

Committee on Athletics  
February 18, 2009



PLAYING AND PRACTICE  
SEASONS

*Summary of Applicable NCAA  
Legislation*

# **I. LENGTH OF PLAYING SEASON**

## **A. TEAM SPORTS**

*The NCAA places limitations on how long each respective season may run during the academic year. These limitations are determined by whether the sport is classified as a team sport (i.e., basketball, baseball, volleyball) or an individual sport (i.e., swimming, track).*

### **Baseball, Field Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball, Water Polo**

A 132-day season, which may consist of two (2) segments (each consisting of consecutive days) and which may exclude only the time between segments, required days off per Bylaw 17.1.5.4 and official vacation, holiday and final examination periods during which no practice or competition shall occur.

### **Football**

Bylaw 17.11.1 reads the length of an institution's playing season shall be limited to the period of time between the start of pre-season practice (17.11.2) and the end of the regular playing season (Bylaw 17.11.4), except as provided in Bylaw 17.11.6 (out-of-season practice).

### **Basketball**

Bylaw 17.5.1 reads the length of an institution's playing season shall be limited to the period of time between the start of pre-season practice (17.5.2) and the end of the regular season (17.5.4).

### **Women's Rowing**

Bylaw 17.17.1 reads the length of an institution's playing season shall be limited to a 156-day season, which may consist of two (2) segments (each consisting of consecutive days) and which may exclude only the time between segments, required days off per Bylaw 17.1.6.4 and official vacation, holiday and final examination periods during which no practice or competition shall occur.

A single winter-training trip for practice only shall be permitted between the segments, provided the trip does not exceed two weeks and is counted as part of the 156-day playing and practice season (17.17.1.1).

## **B. INDIVIDUAL SPORTS**

### **Cross Country, Golf, Swimming and Diving, Tennis, Wrestling**

A 144-day season, which may consist of two (2) segments (each consisting of consecutive days) and which may exclude only the time between segments, required days off per Bylaw 17.1.6.4 and official vacation, holiday and final examination periods during which no practice or competition shall occur.

### **Track and Field (Indoor/Outdoor)**

An institution that sponsors both indoor and outdoor track and participates in at least the minimum number of contests with at least the minimum number of participants required to count both sports in meeting division membership requirements is limited to a 156-day season for indoor and outdoor track combined, which may consist of two (2) segments (each consisting of consecutive days) and which may exclude only the time between segments, required days off per Bylaw 17.1.6.4 and official vacation, holiday and final examination periods during which no practice or competition shall occur.

*Bucknell University makes sure that each sport's season falls within the above limitations. The NCAA mandates that athletic departments maintain a "season declaration" on which, the start and end days are identified and the exact number of days are counted. Furthermore, Bucknell's declaration form has appropriate spaces for the respective head coach and the compliance office to sign off that the information is correct. The coach attaches an official copy of his or her schedule with the declaration form as well. This document is used to verify that the coach is within the limits as far as outside*

*competition dates are concerned. The discussion on the permissible number of competition dates is forthcoming.*

## **II. PRE-SEASON PRACTICE**

### **Pre-Season Practice**

Daily and weekly hour limitations do not apply to countable athletically related activities during pre-season practice before the first day of classes or the first scheduled contest, whichever is earlier. (17.1.6.4.3)

An institution is not required to provide student-athletes with one (1) day off per week during pre-season practice that occurs before the first day of classes, or the first scheduled contest, whichever is earlier. (17.1.6.4.3)

### **Sports Soccer, Field Hockey, Cross Country, Men's Water Polo Which The NCAA Championship Is Conducted During The Fall Term**

The date that permits 21 practice opportunities before the first contest is used to determine the first pre-season practice day. (Bylaw 17.02.11 defines calculation of practice opportunities.)

### **Football**

The date that permits 40 (not more than 29 on-field) pre-season practice opportunities before the first contest is used to determine the first pre-season practice date. (Bylaw 17.02.11 defines the calculation of practice opportunities.)

### **Women's Volleyball**

The date that permits 29 pre-season practice opportunities before the first contest is used to determine the first pre-season practice date. (Bylaw 17.02.11 defines the calculation of practice opportunities.)

### **First Practice Day Allowed For Golf, Women's Water Polo, Lacrosse, Rowing, Swimming and Diving, Tennis, Track, and Wrestling**

September 7 or the institution's first day of classes, whichever is earlier.

### **Basketball**

The Saturday nearest October 15 (e.g., 2009-October 16, 2010-October 15)

In the sport of basketball, pre-season conditioning activities may occur any time after the academic year begins, inasmuch as Bylaw 17.1.6.2 permits eight (8) hours of the following countable athletically related activities outside of the playing season.

1. Weight-training and conditioning activities.
2. Individualized-skill instruction.

### **Calculation of practice opportunities**

The following formula is used when determining the number of practice opportunities to establish the starting day for pre-season practice.

1. One for each day classes are not in session in the week of the first scheduled contest (defined as the six days, excluding Sunday, preceding the first date of competition, even if one or more of the days fall into different traditional calendar weeks);
2. Two for each other day in the pre-season practice period; and

3. Exclude Sundays.

*The Office of Compliance Services checks the “Bucknell Declaration” form to make sure the fall sports start at the appropriate times. In sports other than basketball, the head coach and compliance coordinator schedule a meeting to set the pre-season schedule.*

### **III. FIRST CONTEST OR FIRST DATE OF COMPETITION**

#### **Sports Golf, Women’s Water Polo, Lacrosse, Rowing, Swimming and Diving, Tennis, Track, Wrestling**

September 7 or the institution’s first day of classes, whichever is earlier.

#### **Basketball**

Shall not have first contest (game or scrimmage) prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of November (17.5.3).

#### **Exceptions**

Bylaw 17.5.3.1. The following basketball contests (games or scrimmages) are permitted before the first contest date specified under Bylaw 17.3.3.

1. Informal practice scrimmages.
2. BCA Basketball Classic, Tip-Off Classic, Foreign Team in Canada, Great Alaska Shootout, Top of the World Classic, Maui Invitational, NABC Classic.
3. Games against USA Basketball, foreign teams or four-year institutions other than Division I institutions per Bylaw 17.5.5.3-(C).
4. Pre-Season NIT.

#### **Cross Country**

September 1 or the preceding Friday if September 1 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday (17.7.3).

#### **Men’s Water Polo**

First Saturday in September (17.29.3).

#### **Football**

Thursday preceding Labor Day (17.11.3)

#### **Men’s Soccer and Women’s Volleyball**

September 1 or the preceding Friday if September 1 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday, except that an alumni contest may be played the weekend before September 1 when September 1 does not fall on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday (17.20.3 and 17.28.3).

#### **Women’s Soccer**

The Friday prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> weekend [or 12<sup>th</sup> weekend in years in which the date of the first permissible men’s soccer results in 12 weeks between that date and the start of the NCAA Division I Men’s Soccer Championships] prior to the start of the NCAA Division I Women’s Soccer Championship, except that an alumni contest may be played the previous weekend (17.30.3).

## **Field Hockey**

Eleven weeks before the start of the Division I Field Hockey Championship, except that an alumni contest may be played the weekend before the first scheduled contest (17.9.5.1.1).

Bylaw 17.10.3.1. and 17.20.3.1 – Scrimmages/Exhibition Games. A member institution may play three field hockey scrimmage or exhibition games or three soccer scrimmages or exhibition games (which shall not count toward the institution's won/lost record) before the first scheduled contest during a particular academic year, provided the scrimmage or exhibition game is conducted during the institution's declared playing season per Bylaw 17.10.1 or 17.20.1 (including the pre-season practice period) and is counted against the maximum number of contests.

*As mentioned previously, coaches submit a official schedule of contests with the "Bucknell Declaration" form. The Office of Compliance Services then verifies that the schedule is appropriate in terms of the start dates, permissible exceptions, and length of the season.*

## **IV. TIME LIMITS FOR ATHLETICALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES-IN SEASON**

Definition bylaw 17.02.1 reads " Countable related activities include any required activity with an athletics purpose involving student-athletes and at the direction of, or supervised by one or more of an institution's coaching staff (including strength and conditioning coaches) and must be counted within the weekly and daily limitations under Bylaw 17.1.6.1 and 17.1.6.2. Administrative activities (e.g., academic meetings, compliance meetings) shall not be considered as countable athletically related activities.

### **Daily and Weekly Hour Limitations-Playing Season**

A student-athlete's participation in countable athletically related activities shall be limited to a maximum of four (4) hours per day and 20 hours per week (17.1.6.1).

### **Multi-sport Participant Exception**

A multi-sport student-athlete's participation in countable athletically related activities is limited to a maximum of four (4) hours per day and a total of 20 hours per week (17.1.6.8).

### **Golf Practice Round Exception**

A practice round of golf may exceed the four-hours-per-day limitation, but the weekly limit of 20 hours shall remain in effect. A practice round played on the day prior to the start of a intercollegiate golf tournament at the tournament site shall count as three (3) hours, regardless of the actual duration of the round (17.1.6.1.1).

### **Weekly Hour Limitations-Outside of Playing Season**

A student-athlete's participation in such activities (per 17.02.1) shall be limited to a maximum of eight (8) hours per week, with not more than two (2) hours per week spent on skill-related workouts. A student-athlete may not participate in any countable athletically related activities outside the playing season during any institutional vacation period and/or summer (17.1.6.2).

### **Skill Instruction**

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 (4) 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 (4) student-athletes from the same team may be involved in skill-related instruction with their coaches at any one time in any facility. Skill-related instruction shall not be publicized and shall not be conducted in view of a general public audience (17.1.6.2.2).

*Often times at Bucknell, the exact time of the skill instruction depends on a number of factors. For example, the availability of facilities, the student-athlete's academic class schedule, and the availability of the coach are but a few examples. Skill instruction is not a "practice." Rather, it is a voluntary instruction initiated by student-athletes themselves and therefore, the hours of the instruction may occur throughout the day. This skill instruction may only occur in two (2) of the permissible eight (8) out-of-season hours for any given week. This fact is monitored by having coaches turn in detailed monthly logs indicating what in-season or what out-of-season activities are occurring. Furthermore, student-athletes also sign a countable athletic related activities (CARA) form which affirmatively tracks the respective hours. The "CARA" form is used as a check to verify that the monthly logs are accurate.*

### **Conditioning Activities**

Conditioning drills per Bylaw 17.1.5.2 that may simulate game activities are permissible, provided no offensive or defensive alignments are set up and no equipment related to the sport is used. In the sport of swimming and diving, a student-athlete may be involved with in-pool conditioning activities and swim-specific equipment (e.g., starting blocks, kickboards, pull buoys) may be used (17.1.6.2.4).

### **Computation and Recording Hour Limitations**

The following are some key provisions in recording the daily and weekly hour limitations.

### **Competition Day**

All competition and any associated athletically related activities on the day of competition shall count as three (3) hours regardless of the actual duration of these activities (17.1.6.3.2).

### **Practice Prohibited after Competition**

Practice may not be conducted at any time (including vacation periods) following competition, except between contest, rounds or events during a multi-day or multi-event competition (e.g., doubleheaders in softball or baseball, rounds of golf in a multi-day tournament) (17.1.6.3.2.1).

### **Definition of Week and Day**

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 a week, it shall not change that designation for the remainder of the segment. A "day" shall be defined as a calendar day (i.e., 12:01 AM to Midnight) (17.1.6.3.1 and 17.1.6.3.3).

*At Bucknell, the Office of Compliance Services presumes that the week runs from Sunday 12:01am to Saturday 12:00pm.*

### **Vacation Periods and Between Terms**

Daily and weekly hour limitations do not apply to countable athletically related activities occurring during an institution's term-time official vacation period, as listed in the institution's official calendar, and during the academic year between terms when classes are not in session. If such vacation periods occur during any part of a week in which classes are in session, the institution is subject to the daily and weekly hour limitations during the portion of the week when classes are in session and must provide the student-athletes with a day off (see Bylaw 17.1.6.4), which may be a vacation day (17.1.6.3.6).

### **Final Examination Periods**

Daily and weekly hour limitations apply to countable athletically related activities during final examination periods and to all official preparatory periods leading to final examination periods (17.1.6.3.7).

### **Required Day Off-Playing Season**

During the playing season, all countable athletically related activities shall be prohibited during one (1) calendar day per week, except during participation in one conference and post-season championship and any post-season licensed bowl games or National Invitation Tournaments, and during participation in NCAA championships (17.1.6.4).

*At Bucknell, the Office of Compliance Services carefully scrutinizes the monthly logs to ensure that student-athletes are given one day off per week. Sometimes confusion exists with the parameters of the day off provision. Coaches do not need to provide one day off every seven consecutive days. For example, if a coach gives a Sunday off in week #1 and the Saturday off in week #2 (assume we have a Sunday to Saturday week), the team may have practiced for 13 consecutive days, but no violation of the day off provision would occur. Basically, each week is its own separate entity.*

### **Travel Day**

A travel day related to athletics participation may be considered as a day off, provided no countable athletically related activities occur during that day (17.1.6.4.1).

### **Vacation Period**

It is permissible to use a vacation day to satisfy the day-off-per week requirement (17.1.6.4.4).

## **V. TIME LIMITS FOR ATHLETICALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES-IN SEASON**

### **During Academic Year**

A student-athlete may participate only in the following activities for a maximum of eight (8) hours per week.

1. Weight-training
2. Conditioning activities
3. Individualized skill instruction (not more than two (2) of the eight (8) hours may be spent on individual skill workouts) (17.1.6.2). This is not considered an organized practice that is common during the in-season activities.

Outside competition is permitted as an individual during the academic year, provided the student-athlete represents only himself or herself in the competition and does not engage in such competition as a member or receive expenses from an outside team (14.7.1.4).

Individual sports such as “pro-am” golf teams, doubles tennis teams and relay teams in track and field, are not considered to be outside teams for purposes of this legislation (14.7.1.5).

### **Outside Academic Year/Summer**

Bucknell may not organize or financially support a team’s practice in the summer.

A student-athlete who participates in a team sport may participate on an outside team during the summer; however, there are limitations on the number of student-athletes from the same member institution that may participate on such a team.

In individual sports, there are no limits on the number of student-athletes from the same member institution that may participate on an outside team during the summer.

Summer workout sessions. In individual sports only, a coach may participate in individual workout sessions with student-athletes (e.g., group sessions) from a coach's team during the summer, provided the request for such assistance is initiated by the student-athlete(s). It is not permissible for an institution to pay fees (e.g., green fees) for the use of a facility.

*The Office of Compliance Services meets with the respective teams in the spring to discuss the legislation for the summer. This includes a discussion with men's and women's basketball with respect to NCAA approved summer league participation.*

## **VI. NEW LEGISLATION – DIVISION I**

*Below represents recent adopted NCAA legislation pertaining to playing and practice seasons.*

Board-Approved Legislation

Proposal No. 2008-54

Exempts one (1) annual date of competition in golf which could take place in Hawaii or Alaska from countable contest.

Pending Legislation Initially Approved or Reviewed By The Management Council

Proposal No. 2008-56

In Tennis increases from 3 to 4 the number of student-athletes who may participate in an individual single or doubles tournament without counting the event at a date of competition.

Proposal No. 2008-45

In sports other than football to specify that prior to September 15 and after April 15, no more than four (4) student-athletes from same team may be involved in skill-related instruction with their coaches at any one time in any of facility.

Proposal No. 2008-48

In baseball to reduce the maximum number of contest from 56-52.