

## MEMORANDUM

Date: July 1, 2020

To: IRA Member College Men's Rowing Administrators  
IRA Member College Compliance Officers  
IRA Member College Heavyweight and Lightweight Varsity Men's Coaches

Re: INTERCOLLEGIATE ROWING ASSOCIATION (IRA) Eligibility Regulations  
and Operating Bylaws (July 1, 2020)

### FOREWARD

IRA Eligibility rules and regulation have been adopted by the Intercollegiate Rowing Association for application to member college men's lightweight and heavyweight rowing programs. (**Note: Lightweight women's rowing programs are subject only to NCAA Regulations**). The eligibility regulations and Operating Bylaws of the NCAA constitute the base for IRA eligibility requirements. Wherever IRA eligibility rules and regulations are exactly the same as those of the NCAA (e.g. Amateurism, Recruiting, Awards and Benefits), they have been included herein, but by reference only, and are not reprinted herein.

Further, where the IRA has chosen not to apply certain NCAA Operating Bylaws relating to the men's rowing programs of its members (e.g. Financial Aid, Conduct and Employment of Athletics Personnel), these regulations have also been referenced herein for clarification purposes only, but have not been reprinted.

However, IRA Bylaws authorize the Association to adopt and amend specific IRA eligibility rules and regulations, which may be different from corresponding rules and regulations of the NCAA. Such IRA eligibility rules and regulations shall be adopted or amended only in accordance with the procedures stated under Article Three, Section VI of the IRA Bylaws.

In summary, The IRA Eligibility Rules and Operating Bylaws contained herein are those, which are different from corresponding NCAA rules and regulations. They are NCAA referenced and are applicable to the heavyweight and lightweight men's rowing programs of all members of the Association as printed herein. ***IRA members are reminded that they cannot rely solely on the IRA eligibility rules contained in this manual in discharging their responsibilities to their men's rowing programs but must also comply with those NCAA regulations that the IRA has adopted, as indicated above. As always, the office of the IRA Commissioner is ready and willing to lend whatever help it can to members in need of assistance.***

## **INTERCOLLEGIATE ROWING ASSOCIATION (IRA) ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS AND OPERATING BYLAWS**

### **Article I: AMATEURISM, RECRUITING, AWARDS AND BENEFITS**

IRA institutions agree to abide by NCAA operating bylaws regarding AMATEURISM (Article 12), RECRUITING (Article 13), and AWARDS AND BENEFITS (Article 16). All NCAA regulations and NCAA Official interpretations related thereto shall apply unless specifically excluded by vote of the members of the Association. Standard waivers regarding Amateurism, Recruiting, Awards and Benefits, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed in accordance with NCAA precedent through the NCAA affiliated conference office (PAC-12, Ivy League, etc.) **Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.**

A. Time Period for Telephone Calls – General Rule. Telephone calls or text messages to an individual (or his or her relatives or legal guardians) may not be made before July 1 following the completion of his or her junior year in high school, or the opening day of classes of his or her senior year of high school (as designated by the high school), whichever is earlier. (Revised June 1, 2014/Effective June 5, 2014)

B. Time Period for Expense Paid Visits (Official Visits) First Opportunity to Visit – General Rule. An individual may not be provided an expense paid visit earlier than the opening day of classes of his or her senior year of high school (as designated by the high school). (Effective June 1, 2019)

### **Article II: CONDUCT AND EMPLOYMENT OF ATHLETICS PERSONNEL, FINANCIAL AID**

The IRA does not apply NCAA operating bylaws related to CONDUCT AND EMPLOYMENT OF ATHLETICS PERSONNEL (Article 11), or FINANCIAL AID (Article 15). Any application of these rules must be specifically adopted by vote of the members of the Association.

### **Article III: ELIGIBILITY, ACADEMIC AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

The IRA applies NCAA ELIGIBILITY RULES: Academic and General Requirements (Article 14), including NCAA Official interpretations related thereto, with additions/exceptions adopted by the Association that are printed below. Any changes that may be adopted by the NCAA to these rules apply unless specifically excluded by vote of the members of the Association. Standard waivers to these rules, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed in accordance with NCAA precedent through the NCAA affiliated conference office (PAC-12, Ivy League, etc.)

**Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.**

## A. Initial Eligibility

- a. NCAA initial eligibility certification is not required. Rules do not apply.
- b. Institutions must certify on an annual basis that incoming student-athletes who participate in men's rowing have been admitted as regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students in accordance with the regular, published entrance requirements of that institution.  
(Revised June 1, 2013/Effective June 5, 2013)

## B. Transfer Students (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 14.5)

1. Competition at the First Varsity Level: Standard Waivers regarding transfer students, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, are applicable, and may be processed through the NCAA affiliated conference office (PAC-12, Ivy League, etc.) **Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.** Any such competition that occurs under the benefit of such waiver must be counted as one of the student's **four** years of eligibility in the sport of crew.
  - a. Institutions are not permitted to initiate contact with potential student athletes who are members of collegiate "club crews."  
(Revised June 1, 2013/Effective June 5, 2013)
2. Competition at the Sub-Varsity Level: A transfer student (oarsman or coxswain) may compete in IRA regular season or the IRA Championship Regatta involving Second Varsity or Third Varsity Eights, or Varsity Fours. Any such competition must be counted as one of the student's four years of eligibility in the sport of crew. (Revised June 1, 2012/Effective June 5, 2012)
  - a. A student transferring from a collegiate "club crew" program shall also be subject to these provisions.

## C. Participation on Outside Team (NCAA Ref. BYLAW 17.16.9)

1. IRA student-athletes may not participate during the academic year as a member of any outside team in any non-collegiate competition.
2. It is permissible for rowers of IRA intercollegiate teams to participate as members of a rowing club, which is sponsored by their own university without violating the NCAA outside competition rule under the following circumstances:
  - a. The rowing club is recognized and sponsored by the same university that sponsors the intercollegiate team. Such sponsorship need not necessarily be under the jurisdiction of the university's athletic department, but it must be a legitimate department of the same university.
3. Participation on a particular crew (e.g. eight, four, etc.) of the club on which the intercollegiate varsity/freshman rowers are involved is limited only to such rowers who are eligible to compete as members of the intercollegiate crew team

of the same university. Accordingly, for example, this would permit a Varsity 8, 2V8, or 3V8 in their entirety, to participate in non-collegiate, amateur competition under the name of the university's rowing club. Other rowers who may be at the university, but whose names are not included on the institutional squad lists as eligible to compete as members of the university's intercollegiate crew that year, may not participate on the same crew of the university's rowing club.

a. The competition in question is "countable" as a date of competition for both the institution and for each of the involved student-athletes.

D. Five-Year Rule (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 12.8)

1. A student-athlete shall complete his seasons of competition within 5 calendar years from the beginning of the semester or quarter in which the student-athlete first registered for a minimum full time program of studies in a collegiate institution regardless of whether or not the student participated in rowing at the collegiate varsity or club level since the date of the first such registration.

a. Exception for Military Service and Church Mission Work: Time spent by a student in the armed services, on official church missions or with recognized foreign aid services of the U. S. Government is excepted from the application of the five-year rule. For a foreign student, service in the armed forces or on an official church mission of the student's home country shall be considered equivalent to such service in the United States

b. Waivers: Standard waivers regarding the 5-year rule, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed through the NCAA affiliated conference office (PAC-12, Ivy League, etc.)

**Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.**

E. Seasons of Competitions (NCAA Ref BYLAW 12.8)

1. An IRA student-athlete shall not engage in more than one season of intercollegiate competition at the freshman level.

a. Standard waivers regarding seasons of competition, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed through the NCAA affiliated conference office (PAC-12, Ivy League, etc.)

**Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.**

2. **Delayed Enrollment** (Revised June 1, 2013/Effective June 5, 2013)

A prospect who participates in organized rowing events after his 20th birthday and before fulltime enrollment at the certifying institution shall be subject to the following:

a. The student will be charged with one season of intercollegiate rowing competition for each calendar year after his 20th birthday and prior to full-time enrollment at the certifying institution during which the student-athlete has participated in organized rowing competition

b. Upon matriculation at the certifying institution, the student-athlete must fulfill an academic year in residence before being eligible to represent the institution in intercollegiate rowing, unless the student transfers to the certifying institution with a minimum of 24 semester hours (or equivalent) of transferable degree credit. (Note: All other NCAA transfer and academic eligibility requirements apply.)  
(Adopted June 1, 2012/Effective June 5, 2012)

**NCAA affiliated conference offices are NOT permitted to process waivers regarding delayed enrollment. All delayed enrollment interpretations and waivers must be processed by the IRA office. (Adopted June 1, 2020/Effective July 1, 2020)**

F. Betting of Shirts. (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 10.3 & October 21, 1997 Official Interpretation (Long-Standing Tradition). In accordance with NCAA Bylaw 10.3, bets cannot be placed on the outcome of an intercollegiate rowing race or regatta with one limited exception: losing crews may give shirts to winning crews after races – a long-standing tradition in college rowing.

**ARTICLE IV: PLAYING AND PRACTICE SEASON REGULATIONS** (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 17.17.1)

A. The IRA applies all NCAA Playing and Practice Season Rules (Article 17) that have been adopted for women’s rowing with the following exceptions that are printed below. Changes in NCAA Playing and Practice Season Rules do NOT apply unless specifically adopted by vote of the Association members. Standard waivers to these rules, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed in accordance with NCAA precedent through the NCAA affiliated conference office (PAC-12, Ivy League, etc.) **Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.**

1. Length of Rowing Season

a. The countable practice and playing season, “on the water”, shall be restricted to a total of 156 days. The 156-day season may be divided into two segments, fall and spring. A single winter training program shall be permissible between, or

during, the fall and spring segments, with the trip counting against the 156-day limitation.

b. The length of the rowing season is defined as 156 days of countable practice and/or competition “on the water” to be conducted prior to and/or during the academic year and ending with the date of the IRA Championship Regatta.

c. The 156-day limit is applicable to each individual oarsmen and coxswains, lightweight and heavyweight.

d. Each member shall declare its own countable practice and playing (rowing) season subject to these restrictions adopted by the IRA. Each member must make its declaration prior to the beginning of its rowing season each year, and the declaration shall be on file, in writing in the athletic director’s office.

2. Regulations for Computing the Length of Rowing Season. In determining the length of an institution’s countable practice and playing season “on the water” in rowing, the following regulations shall apply:

a. Consecutive Weeks. The rowing season, or its segments shall consist of consecutive 7-day periods. Practice or competition during any part of a week shall be counted as a full week. A week shall be defined as any consecutive 7-day period, regardless of the day on which the 7-day period begins.

b. Holiday, vacation, exam periods. In the traditional and non-traditional segments, any practice or competition during published vacation, holiday and final exam periods shall be counted as part of the rowing season. If practice or competition is not scheduled during any full week (7 consecutive days) that includes a vacation, final exam, or holiday, it neither shall be counted as part of the rowing season nor shall it constitute a break in the segment. All shells must remain off the water during this break.

c. The Fall Segment. (Non-traditional segment) shall be counted as part of the institution’s declared rowing season regardless of whether or not competition occurs during the segment.

d. Conference Championship date. Any and all practice and competition, on the water, shall be counted against the 156-day limitation during both the fall and spring segments leading to and including a member’s post-season Conference Championships

e. Post Season. The IRA Regatta, The Harvard-Yale Regatta, the Burk Cup and other similar cup races normally held after a member’s post-season Conference Championships are exceptions to the 156-day rule. Practices for, and participation in, these events are not countable against the 156-day practice and

playing season. However, all such events must be counted against the maximum number of dates of competition permitted under paragraph 4-a of this section A.

f. Weather Exception. During an academic term, if necessitated by adverse weather, an institution may transport a team to a practice site within the institution's state or, if outside the state, beyond the normal 100-mile limit but no more than 200 miles from the institution's campus.

g. Winter training trip. A single winter training trip, for practice only, shall be permitted each year between the fall and spring segments and during an institutional vacation period where travel may exceed 200 miles from campus or beyond the borders of the state in which the institution is located, and where crews may practice for a maximum of two (2) weeks duration without having to engage in competition against crews from another college. This trip must be counted as part of the 156-day "on the water" practice and playing limitation.

3. Daily and Weekly Hour Limitations. A student-athlete's participation in practice activities during the countable rowing season shall be limited to a maximum of 4 hours per day and 20 hours per week, 6 days per week.

a. Required Day Off. During the countable rowing season, practice and competition shall be prohibited one calendar day per week.

b. Travel Day. A travel day related to athletics competition may be considered as a day off, provided no practice or competition occurs during that day.

c. Final examination period. Appropriate daily and weekly hour limitations apply to practice and competition during final examination periods and to all official preparatory periods leading to final examination periods.

d. Between Terms. Daily and Weekly hour limitations do not apply to practice and competition which occurs prior to, subsequent to, or between academic terms when classes (or exams) are not in session.

e. Competition day. All competition and any associated athletically related activities on the day of competition shall count as 3 hours regardless of the actual duration of these activities. Practice may not be conducted following competition on the same day as the competition, except at the IRA Regatta.

f. No Class Time Missed for Practice Activities. No class time shall be missed for practice activities except when the crew is traveling to an away-from-home contest and the practice is in conjunction with the contest.

4. Contest Limitations.

a. Teams are limited to 20 contest dates only, not including scrimmages.

- b. Annual Exemptions:
  - (1) Competition in one Conference-sponsored, post season championship events: (e.g., EARC Sprints, PAC 12 Championships), and
  - (2) Competition in one national championship event (e.g. IRA Regatta).
  
- 5. Out of Season
  - a. Skill Instruction (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 17.1.7.2.2)
    - (1) Workouts on the water or in the tanks out of season are permissible under the “skill instruction” regulation and may be held at the “direction” of the coach, once the workout is requested by the student-athletes.
  
    - (2) No more than four (4) student-athletes may be involved at any one time.
  
    - (3) There is a two-hour limit per week to such workouts for each student athlete.
  
    - (4) No other student athletes may be present at the time the workout is being conducted for the specified four athletes.
  
  - b. Other Training and Conditioning. (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 17.1.7.2.3) A student-athlete’s participation in out of season weight training and conditioning activities under the direction of the coach, including ergometers, weights, etc. shall be limited to 8 hours per week.
  
  - c. Safety Exception
    - (1) The “Safety Exception” (per NCAA Bylaw 17.16.7) provides that a coach may be present during voluntary individual workouts in the institution’s regular practice facility on the water or in the tanks (without the workouts being considered as countable athletically related activities), and the coach may provide safety or skill instruction, but cannot conduct the individuals workouts (i.e. Determine the time, nature, or the length of the workout).
  
    - (2) The “Safety Exception” essentially opens the door for practice in the sport of rowing throughout the entire year, without any time limits. However, the coach’s involvement is restricted to providing skill instruction and insuring safety during the workout. While it would appear that this does open the door to year-round workouts; clearly this is not the intent of the regulation. Institutions must have the responsibility for monitoring whether or not such workouts are at the “discretion” of the coach, as opposed to being “voluntary” on the part of the student-athletes.
  
- 6. Foreign Travel (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 17.16.5.4)
  - a. Participation in the Henley Regatta shall be permissible each year.

- b. A crew which participates at Henley is permitted to compete in one additional international regatta, either one week before or one week following the Henley event.
- c. All other foreign regattas will be subject to IRA certification, and a “one-in-three year” foreign travel restriction.
- d. The Vancouver Regatta is considered post-season but shall not be subject to the foreign travel restrictions.
- e. Participation in foreign travel need not be included within the institution’s 156-day rowing season limitation.

7. Summer Practice (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 17.16.6.1). Summer practice that is organized or financially supported by an IRA member institution shall be prohibited except in preparation for competition in the Henley Regatta or any other permissible foreign competition.

#### **Article V: Waivers and Exceptions**

A. Standard waivers that are permitted under NCAA regulations are herein adopted by the IRA and may be processed by the NCAA affiliated conference office (Ivy League, PAC-12, etc.). **Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.** No other waivers are permitted.

**B. All delayed enrollment waivers must be processed by the IRA Office. (Adopted June 1, 2020/Effective July 1, 2020)**

C. Special exceptions to any IRA Eligibility regulations are permissible, provided such exception is not inconsistent with the spirit and intent of these Regulations, and provided such exception is not in violation of NCAA Regulations adopted by the IRA. Such special exceptions may be granted only by formal action of the IRA Eligibility and Infractions Committee at a regular or special meeting. Appeals for such special exceptions shall be processed only through the IRA Commissioner. Special exceptions shall be granted only by affirmative vote of two thirds of the IRA Eligibility and Infractions Committee.