participate in the activity at any time;
- The student-athlete’s attendance and participation in the activity (or lack thereof) may not be recorded for the purposes of reporting such information to coaching staff members or other student-athletes; and
- The student-athlete may not be subjected to penalty if he or she elects not to participate in the activity. In addition, neither the institution nor any athletics department staff member may provide recognition or incentives (e.g., awards) to a student-athlete based on his or her attendance or performance in the activity.

What is the safety exception?

A coach may be present during voluntary individual workouts in the institution’s regular practice facility (without the workouts being considered as countable athletically related activities) when the student-athlete uses equipment in that sport. The coach may provide safety or skill instruction but may not conduct the individual’s workouts.

The safety exception is applicable to the following sports:

Archery
Equestrian
Fencing
Gymnastics
Rifle
Rowing
Skiing

Swimming and Diving
Synchronized Swimming
Track and Field (**FIELD EVENTS ONLY**)
Water Polo
Wrestling