

## Playing and Practice Regulations

The NCAA has carefully defined the playing season regulation by which all student-athletes and teams must abide. This includes practice, competition, conditioning, strength training, and practice and playing oriented meetings. The purpose is to have all teams compete by the same guidelines while helping student-athletes balance both athletic and academic commitments.

Teams are allowed a maximum number of consecutive days of required practice per year which is considered their “in-season.” This varies by sport. The start and end dates are determined by the NCAA and GW on an annual basis. During this time, teams may participate in athletically related activities, which do not exceed 4 hours per day and 20 hours per week. [Competitions are automatically considered to be 3 hours/day.] In addition, there must be one day off per week from all athletic activities. However, if a team is traveling, the day off may be the day of travel as long as there is no physical activity or athletic meeting held. [During vacation periods and outside of the regular academic terms (e.g. preseason) the time limitations and day off requirements do not apply.]

Once a team is in its “out-of-season,” there may be conditioning and strength activities up to 8 hours per week. However, countable athletically related activities are prohibited two days per week. In addition, two of the eight hours may be spent on individualized skill instruction with no limit on the number of student-athletes and coaches involved from September 15<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>. Prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> and after April 15<sup>th</sup> there is a limit of up to four student-athletes and any number of coaches who may participate in 2 hours of skill instruction.

On the day of competition, there may be **no** practice activities (other than warm-down activities) conducted following the competition. The only exception is between contests, rounds or events during a multi-day or multi-event competition.

### Countable Athletically Related Activities

#### *What are the daily and weekly time limitations on countable athletically related activities?*

Student-athletes may not participate in countable athletically related activities for more than:

#### In Season:

- 4 hours per day
- 20 hours per week (including multi-sport)

#### Out-of-Season (during the academic year):

- 4 hours per day
- 8 hours per week

The Daily and weekly hour limitations **DO NOT** apply to the following time periods:

- During pre-season practice prior to the first day of classes or the first scheduled contest, whichever is earlier.
- During an institution’s term-time official vacation period (e.g., Thanksgiving, spring break), as listed in the institution’s official calendar, and during the academic year between terms when classes are not in session.

#### *Are student-athletes required to have a day off from countable athletically related activities?*

During the academic year when school is in session and during the playing season, student-athletes must have one day per week in which there are no countable athletically related activities. The day off may occur on any day of the week and may change from week to week. A "week" is defined as any seven consecutive days, determined at the institution's discretion.

Below are **partial** lists of common activities that count and do not count against your daily and weekly time limits:

<b>Countable Athletically Related Activities</b>	<b>Non-Countable Athletically Related Activities</b>
Practices (not more than 4 hours/day).	Compliance or Academic meetings.
Athletics meetings with a coach initiated or required by a coach (e.g., end of season individual meetings).	Meetings with a coach initiated by the student-athlete and at which no athletically related activities are discussed.
Competition (and associated activities, regardless of their length, count as 3 hours). Note: No countable athletically related activities may occur after the competition.	Drug/alcohol educational meetings or CHAMPS/Life Skills meetings.
Field, floor or on-court activity.	Study hall, tutoring or academic meetings.
Setting up offensive and defensive alignment.	Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) meetings.
On-court or on-field activities called by any member of the team and confined primarily to members of that team.	Voluntary weight training not conducted by a coach or staff member.
Required weight-training and conditioning activities.	Voluntary sport-related activities (e.g., initiated by student-athlete, no attendance taken, no coach present).
Required participation in camps/clinics.	Traveling to/from the site of competition (as long as no countable activities occur).
Visiting the competition site in the sports of cross-country and golf.	Training room activities (e.g., treatment, taping), rehabilitation activities and medical examinations.
Participation outside the regular season in individual skill-related instructional activities with a member of the coaching staff.	Recruiting activities (e.g., student host).
Discussion or review of game films.	Training table meals.
Participation in a physical activity class for student-athletes only and taught by a member of the athletics staff (e.g., coach).	Attending banquets (e.g., awards or post-season banquets).
	Fund-raising activities or public relations or promotional activities and community service projects.

\* There may be additional rules that are applicable only to certain sports. Contact the Compliance Office, if you have questions or would like additional information. \*

### **Participation In Countable Athletically Related Activities Out Of The Season**

*What is the difference between in-season and out-of-season?*

#### **In-season (20 Hours)**

- Time between the team's first officially recognized practice session and the last practice session or competition, whichever occurs later.

- Sports other than basketball may have their seasons separated into two distinct segments: championship segment and nonchampionship segment.
- During the in-season period (e.g., championship and nonchampionship segments), a student-athlete may participate in a maximum of 20 hours per week of countable athletically related activities regardless of how many sports the student-athlete participates in.
- One day off is required.

**Out-of-season (Eight Hours)**

- The term “out-of-season” refers to the remaining days during the academic year not included in the in-season period.
- A student-athlete may participate in a maximum of eight hours per week of countable athletically related activities.
- Participation in up to 2 hours of required skill instruction is permissible.
- Two days off are required.
- All athletically related activities outside the playing season are prohibited one week prior to the beginning of the final exam period through the conclusion of each student-athlete’s exams.

**Outside the playing season (during the academic year), student-athletes are limited to not more than eight (8) hours per week of certain countable athletically related activities. Those activities are shown below:**

<b>Permissible Countable Athletically Related Activities During the Out-Of-Season Period</b>	<b>Non-Permissible Activities During the Out-Of-Season Period</b>
Required weight training and conditioning activities supervised by an athletics department staff member.	Conditioning drills may not simulate offensive or defensive alignments.
<b>Sports other than baseball</b> , participation in up to 2 hours per week of skill-related instruction with no limit on the number of student-athletes and coaches involved from Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> – April 15 <sup>th</sup> . Prior to Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> and after April 15 <sup>th</sup> there is a limit of up to 4 student-athletes and any number of coaches.	Required participation in any countable athletically related activities during any institutional vacation period (e.g., Christmas break, summer) that occur outside the declared playing and practice season (e.g., in-season).
<b>In baseball</b> , participation in up to 2 hours per week of skill-related instruction with no limit on the number of student-athletes and coaches involved from Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> – April 15 <sup>th</sup> . Prior to Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> , from the opening day of classes of GW's second academic term to Jan. 15 <sup>th</sup> (if classes begin prior to Jan. 15 <sup>th</sup> ) and after April 15 <sup>th</sup> , participation in up to 2 hours per week of skill instruction is permitted, provided not more than 4 student-athletes and any number of coaches are involved at any one time.	No equipment related to the sport may be used. However, in the sport of swimming and diving a student-athlete may be involved in in-pool conditioning with swim-specific equipment (e.g., starting blocks, kickboards, pull buoys, etc.).
Participation in a physical fitness class conducted by a member of the athletics department staff.	Any other countable athletically related activity that may have been permissible during the in-season period.
Any voluntary athletically related activity in which the student-athlete chooses to participate (does not count in the 8 hours) (e.g., initiated by student-athlete, no attendance taken, no coach present).	All athletically related activities are prohibited one week prior to the beginning of the final exam period through the conclusion of each student-athlete’s final exams.

**NOTE: Student-athletes may be involved in any non-countable athletically related activity during the off-season period (e.g., workouts using the safety exception, voluntary workouts, other non-countable activities permitted during the in-season period).**

### **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 the permissible skill-related instruction requested by the student-athlete pursuant to NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.2.]
- The activity must be initiated and requested solely by the student-athlete. Neither GW 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 purpose of reporting such information to the coaching staff members or other student-athletes; and
- The student-athlete may not be subjected to penalty if s/he elects not to participate in the activity. In addition, neither GW 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 GW’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 gymnastics, rowing, swimming & diving and water polo.