

# **Basic Legislative Guidelines**

for an

## **NCAA Women's Rugby**

15's Rugby with Option to Include 7's Rugby

### ***Quick Facts***

### **Emerging Sport for Women**

NCAA institutions that sponsor a varsity women's rugby must abide by NCAA regulations on a phased-in basis:

- Year One: Recruiting, financial aid, minimum contests required for sports sponsorship.
- Year Two: Amateurism, seasons of competitions, and awards/benefits.
- Year Three+: Institutions must be in full compliance with all remaining NCAA legislation.

An institution may provide actual and necessary travel expenses (e.g., transportation, lodging, meals) to a student-athlete for participation in athletics competition, provided the student-athlete is representing the institution (competes in the uniform of the institution) and is eligible for intercollegiate competition. This includes NCAA and USA Women's Rugby Championship events.

An institution may provide Incidental Expenses to each member of the squad during travel and practice for NCAA or USA Women's Rugby championship events.

### **Varsity Intercollegiate Sport**

*A sport that has been accorded that status by the institution's president or chancellor or committee responsible for intercollegiate athletics policy and that satisfies the following conditions:*

- a) It is administered by the department of intercollegiate athletics;
- b) The eligibility of the student-athletes is reviewed and certified by a staff member designated by the institution's president or chancellor or committee responsible for intercollegiate athletics policy; and
- c) Qualified participants receive the institution's official varsity awards.

## **NCAA REGULATIONS: PLAYING AND PRACTICE SEASON**

### **Length of Playing Season:**

Women's Rugby shall be limited to a 132-day playing and practice season. This schedule allows each institution to compete the 15's schedule in a manner that best suits their specific conditions, either with a split season or fully within one segment. The 7's division will be incorporated into the 15's playing and practice season for institutions sponsoring both.

### **Preseason Practice:**

15's Division: A member institution's rugby team shall not commence practice sessions prior to the date that permits a maximum of 21 units prior to the first scheduled intercollegiate contest.

7's Division: Championship Segment (Fall): Date that permits 21 'practice units' before first scheduled date of competition.  
Other (Non-Championship) Segment: February 1 of each year.

### **Earliest First Competition.**

A member institution shall not play its first contest with outside competition prior to September 1 or the preceding Friday if Sept. 1 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

### **End of Regular Playing Season.**

15's Division: Conclusion of the National Collegiate Championship.  
7's Division: Last day of final exams for the academic year (must fall within academic year).

### **National Championship.**

15's Division: Spring  
7's Division: Fall

### **Conference Season.**

15's Division: Fall, Spring, or both  
7's Division: Fall

**Minimum Contests:** 10 competitions

A member institution may receive credit for sponsoring both 7's and 15's rugby provided its team participates in at least ten 7's and 15's contests during the year, including at least four 7's dates of competition and six 15's contests.

### **Maximum Number of Competitions**

15's Division:	Fall through Spring	16 Contests
7's Division:	Championship Segment (Fall)	6 Dates of Competition
	Other Segment (Spring)	2 Dates of Competition

### **Minimum Number of Participants**

There is no minimum number of participants required to sponsor a women's rugby program. Typical rosters include an average of 35 players, but can be set to fit the needs and specifics of each member institution.

## **NCAA REGULATIONS: FINANCIAL AID LIMITS**

### **Maximum Equivalency Limits 12 Full Grant-In-Aids.**

The limit on the value (equivalency) of financial aid awards that an institution may provide in any academic year to counters in women's rugby. Financial aid awards may be established in a manner that best suits each member institution.

### **Equivalency Awards.**

Once a student becomes a counter, the institution shall count all institutional aid received for room, board, tuition, fees, and books up to the value of a full grant-in-aid. The sum of all fractional and maximum awards received by counters in women's rugby shall not exceed the total equivalent of 12 full grant-in-aids.

## **NCAA REGULATIONS: COACHING LIMITS**

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Head or Assistant Coach</b>	<b>Limit on Off-Campus Recruiters</b>
<b>Women's Rugby</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

### **Designation of Coaching Category**

An individual who coaches and either is uncompensated or receives compensation or remuneration of any sort from the institution, even if such compensation or remuneration is not designated for coaching, shall be designated as a head coach, assistant coach, volunteer coach, graduate assistant coach or student assistant coach by certification of the institution.

## **NCAA REGULATIONS: RECRUITING**

### **Evaluation.**

Evaluation is any off-campus activity designed to assess the academic qualifications or athletics ability of a prospective student-athlete, including any visit to a prospective student-athlete's educational institution (during which no contact occurs) or the observation of a prospective student-athlete participating in any practice or competition at any site.

### **Evaluation Days – Team Sports (Women's Rugby).**

An institution shall use an evaluation for each prospective student-athlete participating in a practice or contest observed by the institution's coach, even if a contact is made during the same day. An institution's coach who is attending an event in which prospective student-athletes from multiple educational institutions participate in drills (e.g., combine) shall use an evaluation only for each prospective student-athlete participating in the event that the coach observes engaging in the drills.

### **Time Period for Off-Campus Contacts - General Rule.**

Off-campus recruiting contacts shall not be made with an individual or his/her relatives or legal guardians) before July 1 following the completion of his/her junior year in high school) or the opening day of his/her senior year in high school (as designated by the high school), whichever is earlier.

### **Permissible Recruiters: General Rule.**

All in-person, on- and off-campus recruiting contacts with a prospective student-athlete or the prospect's relatives or legal guardians shall be made only by authorized institutional staff members. An institutional staff member is not permitted to recruit off-campus until he/she has been certified on an annual basis as to knowledge of applicable recruiting rules.

### **Telephone Calls: General Rule.**

Telephone calls to an individual (or his/her relatives or legal guardians) may not be made before July 1 following the completion of his/her junior year in high school, or the opening day of classes of his/her senior year in high school (as designated by the high school), whichever is earlier; thereafter staff members shall not make such telephone calls more than once per week.

### **Counting Contacts and Evaluations.**

Evaluations that occur during the academic year count against the permissible number of recruiting opportunities. Outside of the academic year, evaluations do not count against the annual number of recruiting opportunities. Contacts that occur with a prospective student-athlete count against the permissible number of total recruiting opportunities regardless of the time period e.g., academic year or outside the academic year). All contacts and evaluations are subject to recruiting calendar restrictions.

## **RUGBY: PLAYING RULES**

Rugby is a fun, fast-paced game in which the object is to carry the ball over the opponents' goal line and touch it to the ground to score. In order to go forward, the ball must be passed backwards. The ball can be kicked forwards, but the kicker's teammates must be behind the ball at the moment the ball is kicked. This creates a need for fine teamwork and great discipline, as little can be achieved by any one individual player. Only by working as a team can players move the ball forward towards their opponents' goal line and eventually go on to win the game.

Rugby and American football are very different games. The main similarities between the two sports is that they are both running games played with a ball that is roughly the same shape and size. Rugby is the largest contact sport in the world, played by men and women, boys and girls, on five continents and over 100 nations.

### **Divisions of Rugby**

**15's Rugby:** The traditional division consists of 15 players on each side, 8 forwards and 7 backs, who play both offense and defense. Each team is allowed a maximum of eight (8) substitutes in each game. Once a player has been replaced she may not re-enter the contest. The average college roster averages 30+ players. Travel rosters are at the institution's discretion.

**7's Rugby**, which was added to the Olympic Games starting in 2016, includes seven players (three forwards, four backs) on each side. Rosters are limited to twelve players, and all five non-starters are eligible substitutes. Sevens rugby is a faster-paced, more spread out version of 15's. Key differences include:

conversion kicks: in 15's, the player attempting the kick is allowed to use a tee; in 7's conversions must be made via a drop-kick; and

kick-off protocol: in 15's, after one team scores the team which conceded those points is required to kick the ball back to the scoring team; in 7's, the scoring team kicks off to the conceding team.

### **Duration**

**15's Rugby** consists of 40 minute halves with a 10-minute halftime. The referee's whistle indicates the start and finish of the half. Play is continuous, there are no time-outs other than a minute for an injury. The injury time is added to the end of that half.

**7's Rugby** consists of seven minute halves with a one-minute halftime. However, the final of a competition (tournament) can be played over two halves of ten minutes each, with a half-time break of two minutes. This allows rugby tournaments to be completed in a day or a weekend.

### **Field (Rugby Pitch)**

Both divisions of rugby are played on a grass field measuring up to 100 meters/110 yards in length and 69 meters/75 yards in width. Rugby can be played on a soccer field with goalposts. At each end of the field are two 25-yard in-goal areas (end zones), with the tryline marking the front and the dead ball line at the back. The H-shaped goal posts are located on the tryline and are 5.6 meters/6 yards apart with a crossbar set at 3 meters.

### **Equipment**

Competition protective equipment includes a mouth guard, some form of lightweight head protection/scrum cap, and upper body protection which is thin and worn under the jersey. A good quality rugby ball.

Training equipment includes a scrum sled, rugby balls, cones, and tackling suits or bags.

Match equipment includes goalposts, goalpost pads, and 14 flags to mark key zones on the field.

### **Uniform**

Short or long-sleeved jersey, rugby shorts, tall socks, and rugby boots (cleats). Jerseys are numbered based on the position played. More players are using upper body pads and head protection.

### **Scoring**

There are four ways to score points in a rugby game.

**Try:** When the ball is grounded over an opponents' goal line in their 'try zone' it is worth 5 points.

**Conversion:** After scoring a try the scoring team gets an attempt to kick a conversion, worth 2 points.

**Penalty:** If the opposition commits a penalty, a team can choose to kick at goal, worth 3 points.

**Drop Goal:** During play a team may drop and kick the ball over the goal, worth 3 points.

### **Rules of the Game**

Women's Rugby adheres to the USA Rugby and International Rugby Board (IRB) Rules/Laws of the Game.

## **KEY NCAA DEFINITIONS**

### **PLAYING AND PRACTICE SEASON**

#### **Playing Season.**

- Time between first official practice and last practice or date of competition, whichever occurs later.
- Only permissible to conduct practice and competition during the playing season.
- Same/one playing season for varsity and sub-varsity teams, 7's and 15's divisions.
- May consist of two segments to allow institutions to compete a 15's schedule in a manner that best suits their specific conditions (split season Fall and Spring or fully within one segment).
- Conference championships must be included in playing season.
- Practice and competition in an NCAA championship event is not considered part of the playing season.
- If under consideration for championship event, may continue practice without counting in playing season.

#### **Length of Playing Season.**

132 days. Includes both the 15's and 7's divisions.

#### **Outside Team.**

Any team that does not represent the intercollegiate athletic program of the member institution or a team that includes individuals other than eligible student-athletes of the member institution (e.g., members of the coaching staff, ineligible student-athletes, members of the faculty). There are no limitations on the number of student-athletes from any one institution who may compete on an outside amateur women's 7's rugby team.

#### **Pre-Season Practice Units (Fall term only).**

To determine the first permissible preseason practice date, an institution shall count back from its first scheduled contest/scrimmage (21 units permitted for Women's Rugby):

- one unit for each day beginning with the opening of classes
- one unit for each day classes are not in session in the week of the first scheduled intercollegiate contest/scrimmage;
- two units for each other day in the preseason practice period; and
- Sundays are excluded from the counting.

The "week" of the first scheduled intercollegiate contest is defined as the six days, excluding Sunday, preceding the date of competition (even if one or more of the days fall into different traditional calendar weeks).

The "opening day of classes" is defined as the first day of class as listed in the member institution's official catalog.

The first day of practice may be conducted on the day when the last practice unit occurs (determined by counting backward from the day of the first permissible regularly scheduled contest). In women's rugby, practice may be held on the day the 21st practice unit occurs.

#### **Segments of Playing Season.**

Each member institution may divide the playing season into not more than two distinct segments.

- Championship segment.
- Other (non-championship) segment.

### **FINANCIAL AID DEFINITIONS**

#### **Counter**

A counter is an individual who is receiving institutional aid that is countable against the aid limitations in a sport. A counter is included in the maximum awards limitations in that sport.

#### **Determining Equivalency Awards**

A fraction shall be created, with the amount received by the student-athlete (up to the value of a full grant-in-aid) as the numerator and the full grant-in-aid value for that student-athlete as the denominator based on the actual cost or average cost of a full grant for all students at that institution. Books count for calculation purposes as \$800 in the denominator regardless of the actual cost of the books.

#### **Full Grant-in-Aid.**

A full grant-in-aid is financial aid that consists of tuition, fees, room, board, and required course-related books.

#### **Period of Award**

An athletics grant-in-aid shall not be awarded in excess of one academic year.

## **COMPETITION DEFINITIONS**

### **Contest - 15's Rugby**

Each game, match, exhibition or scrimmage with another institution's team, regardless of formality or if occurs within a single date multi-contest tournament. Contests, including scrimmages, by separate squads of the same team against different outside teams shall each count as one contest.

### **Date of Competition - 7's Rugby**

A single date on which any game(s) or exhibition(s) takes place, regardless of formality. A date of competition in sevens rugby is a competition taking place over the course of at least one day between four or more teams.

### **Scrimmages / Exhibition Games - 15's**

One scrimmage/exhibition game may be competed prior to the first scheduled contest during the academic year during the declared playing season. The contest will count against the maximum number of contests; however, the result shall not count toward the institution's won-loss record.

### **Annual Exemptions from Maximum Number of Competitions**

- ▶ **Conference Championship Tournament** (one for 7's and one for 15's).
- ▶ **Conference Play-off Contest** to determine the conference's automatic qualifier (15's).
- ▶ **Season-Ending National Championship Tournament** (one for 7's and one for 15's).
- ▶ **One contest against a foreign team in the United States** played in the facility in which the member institution regularly plays its home dates of competition.
- ▶ **Competition played in Hawaii or Alaska.** Any dates of competition or contests played in Hawaii or Alaska, respectively, against an active member institution located in Hawaii or Alaska.
- ▶ **Fund-raising Activity** in which student-athletes participate with and against alumni and friends of the institution to raise funds to benefit the institution's athletics or other programs, provided the student-athletes do not miss class as a result of their participation;
- ▶ **One contest against a U.S. National Team** as selected and designated by USA Rugby;
- ▶ **One Alumni Contest** or Date of Competition with an alumni team of the institution;
- ▶ **Celebrity Sports Activity** involving a maximum of two student-athletes from a team for the purpose of raising funds for charitable organizations, provided no classes are missed, the event has prior approval of the institution's athletic director, and the activity occurs within a 30-mile radius of the main campus.

### **Once-in-Four Years Exemption: Foreign Tour**

An institution may exempt contests played on a foreign tour, provided:

- a) the tour is scheduled during the institution's summer-vacation or an academic year vacation period;
- b) a tour is not scheduled more than once every four years;
- c) no more than 10 days of practice are permitted prior to departure.
- d) the team shall compete no more than 10 contests or dates of competition during the tour.

### **Foreign Tour - Clarification**

A tour to a U.S. commonwealth (e.g., Puerto Rico) or U.S. territory (e.g., Virgin Islands) is not considered a foreign tour.

### **In-Season Foreign Competition**

A member institution may play one or more contests in one or more foreign countries on one trip during the declared playing season. Except for contests played in Canada and Mexico, the institution may not engage in such in-season foreign competition more than once every four years.

### **Olympic and National Team Development Program.**

There are no limits on the number of student-athletes from the same institution who may participate in Olympic and national team development programs which may also include a coach from the same institution.

### **May 1 Exception - 7's Rugby.**

A student-athlete in 7's rugby may compete outside of an institution's declared playing and practice season as a member of an outside team in any non-collegiate amateur competition, provided:

- a) such participation occurs no earlier than May 1;
- b) the competition is approved by the institution's director of athletics; and
- c) no class time is missed for practice activities or for competition.

There are no limitations on the number of student-athletes from any one institution who may compete on an amateur women's 7's rugby team.

## **RECRUITING DEFINITIONS**

### **Prospective Student-Athlete (PSA)**

A prospective student-athlete is a student who has started classes for the ninth grade. A student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a psa if the institution provides that individual (or the individual's relatives or friends) any benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students generally.

### **Telephone Calls**

All electronically transmitted human voice exchange (including video conferencing and video phones) shall be considered telephone calls. Electronically transmitted correspondence sent to a prospect is limited to email and facsimiles. It is not permissible to contact a prospect via text messaging, instant messaging or message board.

### **Off-Campus Recruiters**

A coach is not permitted to recruit off campus until certified as passing an annual NCAA recruiting exam.

### **Contact**

Any time a college coach says more than hello during a face-to-face contact with a psa/their parents off the college's campus.

### **Contact Period**

During a contact period a college coach may have face-to-face contact with psa's or their parents, watch psa's compete and visit their high schools, and write or telephone psa's or their parents.

### **Evaluation Days**

An evaluation day is defined as one coach engaged in the evaluation of any prospect on one day (12:01 a.m. to midnight); two coaches making evaluations on the same day shall use two evaluation days.

### **Evaluation Period**

During an evaluation period a college coach may watch prospective student-athletes compete, visit their high schools, and write or telephone student-athletes or their parents. However, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with psa's or their parents off the college's campus during an evaluation period.

### **Evaluation and Contacts**

Seven recruiting opportunities (contacts and evaluations combined) per prospect. Not more than three of the seven opportunities may be contacts.

### **Evaluations in Team Sports**

An institution shall use an evaluation for each psa participating in a practice/contest observed by the institution's coach, even if a contact is made during the same day. An institution's coach who attends an event in which psa's from multiple educational institutions participate (e.g., combine) shall use an evaluation only for each psa participating in the event that the coach observes engaging in the drills.

### **Quiet Period**

Period a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with psa's/their parents, and may not watch prospects compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write or telephone prospects or their parents during this time.

### **Dead Period**

Period a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with psa's/their parents, and may not watch prospects compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write and telephone psa's/their parents during a dead period.

### **Official Visit**

Any visit to a college campus by a psa/their parents paid for by the college is an official visit. During an official visit the college can pay for transportation to and from the college for the prospect, lodging and three meals per day for both the prospect and the parent/guardian, as well as reasonable entertainment expenses including three tickets to a home sports event.

### **Unofficial Visit**

Visits paid for by prospective student-athletes or their parents are unofficial visits. The only expenses a prospect may receive from a college during an unofficial visit are three tickets to a home sports event.

### **Recruiting Calendars**

Recruiting calendars help promote the well-being of prospective student-athlete and coaches, and ensure competitive equity by defining certain time periods in which recruiting may or may not occur in a particular sport.